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Nursing mothers block hospital gate over babies' death due to outage

By Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt | 14 March 2017 | 1:18 am



Nursing mothers yesterday barricaded the entrance into the Braithwaite Memorial Specialist Hospital (BMSH), Rivers State apex hospital, over power outage, which they alleged led to the death of two babies in the Children's Ward.

The protesters later proceeded to the Government House, Port Harcourt, to register their anger.

The Guardian gathered that there has been unstable power supply at the health facility for a long time but it was not clear if the power outage led to the death of the babies, as there was no autopsy report yet to ascertain such claims.

Mother of a 21-day-old baby, Joshua Yamunoshi, claimed that her child was in good health when the light was on but was confirmed dead after three hours of power outage in the hospital.



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She said: "My child was okay before they took light, but three hours after there was no light, the doctors came and said my baby was dead. The situation at this health facility is disheartening. We, nursing mothers, drink cold water tea and bath with cold water due to lack of electricity to boil water."

When The Guardian visited the hospital, there was electricity, but in less than one hour, light went off in some sections, especially the Radiology Department. A nurse came and informed the patients to hold on until power was restored, as they could not attend to them in darkness.

The unit ward was enveloped in pitch darkness. People were seen using torchlight in the daytime to move around. There was, however, a loud ovation when the light was restored and the workers resumed attending to the patients.

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Many of the workers declined commenting on the situation but a senior member of staff, who did not want to be mentioned, disclosed that the hospital was not connected to the national grid due to a fault at a nearby substation, adding that the hospital has only two generating sets and one has broken down due to constant use while the only one serving the hospital was switched off at intervals to avoid a possible breakdown.

Narrating how the two babies died, he said: “Both babies were premature. The first one was born with a very low birth rate, but died due to low temperature. The second baby died due to extreme premature birth.”

He pleaded with the overnment to expedite action on a memo sent from the hospital to purchase of a new generating set.

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