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## Woman dies in LUTH on Easter Monday

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## "Management is looking into the case"

An estate developer, Ausbet Udebu, has accused doctors at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, Mushin, Lagos, of professional misconduct.

The doctors' action, he claimed, led to the death of Ngozi, his wife on March 28.

Udebu, 56, alleged that the physician diagnosed and treated his late wife of ulcer, but the autopsy showed that she died of Asphyxia.

Asphyxia is the loss of consciousness due to the body's inability to deliver oxygen to its tissues.

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Reliving the incident, Udebu said he and his family had gone to celebrate Good Friday at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Yaba, Lagos Mainland when his daughter called him that their mother had severe stomach pain.

"We rushed her to LUTH around 9pm with my wife writhing in pains. She underwent some tests/scan and the results were ready before 7am the following day."

Udebu said he took the results to the doctors, and was asked to wait until they were ready for ward rounds.

He said: "After about 90 minutes, a doctor finally turned up, checked her and said the scan revealed some trace of ulcer. The doctor prescribed Gascol and an injection which were not available at LUTH. I bought the prescribed drugs. Still, there was no relief. The doctor then prescribed another brand of injection called IV NEXIUM. Again, I bought it."

The bereaved husband said the emergency unit where his wife, 46, was kept had no light, fan and good ventilation.

He said he used his phone flashlight to assist the doctor in finding his wife's vein, adding that he fanned her because she was sweating profusely and had difficulty breathing because of the stuffy room.

stay. Even her younger sister volunteered to stay and help her out in case of any need but the nurses refused, saying it was against the hospital's policy.

"During this time, my wife's condition deteriorated to the extent of needing oxygen. I bought an oxygen mask to help her breathe. In her weak state, my wife pleaded with the nurses to permit me or her younger sister to be with her through the night, but her plea was equally turned down. 'Daddy, don't go' was the last words I heard her say. I felt dejected as I was forced out of the ward around 11pm."

Udebu said he got to the hospital the following day around 6am with his eldest daughter "and we got the shocker of our life".

"The curtain over her bed was already drawn. Immediately I suspected something eerie. I did not want to believe my wife and mother of my four children was no more. I was told my wife died in the early hours of that morning. Nobody contacted the family when she passed on. Everything about LUTH is wrong. A ward with more than 35 patients with only two nurses available to attend to them. It was later I learnt any patient who registered in any of the doctors' private clinics will have an army of doctors attending to him/her because he/she has paid in the doctor's private clinic."

The Udebu's in law, Quincy Opara, said: "The doctor concluded that her death was caused by ulcer even before an autopsy was carried out. The result of the autopsy came out, to the surprise of everybody, it stated that she died of asphyxia. What is the relationship between asphyxia and ulcer which was the doctor's 'diagnosis'?

"This is shameful and above all disgraceful for Nigeria's prime health institution. The nurse on duty when confronted that they may not have known when she passed on said that she passed on at 3am. She claimed that they battled to save her life."

The body of Mrs Udebu, a teacher at St. Finbarr's College, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos Mainland, has been deposited in a morgue in Delta State.

LUTH spokesperson Mr. Kelechi Otuneme said he was aware of the incident.

"I cannot say anything; management is looking into the matter", he said.

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