

UNTH doctors abandoned my wife to die, grieving husband alleges

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The University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, in Enugu State, has approached the family of Mr Nwachukwu Alagbu, whose wife, Nkiru, reportedly died due to alleged negligence by doctors at the health facility.

Nwachukwu, who confirmed the development to our correspondent, said, “The Chief Medical Director of the UNTH called me on Monday and said he would like to meet with me, but I have not met with him to hear what he will say.”

He added that the family and the hospital management would have met on Tuesday, but the meeting was rescheduled for today (Thursday).

PUNCH Metro gathered that the hospital management reached out to the family of the father of four after a marathon meeting with a non-governmental organisation on Monday, which intervened in the matter.

A source at the meeting, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told our correspondent that though the engagement with the hospital management would continue, “we are looking at how the hospital can engage the husband so that he can have a job to take care of the children.”

Nwachukwu said his wife’s death was a result of the negligence by the doctors, who refused to attend to her until she passed away.

“The doctors are wicked and cruel. What they did to me, I don’t pray for it to happen to any other person,” he stated.

The 40-year-old Nwachukwu had taken to the social media to lament how doctors on duty in the hospital abandoned his sick wife to die for fear that her ailment could have been COVID-19.

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He wrote on the social media, “My wife, late Mrs Nkiru Alagbu, was a 35-year-old woman who developed cardiovascular disorder shortly after her last child more than a year ago.

“Her medical condition had been waxing and waning, especially after every treatment.

“In January 2020, my wife developed the following symptoms: fever, breathlessness, chest pain, morbid weakness, and excessive sweating and loss of appetite. Her illness made my lovely wife visit so many hospitals until Tuesday (14th April 2020) when she had to be referred to a diagnostic Clinic in Enugu for some investigations.

“Right there, the good-spirited Consultant in that Clinic promptly referred her to a cardiologist for immediate attention when he noticed her major health challenge was cardiovascular disease.

“This action heralded our travails. For the avoidance of doubt, my wife and I had not travelled outside Enugu and Anambra States in the last five years. We had never come in contact with anyone diagnosed or suspected of having COVID-19.

“Unfortunately, by the period we got to the private hospital in Enugu in the morning on 15-04-2020, we were directed to Enugu State University Teaching Hospital Parklane GRA, Enugu. At ESUTH Parklane, they informed us their hospital did not have a functional Trolley or wheelchair to wheel my wife to the ward and that the hospital wards were full without empty beds.

“In frustration, I immediately took her to UNTH, Ituku/Ozalla. That was where the worst happened. A doctor came and from a prescribe social distance asked some few questions. Quickly, he concluded that, it was a case of COVID-19. Immediately myself, my brother’s wife and a family friend who offered to accompany us to the hospital started crying because none of the medical personnel on duty in the hospital Emergency cared to assist after my late wife was tagged a COVID-19 case.

“At this time my wife whispered to my ear; that I should not allow her die. I saw my wife in pain and she keep telling me that she would not die. I cried my eyes out when i learnt that the consultant cardiologist called UNTH, informing them to admit my wife for him. That he was coming to take over her treatment, but they ignored him, saying my wife was a Coronavirus patient.

“Within a short while, after the doctor made that COVID-19 proclamation, all the medical personnel disappeared. No one bothered to come close to her while she was lying in the car helpless. And after waiting for more than 30 minutes, I saw my brother’s wife (a consultant’ wife) crying uncontrollably, and handing her phone to a doctor so that the husband could explain the health situation of my wife to him.

“My brother later informed me what the doctor said. He said that they had started making efforts to contact the COVID-19 medical team that would handle the case of my wife.

“He told me that the doctor he spoke with on the phone was so rude and that that UNTH doctor started accusing him of threatening him after informing him that he had to make efforts to sustain the sick alive while they make their efforts at confirming or ruling out the COVID-19.

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“All attempts made by my brother to convince them that my wife was not a COVID-19 case proved abortive.”

Nwachukwu alleged that the hospital could not open a file for Nkiru, who died after about three hours in a car.

When contacted, the Public Relations Officer, UNTH, Mr Cyril Keleze, said the hospital had yet to issue an official statement on the matter.

“Whatever is the position of the hospital on the matter will be communicated by the Chief Medical Director. The management has not issued any official position, but if we have, you would have known,” he stated.