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Usifoh assures pharmacists of all-inclusive administration - As he takes over PSN leadership

By Temitope Obayendo

The newly elected President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Prof. Cyril Usifoh, has pledged to run an all-inclusive administration that will leave no pharmacist behind, as he takes over the leadership mantle from Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa. Usifoh gave the assurance at the official handover ceremony, held at the PSN National

Secretariat, Anthony Village, Lagos, recently. The PSN helmsman has also urged pharmacists whose candidates did not emerge as president to bury the hatchet and come on board to work together with him and his team for the progress of the Society. Presenting the handover notes to Usifo, Ohuabunwa said he was delighted to have an ideal

pharmacist as his successor, stressing that he was eager to allow the new president commence his administration without any obstruction. He appreciated God for enabling him to complete his tenure successfully, noting that while he might not have achieved all his objectives for the profession, he and his team

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L - R: Executive Director, Pharma Sales & Marketing, May & Baker Plc, Valentine Okelu; Head of Osworth Business/COO, Ngozi Chukelu; MD/CEO, Pharm. Patrick Ajah; and Head of Marketing, Obinna Emeribe at the 94th PSN Conference held in Port Harcourt.

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PHARM. LAWRENCE EKHATOR

Pharmacist Lawrence Osaretin Ekhator, current chairman of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Lagos State Branch, was born into the family of Mr Robert Ighitu Ekhator and Mrs Rachael Amen Ekhator on 26 November 1973 in Lagos. He is an indigene of Uhumwonde Local Government Area of Edo State.

Ekhator attended International Women Society (IWS) Day Nursery School, from 1976 to 1978; then Corona School, Gbagada, from 1978 to 1984. He had a brief stint at Igbobi College, Yaba, from 1984 to 1985, after which he proceeded to the Federal Government College, Warri, from 1985 to 1990.

He soon gained admission to study Pharmacy at the University of Benin (UNIBEN) in 1992 and obtained his B.Pharm in 1997. He also obtained a master's degree in Clinical Pharmacy and Biopharmacy from the University of Lagos, in 2002.

Ekhator had his internship at the renowned Commercial Medicines Stores, Yaba and Lagos Island, where his interest in community practice was kindled. Thereafter, he proceeded to observe his mandatory one year National Youth Service at the General Hospital, Offa, in Kwara State.

He started his career as a fully licensed pharmacist as a medical representative with Wyeth/Delpitano Pharmaceuticals from 2000 to 2007. He was involved in the marketing of the Wyeth range of pharmaceuticals and the nutrition segment of the company. Wyeth Nutrition, being operated then by I-Japt International Company Limited, was the sole marketer of the SMA range of infant formula and was actively involved in the introduction and marketing of SMA Progress into the Nigerian market, as the number one follow up milk for weaning infants.

He also had a stint as product manager with Mega Lifesciences and Royale Resources Limited, before moving fully into community practice in 2008. He has been the superintendent pharmacist of Robson Pharmaceuticals Limited, in Bariga, Lagos State, since then.

Ekhator is an active member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) and the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), as well as other professional bodies.

He is also a pharmaceutical inspector of the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) and has served in various capacities at the zonal, state and national levels of the ACPN. He was a secretary of the Gbagada Zone of the ACPN, before becoming state assistant secretary, then secretary and vice-chairman and then national assistant secretary.

He has also served in various committees of the ACPN and PSN at various times.

Ekhator, a merit award winner of the Lagos State PSN is happily married to Mrs Blessing Ekhator and the marriage is blessed with children.



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Inspiration

The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand. - **Vince Lombardi**

"Concentration of effort and the habit of working with a definite chief aim are two of the essential factors in success which are always found together. One leads to the other." - **Napoleon Hill**

"Success is simple. Do what's right, the right way, at the right time. - **Arnold H. Glasow**

Desire is the key to motivation, but it is determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek. - **Mario Andretti**

"Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make

mistakes, but they don't quit." - **Conrad Hilton**

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success. - **Swami Vivekananda**

"Aim for success, not perfection. Never give up your right to be wrong, because then you will lose the ability to learn new things and move forward with your life. - **David M. Burns**

Think twice before you speak, because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure in the mind of another. - **Napoleon Hill**

A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him. - **David Brinkley**

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There are very good reasons why the recent elections of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) which heralded its new executive committee have continued to attract commendations from stakeholders and observers within the pharmaceutical landscape in Nigeria and beyond. The general conduct reflected such good statesmanship and camaraderie that reinforce the fact that pharmacists, as men of honour, will always join hands in the pursuit and preservation of the lofty ideals democracy, good governance and collective progress.

