

Lagos hospitals rejected my brother till he died – Singer

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Sylvester

Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe

A Nigerian musical artiste, Bethamary Okey, has narrated how her brother, Sylvester, was rejected by some hospitals in Lagos over fears that he could be suffering from the coronavirus disease.

Bethamary said Sylvester, who had been suffering from collapsed intestine before the coronavirus pandemic, was referred to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, on April 27, 2020, by a private facility that was managing his condition.

However, LUTH allegedly rejected the victim on the grounds that there was no bed space.

According to the singer, her brother was rushed to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital in Ikeja after he was rejected at LUTH, but LASUTH also declined to treat him.

He was subsequently taken to several private facilities but was refused admission.

While fighting back tears, Bethamary said her brother lost hope after the rejection and asked to be taken home, where he died.

She stated, “I drove to LUTH and when we got to the accident and emergency section, a doctor came out, took his information, checked him in my car and went back inside.

“Another doctor later came out to tell us that there was no bed space in the hospital. I begged him to name any amount for us to pay, but the doctor just said my brother needed intensive care and they didn’t want to admit him in the hospital.

“I left LUTH for LASUTH and we met people outside the accident and emergency ward and asked for someone I could talk to but I was asked for a referral letter from the hospital that was treating him and I produced it. The moment they saw the letter, we were told to go and do a COVID-19 test and I took Sylvester to the Ikota Primary School for the test, but the person we met there said he did not know when the result would be ready but he took his samples.

“I left there and took him to some private hospitals, which also rejected him, and the last place I took him to treated us like trash. The doctor did not even come down to check my brother and he lied to the medical director that he had attended to us and I took my brother home.

“On Monday, May 4, 2020, he started struggling for life and called me; when I got to his room, he was in pain and requested Holy Communion, which I blessed and gave to him and he was okay

“What made my brother to give up was the hospitals that turned him back without attending to him. He could not take it anymore. My brother fought for his life; he wanted to live but gave up because of the frustration and he died around 6am on Tuesday, May 5, 2020.”

When contacted by *PUNCH Metro*, the Public Relations Officer, LUTH, Kelechi Otuneme, insisted that the hospital did not always reject patients.

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“We don’t reject patients. Sometimes, there may not be bed spaces immediately, which is not peculiar to LUTH; and if there is no bed space, we ask them to wait till there is bed space, but most times, the families are not patient enough, which we cannot blame them for, but to say that we reject patients is not true,” he stated.

The Director, Clinical Services and Training, LASUTH, Dr Ibrahim Mustafa, also said it was not in the hospital’s character to reject patients or request COVID-19 test results before commencing treatment.

“We don’t reject patients and we don’t ask for COVID-19 results as a pre-requisite for patients to receive treatment in LASUTH. Every patient that comes to our emergency is asked basic screening questions to know whether they are likely COVID-19 patient or not and when we suspect a patient to have COVID-19, we put such patient in our holding ward till the test result comes back; and if such a person is positive, we call for an evacuation, otherwise we transfer the patient to the main ward,” he said.