

# Boy, 5, dies after allegedly taking deworming pill

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A five-year-old boy, Jerome Nwome, has died after allegedly taking a deworming pill, Albendazole, in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The deceased's mother, Mrs. Ukamaka Nwome, said that her son was healthy before he was given the drug by some workers of Offia Oji Health Centre.

She said her son, a Nursery 2 pupil of Immaculate Heart Conception School, Uwalakande village in Okpoitumo Autonomous Community, had initially rejected the medicine given by the health workers, but following the decision of some of her relations, who wanted him to partake in the vaccination exercise, the tablet was administered to the boy, which later led to his death.

Mrs. Nwome said that after the pill was administered to her son, he became unconscious and efforts to revive him proved abortive. He was rushed to a medical centre where he was confirmed dead by a doctor.

She said her son did not complain of any ailment before he took the pill and regretted the manner through which she lost her second child.

The victim's paternal grandmother, Mrs. Mbam Nwite, blamed those around during the incident for ignoring the boy's reaction to the pill.

She described the situation as an unpleasant one, but attributed it to fate.

The officer in charge of Offia Oji Health Centre,

Mr. Paulinus Ngwuta, said "our worker did not have any hand in the boy's death," as the deworming tablet was administered by the victim's family and relatives.

He said that Albendazole drug, meant for the treatment of a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD), was donated by an international non-governmental Organisation known as Carter Centre.

Ngwuta said that the drug was distributed across the federation on a particular day, but the victim refused to take the pill.

He added that after the family learnt of the child's refusal, they asked for the medicine from health workers called Community Direct Distributors, with an assurance that a friendly approach would be adopted to administer the drug.

He said that based on the plea, the medicine was released, but shortly after his men had left the place, a screaming was heard and upon their inquiry, it was discovered that Master Jerome died following his family's action to force the tablet on him.

"After the distributors had left the place, the people's shout attracted their attention and in order to render a help, the child was rushed to our centre where he was confirmed dead by a doctor.

"The problem should not be attributed to the medicine because such an incident has not been heard about the tablet in other parts of the federation," Ngwuta said.

Police spokesperson Loveth Odah said that she was not aware of the incide