The immediate past President of the apex pharmaceutical body in Nigeria, Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, had during the Gala and Award Night that signalled the end of the just concluded 95th annual conference of the Society in Port Harcourt, stated that the PSN is a body worthy of emulation, going by the peaceful and transparent way it handled the elections. According to him, even the Nigerian government can learn a few lessons from the Society in conducting credible elections.

We agree with him. All through the electioneering process, till the time the votes were cast, there were no cases of rancour, campaigns of calumny, inducement of voters or any other unbecoming conduct. Beyond Mazi's encouraging remarks, however, we believe that pharmacists, by their

PSN 2021 elections: Lessons in decorum and transparency

profound training, constructive comportments as well as notable antecedents in public office, have a lot to offer the Nigerian state, in building lasting institutions that will guarantee a stable, safe and prosperous society.

Right from the presidential debate organised by *Pharmanews* and the PSN for the candidates to acquaint the public with their manifestoes and, perhaps, leadership philosophies, the spirit of selflessness and understanding that the four candidates exhibited showed that their individual ambitions were for the greater good of the pharmaceutical family in Nigeria. The passion and commitment that the candidates put into their individual campaigns also typified the unflinching belief they have in the instrumentality of the PSN's pride of place in offering the right leadership to the Nigerian health sector.

However, it must be noted that the quantum of time, money and other resources channelled into the campaign processes was superfluous. This could discourage potential candidates

in future elections, who might not have the wherewithal for such ostentation. The PSN should find a way to institutionalise the philosophy of moderation in campaign spending, in order to encourage more pharmacists to aspire to its leadership positions.

Moreover, as it had been for almost every other election in the history of the Society, there was no female among the last election candidates. It is our view that, as a progressive Society that is abreast of universal best practice and has competent and qualified professionals of both genders, the PSN should encourage gender balance in its internal politics by encouraging more women to aspire to its highest office. It is bewildering that, since the inception of the Society in 1947, only one woman – Pharm. (Lady) Eme Ufot Ekaette – has emerged president (1997-2000). We expect a change of narrative in the subsequent elections.

As we join all Nigerian pharmacists to congratulate Professor Usifoh on his momentous victory, we call on the three other candidates to sustain their exemplary spirit of comradeship by supporting

the new leadership with their wealth of experience and expertise. More importantly, we urge the new president to strategically begin to implement his campaign promises.

There is no doubt that Mazi Oluabunwa recorded a number of notable achievements while in office. Efforts must be made to sustain and build on these to take the pharmacy profession to greater heights. Additionally, Prof. Usifoh must make good his promise of building a united and progressive pharmacy family, where pharmacists are increasingly relevant, respected and adequately remunerated for their invaluable contributions; as well as networking with other members of the healthcare team and other professionals for the growth and development of the pharmacy profession in Nigeria.

Moreover, the president must marshal his executive team and other relevant stakeholders towards getting assent to the Pharmacy Bill, institutionalising the PharmD programme across pharmacy schools, actualising the consultant cadre agenda, resolving the chaotic drug distribution debacle, strengthening relationships with NAFDAC, PCN and other relevant stakeholders, improving the visibility of pharmacists, advancing the Pharmacy Tower project and all other business concerns of PSN, as well as providing purpose-driven leadership for all technical and interest groups of the Society.

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The question of purpose

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

Any person who wants to live a successful life must settle the question of purpose of life. The first and most important question is, what is God's purpose for my life? What is it that God created me for? What does God want me to do for Him with my life? What is His assignment for me?

These are fundamental questions that must be clearly answered by every person created by God. And the answers to them must be right for anyone who aspires to live a successful life.

These questions come naturally to everyone and how they are answered determines the direction and destiny of each individual. God is never vague about His purpose for anyone's life. Instead, He has always been eager to show people why they were created.

