

# More children killing parents in Nigeria



■ Kazeem Ayoola killed his 85-year-old mother

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is a 2007 graduate of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, had been receiving treatment for mental illness at the Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, since 2014 where he was also doing his housemanship. He had returned home from Jigawa State where he was undergoing national youth service the day before the incidence.

On March 11, in Enugu State,

divorcing their daughter. He said it was in freeing himself from one of such situations that he mistakenly hit the octogenarian who hit his head on a table and died following that.

On March 30th, 2016, Mrs. Cecelia Nwanji's younger son in his 20s, beheaded her, collected her blood and fled Umuchagu Osokwa, Osioma Ngwa area of Abia State where he committed the crime. She

head as his daughter ran to safety. Odihiri initially hid the body but was caught while trying to dispose of it. It was reported that he often threatened to kill her whenever they had a misunderstanding.

Haruna Tijjani, 30, a drug addict, stabbed his mother Hadiza Ibrahim, 50, in Kano on April 7th, 2017. This was after death several threats he had made to her which neighbours thought was a joke. His father reported the case to the police, but Tijjani is still on the run.

## Medical point of view

A psychiatrist at the Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi, Benue State, Dr. Michael Amedu, said, "There are several reasons why children could kill their parents and mental illness is one of them. There is what we call delusion whereby the person believes something against all odds. We all have beliefs which can be changed by a superior argument but for people who are delusional, their beliefs are not amenable.

"When there is somebody they consider an enemy, what they do is to get away from the person and when they can't, they're likely to eliminate him/her. Most people who are victims usually have a close relationship with the person who

kills them."

Amedu said like substance abuse, even alcohol could precipitate things seen in the mentally-ill. He said, "People see or hear things that aren't there and act on these. There are also other forms of aggression that are not due to substances; like schizophrenia which is what the layman calls 'madness', as well as other abnormalities which we see in the psychiatric process.

"Personality disorder could also lead to aggression, violence and crime where the person feels no remorse. These cases are treatable."

The consultant psychiatrist also said, "In terms of parent-children relationship, there are cases where a parent kills the child like mothers who kill their children and may even kill themselves afterwards. This could be linked to depression and their feeling the need to protect their children from the hardships of life."

On whether such cases should all be treated as triggered by mental illness, he said, "It is the criminal justice system that should figure this out and decide which of these was intentional or accidental, although the knowledge of mental illness in the justice system is quite limited.

A consultant forensic