The total abandonment of The Nigerian Health-care Sector

One of the responsibilities of a functional state is the proper welfare of its people which can only be achieved if health is prioritized far more than it currently is in Nigeria. This is no doubt a highly contributing factor in the underdevelopment of the country and why the so-called “Giant of Africa” is still referred to as a third world country. Is it any surprise that a country whose leaders value unbudgeted and extravagant expenses over the welfare of their people is not progressing? I think not.

Although there are thousands of brilliant medical students in Nigeria, only a tiny percentage of them actually go into Nigerian hospitals at the end of their training while the majority go to work in foreign countries where they know they’ll get not only better pay but better access to essential facilities. This only leaves us with a high and unmanageable patient to doctor ratio and hence, a higher mortality rate than most countries.

It is very disheartening to see thousands of people die from treatable cases of malaria, the common cold and domestic injuries due to unavailability of enough doctors and lack of resources. I read about various emergency cases where people die because there are just three doctors on ground to attend to more than twenty patients. On numerous cases, many patients are rejected because there are no beds. The lucky ones are those that are pitifully admitted on wheelchairs. What breaks my heart the most is that this isn’t new but has been going on for only God knows how long.

The situation of the health sector of this country accounts for the reason government officials and the rich and powerful often go on medical tourism. In the past, they have been very oblivious and ignorant of the health crisis but with the pandemic going on and travel restricted, they have finally started to grasp the gravity of this problem.

We even have the COVID-19 pandemic to thank for exposing the crisis in the Nigerian health sector as medical workers fight to contain the spread and treat the infected. Their job has been made very difficult by the lack of necessary equipment needed such as isolation centers and testing kits. It is as if the whole country was not prepared for a pandemic.

From LUTH to UCH to OAUTHC, many lives are being lost for every minute we do nothing concerning this matter. Today, thousands die of cancer, organ failure and so on. That could be anyone of us. If not for NHIS many people wouldn’t be able to afford basic healthcare, yet thousands are still not enrolled because of low awareness.

Lack of awareness is one of the major causes of our deteriorating health system, not only that people are not aware of medical aids such as insurance companies as mentioned before, but also in the sense that people are not actually aware of what proper health care is supposed to look like.

Let us ask ourselves, how is it possible to complain about something and demand better when a large percent of the population doesn’t even know what “better” is. You can’t solve a problem you don’t even know you have and so our first order of business towards improvement of the system will be to educate everyone on how it should be.

Although the lack of awareness of citizens has proven to be a huge factor contributing to the detriment of health care system, I believe the truly problematic population of people are those that are aware of it but simply do not care. The ignorance of this set of people is astounding. They are under the impression that a failing healthcare system is not as much of a problem as poverty, unemployment, insecurity and so on.

Truly, these aforementioned issues seem more pressing but we should never forget the importance of good healthcare. As the saying goes, “health is wealth” and without the welfare of its people, a country will not progress.

If there’s anything to make you worry about living in Nigeria, it is the poor state of healthcare. We need to stop ignoring this subject and remind ourselves that for every minute we sit quiet and do nothing, thousands become victims of the failing system.

Ladies and gentlemen, look at the healthcare in Nigeria. We are clearly not on the path of betterment as you can see. Until one of your beloved becomes a victim, you might not realize how serious the situation is and that we need a better and responsible government beyond *“e go better”.*

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