God has a purpose for everyone. To be happy and fulfilled, the onus is on each of us to seek out that purpose in order to actualise it. God is extremely interested

in your discovery of His purpose for your life. He will gladly let you know this purpose, if you will ask Him. He says in Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV), **"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."**

God is ready to instruct and direct you if you are obedient. Isaiah 30:21 (NKJV) says, **"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."** Also, in Acts 9:6 (NKJV), Paul of Tarsus asked Jesus, **"Lord, what do you want me to do?"**

God will reward or pay only for the services He has ordered. That means that however hard one works, as long as it is outside the will and plan of God, the service doesn't count. In Deuteronomy 28:12, God promised to bless the works of our hands. This implies the works which He has commissioned.

The efforts and resources invested in our services shall be tested. 1 Corinthians 3:15 says, **"Each one's work will become clear, for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."**

As a believer, you are saved but a lot of your services may

be wasted because they are not rewarded. No sensible individual would like to do useless work but that is what those working outside God's will are unknowingly doing.

You go about life with untapped potentials when you are not sure of God's purpose for your life. You move from one type of business to the other but there is no success or fulfilment. You move from one location to the other, thinking that location is your problem.

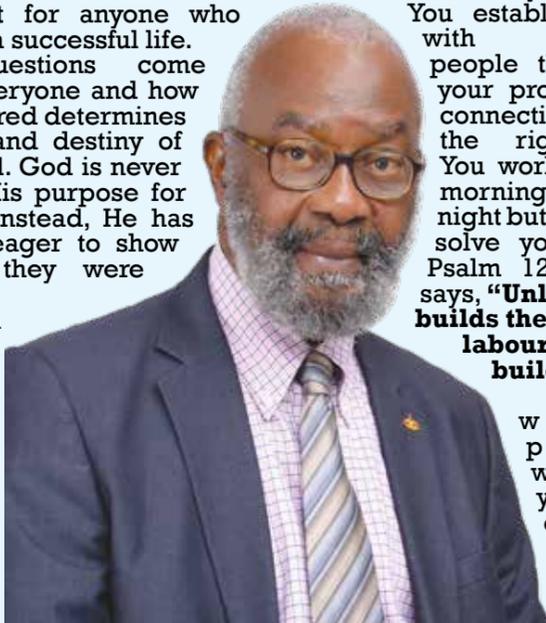
You establish contacts with influential people thinking that your problem is not connecting with the right people. You work from early morning to late in the night but that does not solve your problem. Psalm 127:1a (NKJV) says, **"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it."**

Living without purpose will make you jealous of other people. You envy others who are flourishing in their God-given assignments and want to be like them. The person who is in alignment with God's purpose does not look around to compare himself with others. He is busy with his own assignment and remains focused and committed. He is fulfilled and contented.

The big question is, have you discovered what you were born to do? Until you do that, you may constitute a nuisance to the society, a square peg in a round hole. You may make a lot of movement but no progress. You are not preparing to give account of your stewardship and yourself when this life is over. You will not be among those to whom Jesus will say, **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."** (Matthew 25:21).

It is important to treat discovery of purpose with a sense of seriousness and urgency because life is short. No one should live and die without fulfilling the purpose of God for his life. Such death could be said to be a bad one.

At the same time no one should die without completing God's assignment for his life. I love what Apostle Paul said towards the end of his life. In 2 Timothy 2:6-8 (NKJV), he said, **"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."**



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Working hard is never old school

By George O. Emetuche

“Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds.”

- Gordon B. Hinckley

Firstly, I congratulate the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria for the successful hosting of the 94th edition of the PSN conference in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was a great outing!

This December edition of my article is the last for the year. I thank God for the gift of life. May our careers, businesses and families continue to flourish. Amen.

This article will explore nuggets that will help salespeople and other professionals, no matter the industry or career path. It will prepare you for the New Year.

An interesting feedback

I wrote an article on 18 October, 2021, where I explored my daily motivation. In the Nuggets, I listed ten tips that lead to success. Number two on the list says, “The harder and smarter you work, the luckier you get; success and hard work are interwoven.”

I love constructive criticism; it expands knowledge. One reader of the article who belongs to one of our affiliate social media platforms in Enugu didn't agree with the Nugget assertion. Consequently, he wrote thus, “You don't need to work hard to be successful; rather, work smart and that's intelligence. Working HARD means struggling with life. Only few make it that way.”

