

ANTHONY UBONG - CALABAR

LIKE Mrs Stephanie Drake at the fictional Seattle Grace Hospital in the American medical drama television series, *Grey's Anatomy*, Mrs Josephine Uku Oluohu, a real live Nigerian mother of five, had a towel left in her body after a surgical operation.

But unlike the invented Mrs Drake, the real Mrs Oluohu does not live to get an apology from the doctor at the Calabar General Hospital, in Cross River State, whose alleged negligence had first caused her to suffer protracted discomfort. Mrs Oluohu died soon after a corrective, second operation that revealed what is now believed to be the original mistake of a certain doctor (name withheld).

In the TV play, Mrs Drake, diagnosed with emphysema due to her five-pack-a-day smoking habit, is admitted to Seattle Grace Hospital under the care of Dr John Davies, an attending cardiothoracic surgeon, and his surgical fellow, Dr Preston Burke. During the operation, Dr Davies performs a lobectomy on Mrs Drake's lungs and then Dr Burke performs the close. Unfortunately, Dr Burke erroneously leaves a surgical towel within Mrs Drake's thoracic cavity. The incident goes unreported as Dr Burke fears that it would cause irreparable damage to his surgical career.

Soon after, Mrs Drake overcomes her habit and quits smoking. However, in the next five years, she still suffers discomfort and has to resign from her restaurant job. Mrs Drake returns to Seattle Grace Hospital five years later to surgically relieve the pressure in her lungs. After a chest x-ray, Mrs Drake is diagnosed with hyper-inflated lungs, caused by what they think is bullae. During Mrs Drake's procedure, the Chief of Surgery, Dr Richard Webber and a resident surgeon, Dr Miranda Bailey, discover the surgical towel in an attempt to cut the bullae and immediately convert to an open thoracotomy to extract the towel.

During an unrelated case, Dr Burke ad-

'Doctor cut my wife's intestine, used hand towel to block it'



Josephine