

Insight

How domestic accidents harm people, claim lives

...They 're avoidable –Experts

By Job Osazuwa

FOR nine months, Mr. Judeson Okafor Mba, a former banker and businessman, could hardly move. An injury sustained in an accident in his apartment demobilized him.

At a thanksgiving service after his recovery, Judeson said: "The last nine months have been terrible and frustrating for me and my family. On that fateful day, November 13, 2020, my wife and I were about to have our bath when I slipped and fell on the tiled floor. My wife was already in the bathroom, unaware that I had fallen and couldn't get on my feet. I lay on the floor for about 20 minutes, groaning in severe pain until my wife came over to assist me get on my feet.

"That was how my whole life came to a standstill for nine months. The challenges I and my family experienced during the period of my ailment were horrible and frightening. My business suffered losses. We didn't believe I could walk again, but by only the grace of God Almighty I am on my feet, hale and hearty. I want to specially thank God for his grace and sustenance, and strength to persevere. I also appreciate my darling wife and lovely children for their show of love during the difficult time. They were really supportive to me all the while. I also use this opportunity to thank my relatives, friends and my fellow church members. To God be the glory."

He lamented that, apart from the pains, he was unable to perform his conjugal duties as a husband for the period.

Mba is not alone. A Lagos-based trader, Mrs. Onome Ogehenekevbe, will not easily forget how her mother slipped and fell in her bathroom in Ughelli, Delta State.

She told *Daily Sun* that it was one incident that got all the family members broken. She recollected that when she received the news of her mother's fall, she thought it was a minor incident. It was unknown to her that it was a fall that would claim the 69 years old woman's life in a matter of minutes.

Ogehenekevbe said, while she was making calls to arrange how the victim would be taken to a well-equipped hospital, she got another call 30 minutes later that her mother had breathed her last. She said doctors confirmed her dead when she was taken to a private hospital.

She said that her mother hit her head on the tiles or the toilet seat, which led to severe injury, including open wounds on her head. She also blamed her death on the fact that there was nobody on hand to quickly rescue the victim, as she was home alone when the accident happened. She opined that, by the time help came, a lot of damage had been done.

In June 2021, a final-year student of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Omotoké Suliyat, died the same way.

It was gathered that the HND 2 student of Marketing Department slumped in the bathroom and was immediately rushed to Hope Hospital in the Adigbo area of the state, where she was confirmed dead on June 13, 2021. There were, however, no details of how the accident



•Slippery tiles

happened.

It was learnt that the tragedy threw her entire school into mourning for some days. She was described as a brilliant and easy-going student who did not trifle with her studies.

Many people have been sent to an early grave, while others are left with injuries following one form of domestic accident or the other. Homes regarded as the safest place hide many hazards.

Everyone knows that accidents happen, but do people's fears about household injuries line up with reality? This is one area that usually constitutes the least concern or worry for many Nigerians. Yet, many are dying, largely unreported.

Whether in Lagos or Kano, unintentional domestic accidents continue to devastate people. It is not peculiar to Nigeria. Unpremeditated injury remains the leading cause of morbidity and mortality, particularly among children worldwide.

Managers of healthcare centres have also raised the alarm that domestic accidental deaths constitute a public health burden in Nigeria. They said many people have died as a result, even as they called for more caution while using objects or facilities that could cause injury.

Stakeholders and other concerned Nigerians believe that public education to reduce accidents would go a long way in stemming the rising number of victims and casualties. They stressed that safety at home must be taken very seriously by all.

Domestic accidents are harmful, unexpected, unintended, and abrupt occurrence affecting people of all ages, but

mostly children, which may or may not produce major injuries and which lead to medical consultations. They are inevitable events; however, they are largely preventable and their occurrence can be minimised among children and the elderly. Accidents are the main cause of injury and even death in children.

As gathered, most of the domestic misfortunes could be avoided, according to experts in the building industry. These accidents range from kerosene to petrol poisoning, cuts, and minor and fatal falls.

It is argued that, no matter how much people strive to make their domestic environment safe, accidents at home still happen, even in the most conscientious of households. When it comes to the health of families, especially for those with young children, it makes sense to know exactly what to do if certain common scenarios occur.

Not a few persons would easily forget how the famed musician, Stella Monye, cried out that she needed N35 million for her son's almost two decades of pain and misery. He got the injury through a domestic accident.

That singular incident dealt the artiste a devastating blow. While she traversed the length and breadth of Nigeria, even beyond seeking healing for her only beloved son, Ibrahim, her career came crashing.

"His unfortunate circumstance continues to consume our life. Getting him well and free from pain is my mission. It seems a long road, distanced and murky life for us," she had told newsmen.

She further said: "I begin my day at sunrise with tears of sorrow and end at sunset with prayers for my daily grief, a single mother whose handsome and only son has been in pain the



•Judeson

past 17 years of his 27 years on planet earth."

For her, a freak accident of a goodhearted child has become a pathetic burden and songs of sorrow that have tormented her for two decades. Her name is all over the media; while her songs are on radio and other media outlets, what many do not know is the heartache of a dear mother that frequents hospitals every week to save her son and keep him alive as she prays for his healing.

"My heart bleeds; my salty tears flow endlessly on my face, these tears rage every day, they are my river of pain. I am physically suffering due to Ibrahim's condition. No mother should go through my agony with her child. You do not wish that on any mother, not even a wicked witch.

"Each morning, I clean my son's opened stomach. Every week, we go into the hospital because of infections to his injuries, opened stomach and for his kidney dialyses. His urethra is damaged. This process has caused him kidney disease. Ibrahim lives with tubes inserted in his lower abdomen," she explained.

According to her, Ibrahim's lower abdomen has been open for years, and a tube is connected to his bladder to help him discharge bodily fluids. He had got into an accident at age 10, while trying to help one of his friends fetch water from their compound's tap that was attached to a water tank in the yard.

"His friend had complained to him as they walked home from lesson that there was no water at their home, and he had not taken a bath in days. Inside their compound was a water tanker, barricaded by fences with