He was constructive in his position, hence my decision to write this piece - to dig deeper into the topic: Working hard and working smart.

What I discovered

Let me tell you that 100 per cent of successful people I know work hard. They got to the top by working hard, with the right vision, mission, goals, and objectives. They applied the right strategies at the right places.

I have studied the lives of more than 100 very successful people and I must tell you that four attributes stand out in their lives:

1. They are visionary
2. They are strategic
3. They work hard
4. They are consistent

Show me a successful man who doesn't believe in working hard, and I will show you the most popular magician of the century! Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds; I totally agree with this thought.

In my upcoming book *Starting and Growing a Successful Business* I explored my concept of “The Big Ten.” One of the concepts there is Process.

The place of process

Process is like a chef in a five star hotel who knows the right ingredients for the right soup. He also knows the time to use each ingredient. The right process gets the right results.

Success in business is about process; it is a journey. There's no sudden successful entrepreneur! You must go to work if you truly want to succeed.

I woke up at 2:45 am to pen down this article and I finished it at 6:05 am. That's working hard. I must create it to bring it to life. There's no other way! That's process. If I didn't wake up to write it at that time, I might lose the inspiration to write this piece. Process is hard work. Working hard is following the precepts of process.

Tilling for gold

Gold is hidden beneath the soil. If you dig, you discover it. This is working hard and following a defined path to mining gold. Tilling of the ground to discover gold is the “working hard” aspect of success. There should be process before success. No real success stands

alone; it must follow a path.

As a professional, or someone trying to start a business, don't allow anyone deceive you to believe that you don't need to work hard; that you only need to work smart. Your smart work must stand on a strong foundation of planning, executing and knowing the process that gets things done. What is working smart without believing in working hard? I need a superior explanation please!

What I think

You see, I have issues when folks use the line: “I don't work hard, I work smart.”

What I have found out is that people who say this can't even dissect the meaning of the sentence. They simply can't explain the statement. The statement is vague!

I believe that you can't get to the top when you don't know how to climb. You must follow a means to get to the top. Working smart without believing in working hard is like telling someone to get to the top without using a ladder, an elevator or

any means to the top.

Real success is a journey; it has a foundation

Success cannot stand alone. It is a journey that takes off from somewhere. It follows a defined path. Real success takes sweat. It takes thinking, planning, executing and monitoring.

People who promote “I don't work hard, I work smart” see working hard as not being smart. Are you kidding me? How on earth would someone discount working hard on his path to success? Success and working hard are cousins! (Continues next edition)

George O. Emetuche, CES, MNIMN, is a Brian Tracy endorsed bestselling author, accredited training consultant, life coach, sales and marketing expert.

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Narcoterrorism in the Nigerian street context

The activities of illicit drug peddlers on Nigerian streets should be a matter of serious concern to our government, not only at the local level but also at the federal level. One must commend the tireless efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) which has taken the fight against illicit drug peddlers to almost every nook and cranny of the country.

According to Wikipedia, "Narcoterrorism, in its original context, is understood to refer to the attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of a government or a society through violence and intimidation, and to hinder the enforcement of anti-drug laws by the systematic threat or use of such violence."

In the city of Lagos, Nigeria, there are many streets that have become notorious for drug peddling and violence. These streets are populated by young men and women who consume hard drugs, especially marijuana, *Colorado*, *ice* and *SK*. The truth is that these young people are emboldened by the fact that the communities

in which they live fear them because of their propensity to unleash mayhem at the slightest provocation.

Many of them argue that they are frustrated hustlers who no longer have any hope in the government. They believe that government has failed them and that the only way they can make a living is to peddle illicit drugs among their peers. Whenever there is a threat to their business from government quarters, they usually respond with other acts of violence to serve as a warning to the authorities to desist from harassing them.

On some of these Lagos streets, there are covert smoking cells where people gather to smoke marijuana in groups. These groups are usually united and can fight a common cause together. Some of the cases of rape, as well as phone and bag snatching that take place on the streets, are actually responses from these groups. They are always trying to make a statement with their actions.

