

Ondo hospital rations fuel, patient dies during surgery

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3rd August 2022



A middle-aged-man, Sunday Samuel, has accused the Ondo State Trauma and Surgical Centre, Ondo Town, of negligence after his wife died during a surgical operation at the facility.

The deceased, Fola, was reportedly diagnosed with breast cancer.

The mother of four was thereafter placed on medication for about a month in the hospital ward before she was taken to the theatre for surgery on Monday, July 25.

According to her husband, the operation was disrupted by power outage, as the medical facility repeatedly switched between electricity and generator.

He also lamented that the hospital failed to provide a standby oxygen cylinder before embarking on the surgery, as none was available when they needed it during the operation.

Sunday said, “My wife had breast cancer and was admitted to the Ondo State Trauma Centre, where she was stabilised for close to a month.

“On Monday, July 25, she was taken from her ward and moved on a wheelchair into the theatre room around 10.30am. Shortly after they moved in, power supply went off, and they had to call the person in charge of the generator to switch it on.

“I was even surprised that the man was just pouring fuel into the generator. The power came back 30 minutes later and they switched off the generator.

“After an hour, the light went off again. That was when we started looking for the man in charge of the generator but we could not find him. So, I had to put on the generator myself; imagine a big hospital like that.

“All this was happening while the surgery was ongoing. About one hour later, the person in charge of the generator switched to normal power again. About one hour and 30 minutes later, one of the doctors rushed out to call someone in our presence to get oxygen.

“I was sitting directly opposite the theatre with my mother-in-law and a friend and did not see anyone take the oxygen into the theatre. It was later that they came out to tell me that my wife did not make it. That was when I broke down in tears.”

Sunday, a security guard, frowned on the decision of the hospital to manage the fuel in its generator at the expense of his wife’s life.

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He noted that all the demands of the hospital were met before Fola was taken to the medical centre.

“We bought oxygen the previous week when she was still in the ward. It was not as if she needed oxygen, but they said she might need it at night. So, I paid for it and they went to purchase it and placed it by her side. For more than five days, she did not use it. It was one morning that I arrived that they said she was unconscious in the night and had to use oxygen. We also bought two pints of blood; one was used before the surgery and the other was meant to be used during the surgery. So, if it was fuel that they needed, I would have got it too, instead of rationing their fuel. I wondered why they should manage fuel while carrying out a surgery at the expense of someone’s life. My wife had the chance of surviving if those scenarios had not played out,” he added.

A member of the family, who witnessed the incident and identified himself as Tunde, said the deceased was getting better before she was considered for the surgery.

He said, “When they brought her here, she could barely walk. But she later started recuperating. She was already walking, eating and even visiting the restroom by herself some days before the surgery. Her file is there to prove this. A nurse even confirmed to us that she was already getting better and capable of undergoing the surgery and that something of such should not have happened.”

The Information Officer of the medical centre, Tope Akinjide, said the hospital did not carry out any surgery on Monday.

But when confronted with evidence by our correspondent, he confirmed that it was true that the patient was operated on that day.

He said, “I am into administrative matters and not clinical matters. And from my own desk, surgery is carried out on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Nevertheless, by their own discretion, they could have booked it for Monday. The surgery department has the right to schedule their operation. I have just confirmed the personality and the core subject matter of the case. It is true.”

Akinjide said a senior surgeon at the hospital told him that the survival chance of the patient was low.

“The issue is that when I spoke with the senior surgeon, he said the patient in question was in the ward for some weeks, and she had been critical, a late presentation of the case. The patient was having breast cancer and she took some pints of blood. More so, he said the patient’s oxygen was still intact, saying it did not get exhausted overnight,” he added.

Akinjide, however, did not respond to the allegations that the hospital was switching between electricity and generator while the surgery was ongoing.

He said he would contact the Deputy Chief Medical Director of the hospital for comprehensive details of the incident.

He had yet to do so as of the time of filing this report.