

CONTROVERSY AT FEDERAL GOVT COLLEGE: "How our daughter died 24 hrs after leaving school – A/Ibom parents

By Chioma Onuegbu, Uyo

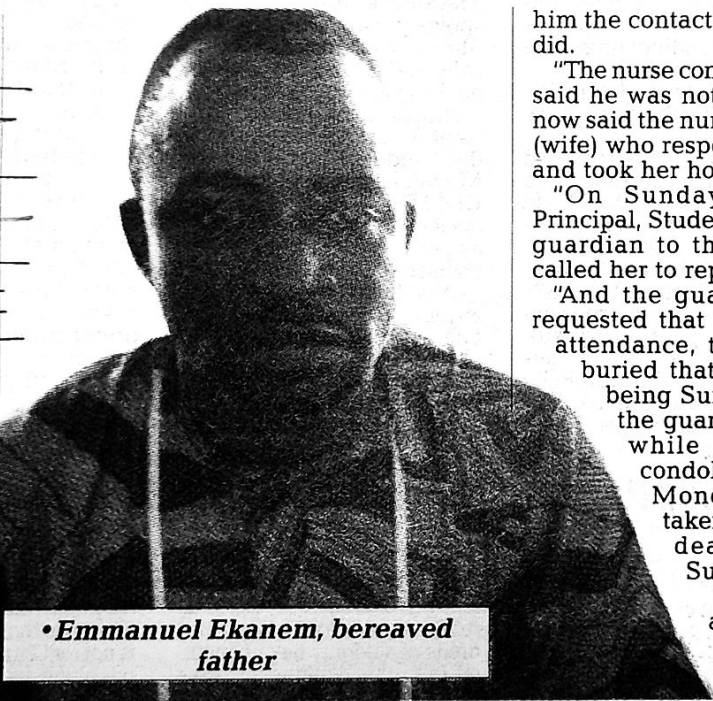
THE Management of Federal Government College, Ikot Ekpene, in Ikot Ekpene local government area of Akwa Ibom State has spoken on the death of a student of the college identified as Rita Emmanuel Sunday last month.

According to reports, the 10-year-old JS1 girl was taken to the school's Sick Bay, which lacked functional medical facilities and specialist to handle her case, and later released to her parents who took her to hospital where she later died.

Some parents whose children are students of the college were even quick to blame the situation on negligence by the Management of the college.

But when Sunday Vanguard visited the school, the Principal, Mr. Jude Ezeogu, explained that the Management takes proper care of students, adding that immediately the deceased (Rita) reported stomach pains, she was taken to the school clinic, where she was first examined by a nurse on duty who discovered she had umbilical hernia.

Ezeogu narrated, "The news going round that a student died in the college is totally false. The child reported to the



• Emmanuel Ekanem, bereaved father

clinic on the 17th of June, being a Friday, that she was having stomach pains.

"On getting to the clinic, the nurse examined her. According to him (nurse), he discovered that the girl had umbilical hernia and immediately asked her to give

him the contact of the parents which she did.

"The nurse contacted the father first, who said he was not close by and the father now said the nurse should call the mother (wife) who responded. The mother came and took her home.

"On Sunday morning, the Vice Principal, Students Affairs (Girls) said the guardian to the girl said the mother called her to report that the girl died.

"And the guardian said the mother requested that the school should be in attendance, that the child would be buried that Sunday morning. That being Sunday morning, we asked the guardian to go for the burial while we now prepared for condolence visit to the family, Monday morning. She was taken home on Friday and her death was reported on Sunday morning.

"That was all we knew about the matter. But from the report the mother said the girl had been having that issue, and that is why the nurse said it was a relapsing case, but it was not known to the college.

"It (death) broke our heart because she was our child. We admitted many, but we are not happy that we have lost one. We

are still grieving over it".

Speaking on the state of the college's clinic, the Principal said, "The clinic we have only runs what you may call primary health. We attend to students based on what the clinic can offer. If the illness is beyond what the college can handle we immediately call parents.

"We have two qualified nurses employed by the Federal Ministry of Health and posted to the Federal Ministry of Education who also then posted them to the school. Others are attendants that assist them in doing the work".

During a brief interaction with the bereaved parents who are natives of Ikot Ekpene local government area, they corroborated the position of the school that their daughter did not die at the college but at General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene and also dismissed the speculation that they did not take her to hospital after collecting her from the school.

The mother, Mrs. Blessing Emmanuel Sunday, who could not hold back tears, simply disclosed that the deceased was the third out of four children.

On his part, the husband and a businessman, Emmanuel Sunday, said,

"We never noticed any kind of sickness in her before, but her stomach pains came sometimes once or twice a year and whenever that happened we took her for treatment.

"When the school asked us to come and pick her that Friday, because of the heavy rains, we took her home. Whenever she had that we gave her pain relieving drugs. And early in the morning on Saturday, we took her to General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene. She died same Saturday evening in the hospital".