One of the reasons the concept of narcoterrorism has become complicated is that we often look at it from a higher

perspective, thinking that only the big and international drug cartels pose the major threats. Unfortunately,

with rising unemployment, many youths have ventured into the business of drug peddling in miniature scales. The fact that they are itinerant in their *modus operandi* should bother any right thinking government. Many undergraduates on Nigerian campuses peddle marijuana and other illicit substances and are known to be the best friends to members of different campus confraternities. There is no cult killing in Nigeria that is not connected to the consumption of one hard drug or the other.

It is therefore pertinent to note that, in deconstructing the behavioural psychology of young drug users, one must put into consideration their social and, if possible, educational status. Most Nigerian undergraduates easily find themselves in the vicious mix of drug-related activities, largely because some of them have not fully jettisoned the excesses that come with adolescence.

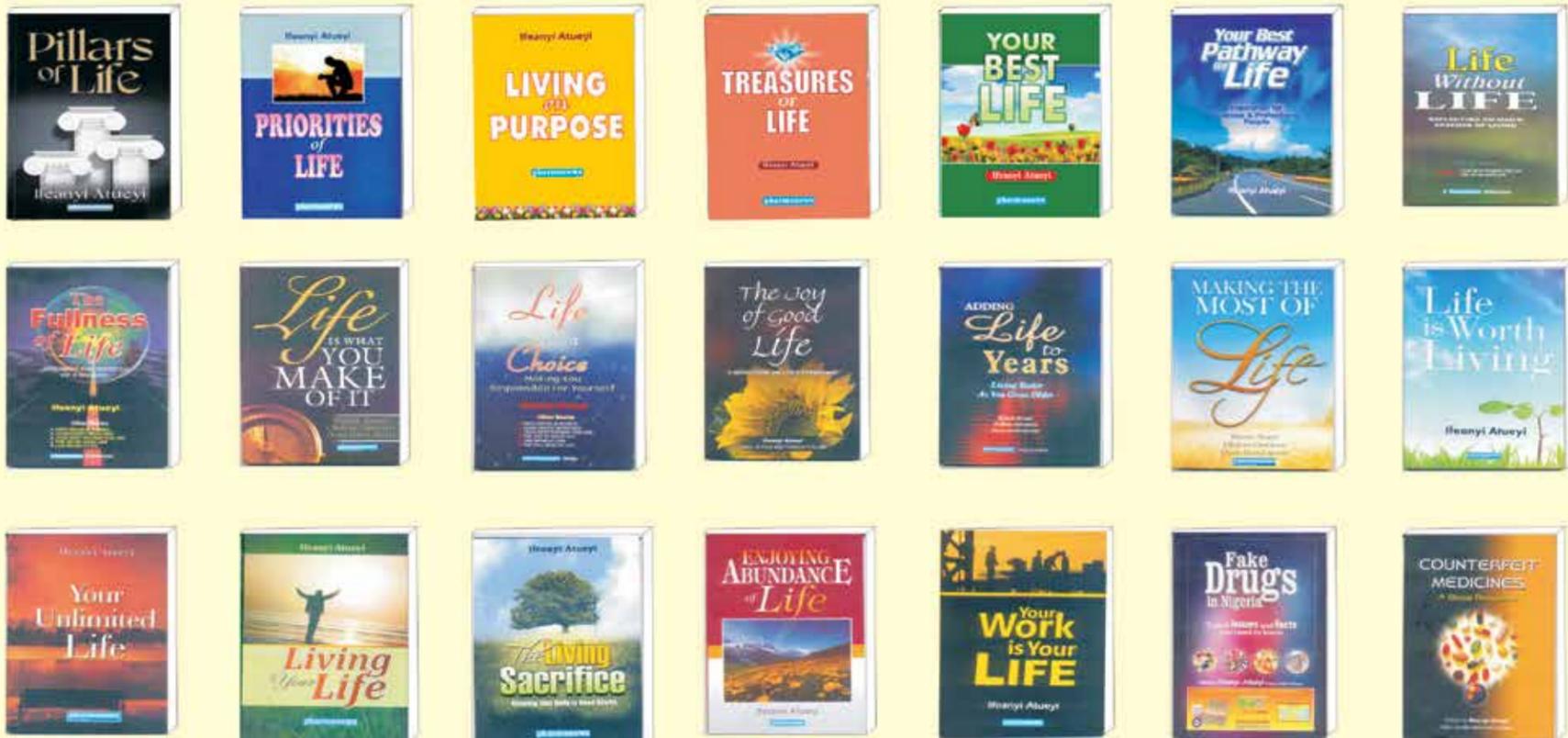
They are usually hyper-curious and always willing to explore new realities, not minding the consequences. Peer pressure also plays a very significant role in shaping the behaviour

of these young drug users who eventually grow into adults and constitute a serious menace to the society.

