

'How my pregnant wife died of neglect at Epe General Hospital'

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Life will not remain the same for Mr. Taiwo Ayobami, who lost his wife, Oluremi during childbirth at Epe General Hospital, Lagos State on April 15, 2020 over alleged neglect by health workers. The deceased was a level 9 officer of the Lagos State Ministry of Education, teaching mathematics at Epe Senior Grammar School.

According to her husband, Mrs. Ayobami had conducted several ultrasounds to know the status of the pregnancy and the result had always shown that the baby was healthy. "However, on April 13, another ultrasound result showed she had 'placenta previa' and so they advised we quickly go to the hospital since she was near her due date.

"When we got to the primary healthcare centre where she registered, we were received by Dr. Mathew Akinpelu, who further referred us to the general hospital, Epe because of the urgency. We went in a Lagos state ambulance provided for us. The doctor also reminded us that a caesarean section must be carried out within the next five hours."

Mr. Ayobami narrated that on arrival at the hospital, at about 3:30p.m., his wife was admitted. "I was asked to get three pints of blood. I paid 45,000 for the blood and was also approached by some nurses to purchase a cesarean kit for another fee. I wanted a confirmation from the doctor before purchasing and he seem not to give me a response. Six hours later, there was no sign of conducting a surgery, I became agitated and began pleading, which fell on deaf ears.

"At about 3:00a.m. on the 14th, my wife called me saying she was having stomach pains, she tried to call the nurses on duty but got no response. She started bleeding profusely; I got to the hospital at 6:00a.m. and found her in pool of her own blood. I immediately called on the nurses for help and asked for the doctor on duty, I was told there was none on duty.

"I was sad over the level of neglect; they did not bother to change her bed sheets or clean her up. I ran over to the administrative block, seeking attention and saw the medical director. After narrating my ordeal, he called the apex nurse and they assured me they would do the needful.

"On getting to the ward to see my wife, the doctor on duty, Dr. Ayodeji, prescribed some emergency drugs and directed me to get them from the pharmacy. He also informed me they were free, I ended up purchasing them for N29,000. On getting to the ward, my wife was still bleeding. This was 12noon on the third day, April 15, it was at this point she was wheeled into the theatre, clearly 72 hours after she was recommended to be operated on within five hours."



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Continuing, Mr. Ayobami said that his wife came out of the theatre at 2:00p.m. and by 5:00p.m. started complaining of tiredness. “I reached out to the doctor on duty, Dr. Dawodu, who said those on duty failed to do the needful; hence she has lost so much blood. The doctor asked me to get blood for transfusion, so I went for the blood I initially paid for, which was reluctantly released to me as I was in dire need, that was when my wife died.”

When The Guardian contacted the Chief Medical Director at the Epe General Hospital, Dr. Omoloye, he declined commenting on the matter, saying the Health Service Commission, which is his employer, is currently handling the matter.



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But reacting to the incident, founding director, Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC), Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, said the case of Mrs. Ayobami raises a number of issues that border on the violation of fundamental human rights and corruption in our health system.

“Every woman has a right to enjoy a variety of facilities, goods, services and conditions necessary in pregnancy and childbirth. In relation to maternal health, there is an obligation on states to remove barriers that deny women access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and education. Late Mrs. Ayobami was denied adequate healthcare services for about 48 hours because the medical personnel were negligent and gave priority to their selfish gains as against service to humanity.

“Hence, we demand a thorough investigation into the corrupt practices perpetuated that involved the sale of Ceasarian kits and drugs meant to be free, sale of drugs at higher prices and hoarding of drugs and blood that would save the lives of people. We also seek immediate prosecution of those found guilty of corruption and negligence while in the course of performing their duties.”

