

Panel finds paediatrician culpable in baby's death

•Recommends prosecution, sanctions



by **Precious Igbonwelundu** April 3, 2019 in **News, News Update**

0

THE Lagos State investigative panel on the care and management of 15-month-old twin girl, Taye Adetunji, who died in curious circumstances during blood transfusion at HJ CLAIROOWEN Medical Centre, has found a paediatrician, Dr. Joy Ohirigbe, culpable.

Ohirigbe, a volunteer paediatrician at the Igando General Hospital, penultimate Sunday when the child's mother took her there, referred them to her private and illegal clinic, HJ CLAIROOWEN, where the infant died during blood transfusion.

Following the baby's parents' outcry, the government, through the Ministry of Health, set up a panel to investigate what transpired from the time the woman arrived the General Hospital to when the baby died.

Findings by the panel made available to The Nation last night indicated that a decision was taken to refer the patient to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) for further management, owing to the suspected diagnosis of severe anaemia with sepsis.

According to the report, a referral letter was written to that effect and the patient left the facility, but shockingly ended at the private clinic where she died as a result of "mismanagement and unprofessional conduct."

Following her death, Health Commissioner Dr. Jide Idris directed a comprehensive investigation and instructed HEFAMAA to visit the private facility, which turned out to be operating illegally under the headship of an auxiliary nurse, Dayo Badmus, the Director of Public Affairs, Mrs. Adeola Salako, said.

She said HEFAMAA had been repositioned and was being empowered to intensify its operations in tracking illegal health facilities in the state.

Read also: [Nurse gave baby overdose on doctor's instruction, panel told](#)

In its report, the Health Service Commission (HSC), which concluded its investigations and submitted report to the commissioner yesterday, said Dr. Ohirigbe ignored the established referral system and protocol of the hospital.

The report said: "Dr Joy Ohirigbe, who was a volunteer staff of Alimosho General Hospital until March 25, was on call duty on the day the deceased child was brought to the hospital.

"She was found to have ignored the established referral system and protocol of the hospital by not consulting with the head of paediatrics or communicating with the nurses or the Ambulance section. Her decision was made singlehandedly for selfish and monetary gains.

"Dr Joy flouted the conventional system of referral within the sector in which a patient is only referred from a secondary to a tertiary level of health care. In this case, LASUTH has already indicated in the deceased patient's case file.

"Unknown to the ministry, she illegally operates an unregistered health care facility where she employed quacks headed by Mr. Dayo Badmus, an "auxiliary" nurse.

"Her unprofessional and negligent conduct led to the death of the patient. In a callous manner, she facilitated the quick disposal of the body without the required autopsy by instructing a nurse to give a death certificate and advising on the burial location.

"In view of the above, she has been found culpable and the matter has been referred to the Ministry of Justice, the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), as well as the police for further action and prosecution, if necessary.

"The two other workers found negligent through acts of omission have also been reprimanded and disciplined, in accordance with civil service extant rules."

Quoting the commissioner, Salako said the issue had underscored the need for concerted effort by all stakeholders to eradicate quackery and other unprofessional conducts in health care delivery.

"We must join hands in ensuring that quacks find Lagos too hot a destination for their criminal operations. Let us be provoked by the loss of this innocent life to push criminals out of the state.

"The outcome of this tragic incident is to serve as formal notice of renewed mission to rid the state of the life-threatening scourge of quacks and quackery," she said.

Following the incident, Salako said Dr. Idris had noted the need to evolve strict supervisory strategies in overseeing the health care staff to ensure that unprofessional and unethical conducts are completely eradicated.

"We enjoin Lagosians to continue to uphold the confidence reposed in the health sector, as we are committed to carrying out our mandate fully for a qualitative health care delivery.

"While commiserating with the bereaved family on the sad loss of baby Taye, the commissioner prayed for divine comfort and consolation for the entire family at this trying period," Salako said.