As stated earlier, most of the cases of street theft, rape and snatching of phones, purses and handbags have their origins in the minds of young people who are high on hard drugs, such as marijuana and other street-side narcotics. And while the war against drug abuse at this level concerns all levels of government, the greater onus lies on the local government which deals directly with the grassroots. In Lagos, the LCDA (Local Council Development Authority) system has proven to be very effective in curbing and controlling the excesses of drug peddlers and their customers.

Being that the LCDA is usually made up of landlords and their tenants, so many criminal activities have been brought to an end through the efforts and strategies put in place by some LCDAs. In many of these communities, landlords have risen to the occasion in the fight against drug peddling because they have discovered that their own children are at risk of being influenced. In fact, some of them have been shocked to find out that their wards are already drug addicts and so, they have joined the fight against the menace of street drug peddling.

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The importance of antioxidants to health

By Chima Ejimofor



The process of oxidation in the human body damages cell membranes and other structures, including cellular proteins, lipids and DNA. When oxygen is metabolised, it creates unstable molecules called “free radicals”, which steal electrons from other molecules, causing damage to DNA and other cells.

The body can cope with some free radicals and needs them to function effectively. However, the damage caused by an overload of free radicals over time (oxidative stress), may become irreversible and lead to certain diseases (including heart and liver disease) and some cancers (such as oral, oesophageal, stomach and bowel cancers).

Oxidation can be accelerated by stress, cigarette smoking, alcohol, sunlight, pollution and other factors.

Antioxidants and free radicals

Antioxidants are found in certain foods and may prevent or slow down some of the damage caused by free radicals by neutralising them. These include the nutrient antioxidants, vitamins A, C and E, and the minerals copper, zinc and selenium.

Other dietary food compounds, such as the phytochemicals in plants, are believed to have greater antioxidant effects than vitamins or minerals. These are called the non-nutrient antioxidants and include phytochemicals (such as lycopenes in tomatoes and anthocyanins found in cranberries). These plant-based antioxidants are a kind of phytonutrient and called exogenous source.

Antioxidants are called “free radical scavengers”. They mop up or fight free radicals in the body. Free radicals are also called reactive oxygen species (ROS). Antioxidants can be sourced naturally in brightly coloured fruits like pomegranates, pineapple etc. or through nutritional supplements. The body also produces some antioxidants, such as glutathione, lipoic acid, bilirubin, ferritin, superoxide dismutase, catalase, glutathione peroxidase, among others. These are called endogenous antioxidants.

Factors that increase the production of free radicals in the body can be internal, such as Inflammation; or external, for example, pollution, UV rays exposure, cigarette smoke, car and industrial fumes. Other factors which predispose us to oxidative stress include:

- High fat diets
- Excessive red meat
- High levels of stress (busy executives)
- Chemicals and preservatives in food
- Processed and fast foods
- Alcohol
- Dairy products
- Artificially ripened fruits
- White flour and pastry products
- Water pollution
- Toxic wastes
- Refined Sugar

Some conditions caused by free radicals include:

- Deterioration of the eye lens, which contributes to vision loss.
- Inflammation of the joints (arthritis).
- Damage to nerve cells in the brain, which contributes to conditions such as Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s disease.
- Acceleration of the ageing process.
- Increased risk of coronary heart disease, since free radicals encourage low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol to stick to artery walls.
- Certain cancers triggered by damaged cell DNA.

The benefits of taking antioxidants, especially through organic nutritional

- Improves nervous system functioning
- Have anti-aging effects
- Supports the immune system and improves defence power of the body
- Protects the liver
- Reduces obesity
- Maintains healthy vision
- Offers protection against digestive disorders
- Improves quality of sleep
- Supports the respiratory system.



Argi Plus, just to mention a few.

