

# Ameyo Adadevoh

Physician and endocrinologist who was instrumental in containing the Ebola epidemic in Nigeria

**Ameyo Stella Adadevoh, endocrinologist (b 1956; q 1980 University of Lagos College of Medicine), died from Ebola virus disease on 19 August 2014.**

On 20 October 2014, the World Health Organization declared Nigeria free of Ebola. Nigeria witnessed just 20 cases of the disease, including eight deaths. As in the rest of west Africa, the death toll was high among healthcare workers, and it included Ameyo Adadevoh—one of the doctors who treated the country's index case of Ebola.

In a long article on its website, WHO praised the many public officials whose hard work ensured that this devastating disease did not affect Nigeria as badly as neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia.<sup>1</sup> Although Adadevoh's name was not mentioned in the report, she has been widely credited with ensuring that the disease was contained in the sprawling city of Lagos.

Jeffrey Hawkins, the US consul general in Nigeria, said at the beginning of the outbreak in July: "The last thing anyone in the world wants to hear is the two words 'Ebola' and 'Lagos' in the same sentence," as it conjures up images of an "apocalyptic urban outbreak."

At the end of July 2014 Adadevoh was the lead physician and endocrinologist at the First Consultant Medical Centre in Lagos when Patrick Sawyer was admitted with what looked like malaria. Sawyer, a Liberian-American lawyer, had travelled to Nigeria from Liberia to attend a conference when he collapsed at the airport. Ordinarily he would have been seen at a government hospital, but a strike by medical staff meant they were closed. He came to First Consultant, which was a private hospital.

Adadevoh saw Sawyer the day after his admission. She suspected he might have Ebola—although he denied that he had been in contact with anyone infected with the virus. She contacted the Nigerian Ministry of Health and tried to create an isolation area in the hospital, despite having no protective equipment. This was not the first time that Adadevoh spotted the beginnings of an epidemic—in 2012 she was the first in Nigeria to treat a patient with the H1N1 virus, and duly alerted the authorities.

Sawyer was desperate to be discharged, and he put a lot of pressure on Adadevoh, with the Liberian ambassador to Nigeria accusing the hospital of kidnapping. But Adadevoh—a formidable doctor who was known among colleagues as the "first lady" of the hospital—would not bow to his



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demands, realising the implications of letting a patient with suspected Ebola infection into the community.

Despite being one of Nigeria's better hospitals, the First Consultant was not equipped to deal with the virus. The hospital had no personal protection equipment, and for the first 48 hours Sawyer was not treated as an infection risk. Once Ebola was suspected, Adadevoh and her staff were forced to improvise, putting a wooden barrier outside Sawyer's door. Staff did not know how to treat patients with Ebola, so Adadevoh went online to download information to distribute to doctors and nurses. She knew that isolation was the best place for her patient, but this was not available.

Sawyer died on 25 July, and Adadevoh was diagnosed as having the disease a few weeks later. Her care was rudimentary, and her family called a press conference urging the US government to send samples of the experimental drug ZMapp to treat her.

Adadevoh was born in Lagos to Babatunde Kwaku Adadevoh, a physician and former vice chancellor of the University of Lagos, and Deborah Regina McIntosh, both scions of Nigerian nationalist families. Adadevoh was the great granddaughter of Herbert Macaulay, considered

by many to be one of the founders of Nigerian nationalism. Her mother was a descendant of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria's first president.

## Loyal to her country

Adadevoh spent most of her childhood in Lagos, apart from two years in Massachusetts while her father undertook a fellowship at Harvard University. She studied medicine at the University of Lagos College of Medicine, and in 1983 her career began with a residency at Lagos University Teaching Hospital. She performed house jobs at the hospital until 1988. In 1991 she became a consultant at Lagos University Teaching Hospital, and from 1991 to 1993 she undertook a fellowship in endocrinology at Hammersmith Hospital in London. In 1986 she married Afolabi Emmanuel Cardoso, and the couple had one son.

After returning to Nigeria Adadevoh worked at the First Consultant Hospital for 21 years, eventually becoming lead physician. Although this meant she did not have to treat patients, she enjoyed being a hands-on doctor—even taking calls from patients when visiting relatives abroad.

She paid for her patients' medication if they could not afford to do so, and conducted home visits in her own time. She was a committed Christian but was sensitive to all faiths and would ensure that patients who were unable to attend religious services while in hospital could continue to practise their faiths.

Adadevoh was a patriot and ignored her siblings' pleas to leave and work in the relative comfort of the US or Europe.

"It's so painful that the health system she dedicated her life to was the one that killed her," says her niece, Niniola Soley.

Her strong character meant that she was perhaps one of the few who would have been able to withstand the pressure of those first few days of the Ebola crisis. In a tribute, Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, chairman of Nigeria's National Human Rights Commission and a longstanding patient, says the consequences would have been "unfathomable" if Patrick Sawyer had been initially sent to a general hospital.<sup>2</sup>

"It required someone with her capabilities and pedigree to be able to take the measures needed to firewall Mr Sawyer and limit the contamination that he would have inflicted," he wrote.

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References are in the version on thebmj.com.

