

Six die in UPTH as resident doctors continue strike

**Ibanga Isine and
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SIX patients on admission at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital have so far died due to the ongoing industrial action by members of the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors in the hospital.

The strike, which entered its fifth day on Tuesday, was embarked upon by NARD to force the hospital authorities to pay an 11-month arrears of the Consolidated Teaching Hospital Salary Scale owed its mem-

bers.

While calling members of the association out for the strike, the local chairman of NARD, Dr. C. Amadi, had accused the management of the hospital of being noncommittal to the demands of the doctors.

However, our correspondent, who visited the hospital, reported that activities had almost come to a standstill as relations of patients continued to move them to other health facilities in the state.

A few patients, who were still at the wards, under critical

condition; however urged the doctors, to return to work to save them from dying.

They said that unless the hospital management and the doctors resolved their differences very soon, many of them might not leave the wards alive.

A patient, who simply gave her name as Ngozi, said that she was referred to the hospital a day before the doctors withdrew their services.

She said, "I had just completed the entire tests required by the hospital and the results were ready when the doctors disappeared from the ward. My husband has spent everything and here I am, not getting any better."

The Chairman of the Medical Advisory Council of the hospital, Dr. Aaron Ojule, has appealed to the aggrieved doctors to return to work in the interest of patients in critical condition.

When contacted, the public relations officer of the hospital, Mr. Georgewill Orji, said that the strike might be called off before the weekend.

Meanwhile, the Minister of State, Health, Chief Gabriel Aduku, has appealed to the National Association of Resident Doctors to sheathe their swords over the ongoing strike.

He said that the Federal government was making all efforts to meet all their demands.

Aduku, who spoke to journalists in Jos after inspecting the level of work at the Jos University Teaching Hospital permanent site, Laminga, near Jos said that the shortfall in regards to the consolidated salaries for medical personnel is being computed and would be released to the Chief Medical Directors of teaching hospitals as soon as possible.

Nigeria lacks capacity to treat cancer – Report

Victor Sam, Abuja

A report by the National Consultative Committee on Cancer Control in Nigeria has stated that the country lacks qualified personnel and equipment to manage the treatment of cancer.

It said a country with only five radiotherapy centres, 60 qualified pathologists, and 20 radiation oncologists to handle cancer patients, falls far short of the expected international requirements for the management of cancer.

The report of the NCCCC exclusively obtained by our correspondent on Monday, was presented last week to the Minister of Health, Prof. Adenike Grange, by the chairman of the committee, Prof. Francis Durosinmi-Etti, in Abuja.

In the report, the committee noted that in a country where new cases of cancer were expected to hit 500,000

annually by 2010, it was disheartening that Nigeria did not have the required manpower and equipment to treat cancer patients.

It said that cancer killed more Nigerians than HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria combined yearly, but the attention given to it was far below what was given to malaria.

Part of the report states, "Cancer remains a major health problem in Nigeria where over 80 per cent of cases present with late and advanced diseases when only palliative treatment is possible."

According to WHO, by 2020, death rates in males will rise to 72.7 per every 100,000 and 76 per 100,000 females.

"In Nigeria, cancer diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, and trained manpower, among others, are still inadequate to meet the needs of the 140 million population," it added.

France invests N235m in French