

# My wife, baby died as nurses watched YouTube videos to perform C-section – Imo contractor

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| BIODUN BUSARI

*A building contractor, Onyedikachi Eze, shares with BIODUN BUSARI how he lost his wife, Favour Paul, and their newborn baby at a private hospital in Owerri, Imo State, due to the alleged mishandling by medical doctors and nurses on duty*

*How did you end up at Lebechi Hospital, where your wife and baby passed away?*

Nobody referred me to the hospital. I went there myself to register my wife for antenatal care when she was pregnant. I chose Lebechi Hospital because of its proximity to my house. The transport fare to the hospital where my wife had our first child would have cost me N5,000.

Additionally, we had moved away from the area where we had our first child. I thought Lebechi Hospital would be more convenient for my wife to walk to. I knew when the hospital was first opened, and I had seen people going there before my wife registered. Unfortunately, the most tragic part of this experience is that people began coming forward to tell me about the hospital's inadequacies only after my wife died.

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Nobody mentioned the hospital's shortcomings when my wife was going there, until tragedy struck. I thought that whenever I wasn't around, my wife could visit the hospital for emergencies in the middle of the night since I didn't have a car to transport her to the other hospital.

*When did you register your wife for antenatal care at the hospital?*

She was registered for antenatal care in June 2024.

***What happened the day your wife and newborn died?***

I was at work in Olo, Enugu State, when the doctor's husband called me. He told me my wife was in serious condition. I assured him I would come to the hospital right away. When I arrived, I met Dr Lebechi Chijioke, the owner of the hospital. She informed me that my wife needed surgery to deliver the baby.

She said some nurses would assist in performing the Cesarean section on my wife. However, the midwife had already checked my wife and confirmed that both she and the baby were fine. The midwife said she would carry out the surgery to separate my wife and the baby.

***Was she the one who performed the C-section?***

She was not the one who did the operation. She is a female doctor and owns the hospital.

***Did Dr Lebechi tell you who would be operating on your wife?***

No, she didn't tell me anything about the doctors who carried out the CS. She didn't even tell me the number of doctors to operate on my wife.

***Who took your wife to the hospital before you were called?***

My wife went to the hospital on her own. She wasn't rushed. She walked there because I registered her at the hospital for easy access to care in case of emergencies. She complained of abdominal pain on Tuesday, 21st January 2025. I reassured her everything would be fine. She had been attending regular check-ups there, including for her blood pressure. Even my son had a card at the hospital. She arrived around 10am, and I reached the hospital around 2:23pm.

When I arrived, Dr Lebechi told me my wife needed an operation because the placenta was attempting to come out before the baby. She only mentioned that my wife needed more blood. I offered to donate, but after several attempts, they said my blood didn't match. They called a man who donated one pint of blood. By 5pm, when the operation began, my wife had lost a lot of blood.

***How did you react when you saw your wife bleeding?***

I couldn't do anything. I was just there in the theatre with her. They put her on a drip, and she was feeling weak. I questioned if someone could be in labour and on a drip at the same time.

The hospital staff had called two male doctors and three female nurses to assist in the operation. At one point, the power went out, and I had to fix and fuel their generator because they couldn't get it started.

*Why were you the one to start the generator?*

There was no one else to do it. The generator had a technical fault, and I had to fix it and fuel it myself. The hospital didn't have enough lower-level staff to manage this.

*Can you describe what the hospital looked like in terms of staff?*

The hospital was located in a three-bedroom flat. There was a passage near the entrance that served as a lobby. The next room was where they operated on my wife. The hospital had the owner, Dr Lebechi, and four female nurses, all of whom were unqualified. The nurses were student nurses from Holy Rosary Hospital, and they worked in shifts. The other flat served as the living quarters for Dr Lebechi and her husband. Occasionally, some of the staff would sleep there.

*Who were the two doctors who performed the C-section on your wife?*

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They were hired by Dr Lebechi. Three of her nurses also assisted, bringing the total to five people involved in the surgery. Dr Lebechi was not in the theatre during the operation. She left twice to buy fuel for the generator. The nurses knew me and my wife well. We weren't strangers at the hospital. It was the nurses who were watching YouTube videos on how to perform the C-section.

### *How did you find out they were watching YouTube?*

I joined them in the theatre after fixing the generator. When I entered, I saw them watching YouTube videos. My wife was bleeding profusely, and I could barely tolerate the sight. My younger brother and my wife's younger brother were also there. It was my wife's younger brother who later contacted a human rights group.

