

Row erupts between hospital and dead woman's family

By Carol Kasujja

Row has erupted between the family of the late journalist, Nuliat Nambaziira and the International Hospital Kampala (IHK) over her death.

Nambaziira, 38, passed on two weeks ago as a result of childbirth-related uncontrolled bleeding.

Her husband, Abbas Ssemujju, told mourners that the hospital mishandled her, leading to her death.

"Three days after giving birth to our fourth child by caesarean section, we were discharged from the hospital. Nuliat and the baby were well, but after one day, she started complaining of headache, backache and the stomach started swelling," Ssemujju said.

"Because it was an emergency, I could not drive back to IHK. I rushed her to a nearby clinic in Nansana," Ssemujju added.

He said when his wife's bleeding increased, he decided to take her back to IHK. He argues that doctors at IHK carried out tests and advised them to go to Nakasero Hospital, for a scan.

The scan results showed that she was bleeding in the stomach.

"Doctors recommended her to go for an operation, but because she used to overbleed after any operation, she asked the doctors whether there was another alternative to stop the bleeding. The doctors told us to wait for a day," Ssemujju said.

"The following day, I was told that she needed fresh blood. I collected more than 10 people, we went to Nakasero Blood Bank for the blood. When I returned to IHK, I found my wife already operated upon. I was told there was no blood. When I asked the doctors, they just told me to sign the papers for the operation. On signing, they told me that the operation was successful," he said.

Ssemujju said the doctors also told him they wanted to carry out another operation to remove the towels they had put in her stomach to prevent the bleeding. He said they asked for sh9.6m.

"I just signed the papers, but I did not know what I was signing," he noted.

However, IHK has denied any wrongdoing. The hospital

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ Andre Ackerman, the IHK executive director, said they did not respond earlier because they wanted to respect the patient's confidentiality.

authorities say the family disregarded medical advice.

Speaking to *New Vision*, Dr Ian Clarke, the chairperson of the IHK board said if Nambaziira and her family had allowed the doctors to carry out an operation in time as they were advised, her life would have been saved.

He explains

Ian Clarke says Nambaziira underwent a caesarean birth at the hospital. She was handled by Dr Nuru Nakintu, a visiting doctor and a senior gynaecologist at Mulago Hospital.

She spent three days at the hospital and was discharged. Later, she developed some complications and was bleeding. The family decided to take her to a nearby clinic.

When the situation got worse,

the family decided to take her back to IHK, where tests were done. It was found that her blood level was low.

"We advised her to go for an operation, but she refused. She was of sound mind and conscious at the time she refused," Clarke argued.

"We gave her time to make up her mind and after 15 hours, the family realised that her condition was getting worse. They gave us permission to carry out the operation," he added.

Clarke said by then, the bleeding had increased and she was too weak and unstable for a surgery. They could consequently not go on with the operation.

He said Nambaziira was then taken to the intensive care unit, but it was too late and she could not make it for another operation.

Andre Ackerman, the IHK executive director, said they had not responded earlier because they wanted to respect the patient's confidentiality. He insisted that the death was not due to negligence and that she was handled by four senior doctors.

However, Ssemujju maintained that there is no way he would have disregarded the doctors' advice.

"I am not fighting the hospital

because of money. I want to help other women who give birth from the hospital. Doctors should be more responsible," he noted.

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