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## Parents, hospital clash over only child's death

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•Tobi on oxygen before his death



•The late Tobi

### •Police clear hospital of 'negligence'

The death of a 14-year-old, Tobi Bakare, has sparked a row between his parents and an Ikeja-Based hospital.

Tobi, the only child of Mr and Mrs Akeem Bakare, died on June 13, three days after he was admitted in the hospital.

His parents are blaming his death on the hospital's negligence.

But the police have absolved the hospital of any wrong doing, claiming that the boy suffered from a terminal illness.

The bereaved parents, who have refused to collect their child's remains, accused the hospital of placing him on a plastered oxygen cylinder, which they claimed he choked on.

In a petition to Police Commissioner Fatai Owooseni, written through the law firm of Odede & Bodede, the Bakares accused the hospital of killing Tobi through its negligence.

According to Mrs. Bakare, Tobi was taken to the hospital situated on Allen Avenue, Ikeja, after he suffered a toothache and ran temperature. She said he was diagnosed of malaria.

She said the hospital's staff on night duty on June 12 refused to listen to her request that another oxygen be brought when she observed that the one her son was on was almost finished.

The woman said: "We took Tobi to the hospital on June 10. He was tested and diagnosed of malaria and the hospital told us an expert (paediatrician) would come and he came on June 12 and saw the CT Scan we did. He said we were lucky. Tobi was given oxygen and when I observed and pointed out that the oxygen will soon finish, the nurses on duty were shouting me down that I shouldn't teach them their job.

"I complained about a lot of things at the ward. There was no wheelchair to take Tobi to the ward the day he was admitted. There was also no ambulance to take us for scan. We had to pay the laboratory N5,000 to bring their own ambulance to the hospital. The ward was mosquito infested; they never changed bedsheets and only cleaned the ward once a day with ordinary water. I also complained that the nurses were never observant.

I was the one who usually called their attention when drip was not flowing or something was wrong.

“I kept complaining about the plastered and leaking oxygen. I also told the nurses to change the one he was on since it was almost finished and they might soon sleep but they refused. When the nurses later came to check him, it was too late. After my discovery and call to them to replace the finished oxygen, the doctor and nurses could not do it. They called an elderly man downstairs, who ‘fiddled and fixed’ but definitely, no oxygen passed and around 3am when they woke up, the boy was found dead as he had been on empty cylinder.

There was mucus in his mouth, which was not sucked all night. He died with plenty of mucus. I observed that the cylinder was leaking and the doctor plastered it. I told them it was still leaking but they ignored me. My son died as a result of the negligence of the nurses and doctor on duty. I reported to a doctor and also put it in writing because I told them I was not going to let them get away with their actions.”

In the letter to Owoseni, the lawyers described the incident as “a clear case of negligence”.

“A patient approaching a doctor expects medical treatment with all the knowledge and skill that the doctor possesses to bring relief to his medical problems. A breach of any of these duties gives a cause of action for negligence against the doctor.

“We are therefore imploring you to kindly arrest, investigate, detain and prosecute the hospital and its staff and bring them to justice. On our part, we pledge to provide the necessary logistics to enable your office deal with this matter in accordance with the provisions of our laws.”

The command’s spokesman, Olarinde Famous-Cole, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), said he was not aware of the petition, adding that information availed him

by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) indicated that the parents abandoned the body of their son.

He said: "It is not my duty to find out whether a petition was sent to the Commissioner of Police. The information I have from the DPO is what I will tell you. He said that the hospital filed a complaint at the station that the body of a boy who suffered a terminal illness was yet to be collected.

"The DPO said he has made several calls to the deceased's parents to hear their side of the story but they have not been forthcoming. That's all I know about the matter."

orts to get the hospital's reaction failed. Contacted on Sunday, it said its medical  
ector was not available and would be around by 10am yesterday.

veral calls to the hospital yesterday were not picked.

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