### *After the operation, what happened?*

Once the operation was completed, the two doctors left, and we were told to step outside. I touched my wife before leaving the theatre. After about two hours, Dr Lebechi came to tell me that my wife needed more blood. She told me my wife was fine and that the nurses were stitching her up. She mentioned that my wife was unable to feel her legs, especially her right leg, which was numb.

I entered the room and gave her a brief kiss, reassuring her she would be fine. I also asked about my baby, and Dr Lebechi said it was a girl and that she was fine. They said they were cleaning up the baby and promised to let me see her afterward.

However, as I was calling my in-laws to tell them that my wife had given birth to a baby girl, Dr Lebechi returned to tell me they needed more blood to revive my wife. I was confused, saying that blood couldn't be bought like groceries. She insisted I find someone to drive to a hospital to purchase blood.

### *How did you manage to get the blood?*

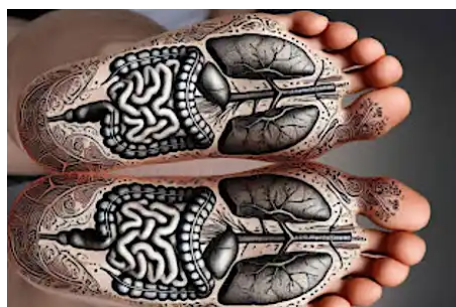
Dr Lebechi asked me to prepare around N5,000. She called me again in about 30 minutes to say that the person she had sent couldn't make it. I suggested some neighbours who were willing to donate blood, but she refused, claiming she couldn't trust their blood. She insisted on going to where she trusted. So, I drove with her to Holy Rosary Hospital in Mekuku to buy the blood. We bought two pints for N8,500, and I paid using my ATM card.

On the way back to the hospital, Dr Lebechi casually mentioned that surgery was not her area of specialisation. I brought the blood to the theatre myself. The nurses were the ones who administered it to my wife. Afterward, my wife started to struggle and shout. They called one of the doctors who performed the surgery. I was asked to leave the room, and I stood outside, not knowing what was happening. At one point, I stopped hearing my wife's voice. My neighbors and I were praying outside.

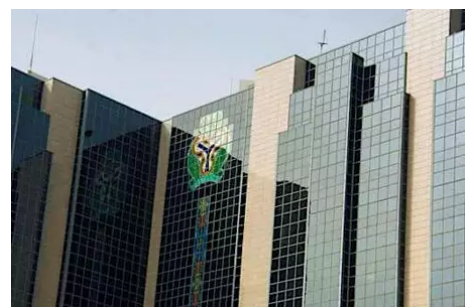
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***When did doctor come out with the news?***

It was around midnight. The doctor came out and told me and my brother to take heart. They informed me that my wife had passed away. I asked about my baby girl, and they said she had died too. I was devastated. Dr Lebechi said she hadn't told me about the baby's death earlier to prevent me from crying. The baby had died before my wife experienced the second crisis, but they hadn't informed me right away.

***Were there other workers, like cleaners or receptionists, in the hospital?***

No, there were no other staff members like cleaners or receptionists at the hospital. Only the four nurses were present.

***How much did they charge you?***

Dr Lebechi initially asked for N100,000 to buy blood. She billed me N480,000 for the operation, but after negotiations, we agreed that I would pay N350,000 if the operation was successful. She said that if it were anyone else, she would charge no less than N600,000 for the operation. She claimed that I got a discount because I helped her with the generator.

***How did your family and in-laws react to the news of your wife's death?***

They have been very supportive. As I mentioned earlier, my brother-in-law reached out to a human rights group to seek justice for my late wife. There has been grief, anger, and frustration.

***How have the police handled the case?***

The doctor is currently in police custody. However, I find it concerning that both she and her husband are still insisting that they were right. They are trying to use their influence to dismiss the case. Dr Lebechi even implied that I still owed her, despite the tragic loss of my wife and baby. Her husband has also supported her, claiming she helped me. My brother-in-law had to step in because they failed to save both my wife and child, and they insisted I still needed to pay.

***Have you heard of any similar incidents at this hospital?***

No, I hadn't heard anything like this before. It wasn't until after the tragedy that people started sharing their negative experiences with the hospital.

***How is your son doing?***

He's with my sister. Since that day, he has been feeling cold and has a cough. He's been crying a lot. I've been giving him medication to help him feel better.