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● ANALYSIS, p 15

**William Fowler Felton**



**Former consultant venereologist Royal Sussex County Hospital and St Thomas' Hospital (b 1918; q Cambridge/London 1941; MA, DPH, DIH), d 30 August 2014.**

William Fowler Felton ("Bill") was the doctor we would all like to have been. Parachuted into Greece with the Special Operations Executive in 1943, his service was recognised by the award of Knight of the Royal Order of George I of Hellenes (with swords). A postwar stint as medical officer at Sellafield was followed as managing director of major British companies, including Ronuk Polishes and Hallmark Cards. Bill retrained as a venereologist in 1969, and his abiding interest in gonorrhoea resulted in definitive publications on its transmission. He was Master of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters and an enthusiastic sailor, beagler, and mountaineer. He leaves Felicity (Fizzy), his wife of 69 years; five children; and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

**David Barlow**

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**Robert Miles Frankel**



**Former general practitioner (b 1944; q 1967), d 4 November 2014.**

Robert Miles Frankel did his house jobs at Poplar Hospital for Accidents in London's Docklands, an area he always declared was the best training ground he could have hoped for. Having spent time in Newfoundland, Paris, and Papua New Guinea, in 1973 he acquired a Georgian property in rural north County Cork,

Ireland, and set up as a singlehanded general practitioner in the village of Doneraile, where he worked until he retired in 2011. He spent much time on the farm attached to the house and was introduced to horses by his current partner, Emer Ramsden. Miles was laid low by severe sarcoidosis in the mid 90s and subsequently developed both rectal and urothelial carcinomas in the 90s. The bladder cancer metastasised in 2012, but he outlived his prognosis and remained relatively well and active. He leaves Emer and Frances; four sons; his brother; six grandchildren; and extended family.

**Conor Ramsden**

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**Cyril William Holmes Havard**



**Emeritus consultant endocrinologist Royal Free Hospital, London (b 1925; q Oxford/Barts 1952; MA, DM Oxon, FRCP Lond), died from septicæmia secondary to subacute bacterial endocarditis on 11 November 2014.**

Cyril William Holmes Havard ("Bill") was the clinical tutor at Barts before consultant appointments at the Royal Free and Royal Northern hospitals. He wrote numerous standard textbooks, was editor of *Black's Medical Dictionary*, sat on the editorial board of *Hospital Medicine*, and was vice dean of the Royal Free Medical School. He was chairman of the European Thyroid Club and in charge of the endocrine clinic at the Royal Free. While at the Royal Northern, he directed the clinical pharmacology unit from 1966 to 1990. He used to examine for the University of London and the Royal College of Physicians and was a college censor from 1983 to 1985. Bill leaves four children; a stepson; and eight grandchildren.

**John Havard**

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**Rodney Lloyd Herbert**



**General practitioner Chingford (b 1940; q Leeds 1963), died from pulmonary fibrosis on 30 September 2014.**

Rodney Lloyd Herbert was a founder member of the North East London Accident Unit and the Resuscitation Council UK, gave emergency medical assistance at thousands of road traffic crashes, and attended many serious disasters (the Moorgate tube accident and the Marchioness pleasure boat disaster, for example). Over the years he taught at Whipps Cross Hospital and at his clinic. He lectured internationally on immediate care schemes, wrote numerous articles, and was involved in the making of a film of emergency medicine that won a silver award. A regular medical attendant at the London Marathon, in 1990 Rodney Herbert saved a man's life after he had a heart attack just yards from the finish line. He leaves his wife, Linda; and three children.

**Daryl Herbert**

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**James Douglas Hunter**

**Consultant anaesthetist (b 1926; q Marischal College, Aberdeen, 1949; FRCA), d 27 November 2014.**

James Douglas Hunter served as a houseman at Stracathro Hospital, Angus, for six months before being called to national service. He joined the medical wing of the Royal Air Force and was based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. He moved to Horncastle in 1953, working as an assistant GP, and then



held a similar post in Stoke on Trent. Having returned to hospital medicine at Lincoln County Hospital, he specialised in anaesthetics. In 1960 he was appointed as senior registrar at Newcastle General Hospital and then consultant in anaesthetics in 1964. Having been promoted to deputy head of anaesthetics in 1980 and head of department in 1984, he retired in 1988. He enjoyed a long and quiet retirement and leaves a widow, two children, and five grandchildren.

**Elaine Jackson**

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**Ronald Charles King**



**Consultant physician and postgraduate dean for South East Thames Region (b 1924; q St Bartholomew's Hospital 1947; MD, FRCP), died from Alzheimer's disease on 4 October 2014.**

As an instructor at the University Hospital, Ann Arbor, USA, Ronald Charles King ("Ronnie") was present when a flexible glass gastroscope was first used to visualise the interior of the duodenum. Appointed a consultant in general medicine at the Kent and Sussex Hospital, Tunbridge Wells, he founded an intensive care unit and the postgraduate centre. Later he became involved in local, regional, and college health management. He was appointed postgraduate dean for the Southeast Thames Region, assistant director of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, and helped create the Joint Centre for Educational Research and Development in Medicine. Ronnie believed that the appropriate introduction of humour softened the more serious side of medicine. He leaves his wife, four children, 12 grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

**David King**

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