

# UNILAG undergraduate dies in Lagos hospital, family kicks

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The family of an undergraduate of the University of Lagos, Samuel Omolaye, has accused the management of the Federal Medical Centre, Ebute Metta, Lagos, of negligence resulting in his death at the facility in Lagos State.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that Samuel complained that he was feeling unwell and his family members rushed him to the medical facility for urgent treatment on February 1, 2023.

On getting to the premises, it was learnt that workers in the hospital refused to commence treatment on the 25-year-old due to a lack of bed space in the hospital.

Samuel's mother, Comfort, while chronicling the circumstances surrounding the death of her son at the medical facility, said despite the medical workers observing that Samuel was in dire need of treatment, no bed space was provided so his condition could be assessed until after three hours.

Comfort said, "My son complained about weakness of the body. I took him to the Federal Medical Centre since we have the hospital card. We got there around 3pm and were told that there was no bed space. I was directed to another hospital but I started begging the workers in the hospital as I could not risk taking him to another hospital because of his condition.

"After pleading for about three hours, they later told us that a bed was available and my son was admitted. When the doctor on duty checked him, he discovered that Samuel had a shortage of blood and told me to get blood and left us.

"My son kept lamenting seriously over the weakness he was experiencing in his body. I complained to a nurse but was surprised that when the nurse said the doctor did not record it in the system that my son needed blood."

Comfort said another doctor who was later assigned to her son, did not take his blood sample until 8pm, adding that the result which came out around 11pm, revealed that Samuel needed four pints of blood.

She explained that because Samuel's father was not around, she asked where she could purchase blood but was told that the blood bank had closed

The bereaved mother said she was desperately searching for blood when a nurse recommended her to someone whom she said was ready to donate blood for her son for N10,000 per pint of blood and with an additional N10,000 for commission.

"When I obliged to give him the money, the man went into the laboratory, returned and informed me that the laboratory had blood and that they claimed they wanted to use it for surgery the following morning.

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“He told me to beg them and when I pleaded to get blood to save my son, they told me to pay N9,600 to the cashier which I did. I brought the receipt to them but they told me that the money did not reflect in their system, and they held on to the blood,” Comfort said.

The aggrieved mother said she waited for the payment to be confirmed after the blood was released to a worker in the hospital, adding that by the time she returned to the ward, the blood transfusion was yet to commence.

“I questioned the nurse and she said they needed to warm the blood. It was while they were warming the blood that my son died. It was not too long that he died that other all the workers on duty started rushing out from where they were sleeping to start pressing Samuel’s chest. I told them that they took my son’s life. We just buried him on Monday.”

Contacted, the Head of Clinical Services for the hospital, Saheed Ogunme, while condoling with the deceased’s family, said Samuel, who was a sickle cell patient, was brought in from a private hospital where his health had deteriorated.

He said, “When they arrived at our facility, our beds were filled. We had to tell a patient who was a military man to permit us to use his bed while we moved him into a wheelchair. That was how we were able to attend to him.

“We also do not allow commercial donors in the hospital; we only permit patients and patients’ relatives blood donors. Meanwhile, the pint of blood that was available as of then belonged to a woman who was in labour.

“We could not give out the blood until we were sure that the woman was stabilised. We are also going to investigate the case of a commercial donor that was mentioned and we will take action against anyone found culpable.”

Reacting to the development, a human rights lawyer, Inibehe Effiong, said Samuel’s family could seek redress in court.

He said, “They can file a civil lawsuit to seek compensation for medical negligence. They can also approach the Medical and Dental Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal to seek redress in which case the hospital and the doctors involved could be sanctioned for professional negligence.

“They can also approach the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission. If they do that, it can also give them succour because the agency has the power to investigate the matter and then take appropriate action against the hospital and of course the doctors who were implicated.”