

UNTH to probe death of woman by workers' negligence

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File copy: University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital

By Raphael Ede

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The University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital has announced it is investigating the allegations of negligence surrounding the death of Mrs Charity Unachukwu, who passed away on September 20, 2025, after being admitted following a car accident.

The hospital's management, reacting to the accounts of how the staff members' negligence led to the untimely death of their sister, extended its deepest condolences to the Unachukwu family and acknowledged the grief expressed in the public account shared on social media.

Charity's sister, Phina Unachukwu Ezeagwu, in a post shared on her Facebook page, had expressed the family's pain, saying, "UNTH killed my sister with negligence of duty" and that the family experienced a "heartbreaking ordeal" at the UNTH, citing delays and poor medical response that ultimately led to Charity's demise.

Narrating how in the wee hours of September 20, 2025, their world came crashing down, Phina said that her sister, Charity, was rushed to the UNTH in Enugu after a horrific vehicle accident.

“We rushed out to the hospital and were asked to take her to the orthopaedic hospital,” Phina recounted. “From there, we were referred to Parklane, and then to Memphis hospital, where a CT scan revealed no neurological issues. But despite the urgency, we were met with resistance and delays at every turn.”

At the UNTH, the family faced their greatest challenge yet. Despite arriving at 12 midnight, Charity wasn’t admitted until 3 am, after a gruelling search for a bed. The lab tests were delayed, and the blood transfusion, crucial for Charity’s survival, was repeatedly postponed.

“My husband and the ambulance driver ran helter-skelter looking for a bed,” Phina said. “The doctor refused to admit us, even when we offered to provide extra pillows and oxygen. It was as if time was of no essence.”

The lab tests were another ordeal. Despite the urgency of the situation, the family was told to come back at 6 am, then 7 am, and finally, 9 am. The porter’s indifference and lack of authority over other staff members further exacerbated the situation.

As Charity’s condition worsened, Phina pleaded with the doctors to transfer her to the intensive care unit. But the response was slow, and before any action could be taken, Charity gave up the ghost at 1:45 pm.

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“UNTH killed my sister with negligence of duty,” Phina lamented. “Nothing is working at UNTH, not even control of junior staff. The conveniences are a complete write-off, an eyesore in a health facility.”

In the end, Phina's words echoed the despair of many who have faced similar ordeals in Nigeria's healthcare system. "Nigeria happened to us, a country where our leaders go for medical tourism for even a headache, but citizens perish with a dearth of Medicare," she said, her voice heavy with grief. "Sleep tight, Chinwe, my sister, till that resurrection morning when the trumpet shall sound."

In response to these allegations, the UNTH, in a statement on Sunday by its Public Relations Officer, Uchelue Boniface, regretted the unfortunate incident, stating that the management was going to investigate it.

According to the statement, the Chief Medical Director had cancelled his official trip abroad to oversee an independent and transparent investigation into the circumstances surrounding Charity's death.

The investigation, the statement noted, would examine emergency admission procedures, laboratory and diagnostic services, and inter-departmental coordination to determine any systemic or individual failures that may have contributed to delays or lapses in care.

"We recognise the pain expressed in the detailed account shared publicly and acknowledge the grief of the family, their friends, and sympathisers," said Uchelue. "Losing a loved one under any circumstance is devastating, and we share in this sorrow."

The UNTH reassured the public that the investigation would be thorough and conducted in a transparent manner, saying, "Where lapses are confirmed, corrective and disciplinary measures will follow. The hospital prioritises systemic improvements to ensure compassionate, safe, and effective healthcare for all."

"We appreciate the public's vigilance and trust, and we reaffirm our commitment to compassionate, safe, and effective healthcare for all," Uchelue added.