References:

Google Health Lecture by Adebayo Ijaoba

About the Author

Mrs Chima Ejimofor is the Lead Partner of Infinite Health Consult, and is available for the purchase of these Nutritional Supplements, Health Talks and Wellness Seminars. She is based in Lagos, Nigeria. Telephone/WhatsApp: 07033179632, email: infinitehealthconsult@gmail.com

supplements include the following:

Proper nutrition at cellular level. The WHO recommends five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Most people today cannot do this).

- Supports kidney function
- Maintains good dental health
- Improves reproductive function

Excellent nutritional supplements that can be recommended include the following products, all from the stable of the Aloe Vera Company. These are Aloe Vera Gel, Berry Nectar, Bits n Peaches, Pomesteen Power, Aloe Blossom Tea, SuperGreens, Daily, Ginchia, iVision, Vitolize Men and Women, Garlic Thyme, Immublend, Lycium Plus, Infinite Complex, Absorbent C and

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Vincent Njar: Foremost cancer cure specialist and entrepreneur

By Ola Aboderin

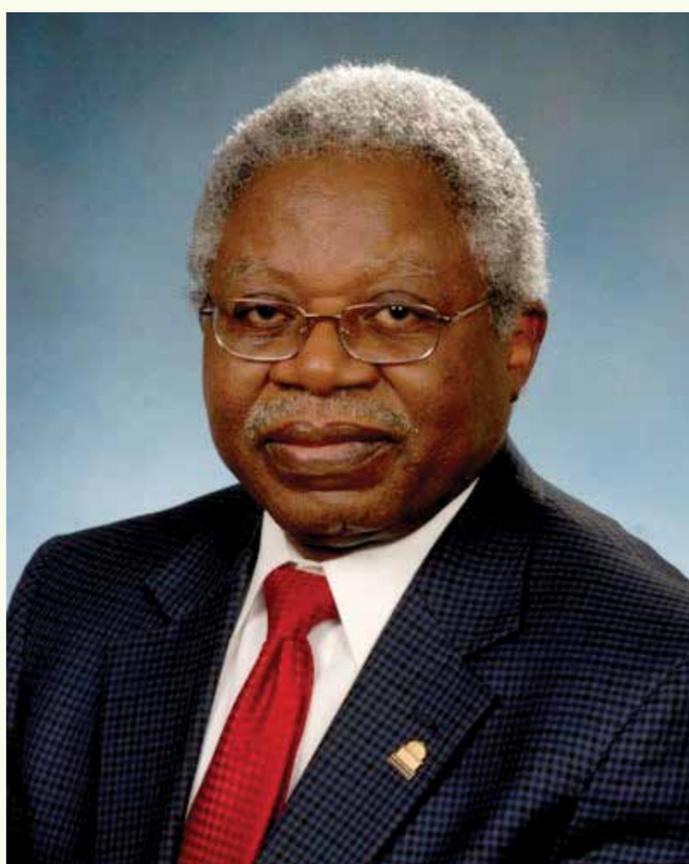
In 1999, Distinguished Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacology, Vincent Njar, made a decision that might have seemed purely normal for an avid researcher. He had recently been made professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Ibadan (1996). However, following several research visits from 1996 to 1998, which saw him collaborating with the late internationally renowned breast and prostate cancer researcher, Dr Angela Brodie, he decided to join her fully at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM), in Baltimore, USA. Not only has that decision paved way for him to become one of the most successful medicinal chemists and oncopharmacologists but it has also positioned him to give the world a potential definitive cure for cancer.

Brodie was a British biochemist, who had pioneered development of steroidal aromatase inhibitors in breast cancer research. Njar's partnership with her in developing the inhibitors bolstered his interest in the rational discovery and development of small molecules as anti-cancer agents. Consequently, over the years, he has made outstanding discoveries in the development of novel small molecules with potential for the treatments of a variety of cancers, especially breast, prostate and pancreatic cancers. He invented novel reactions that led to the synthesis novel inhibitors of all-trans retinoic acid (ATRA) metabolism enzyme (CYP26). These inhibitors are also referred to as retinoic acid metabolism blocking agents (RAMBAs). Some of his compounds are by far the most potent RAMBAs known.

Hopes well founded

Indeed, there are very strong reasons for the widespread belief that finding a cure for cancer lies in Njar's works. As earlier noted, his most significant discoveries include retinoic acid metabolism blocking agents (RAMBAs), or novel retinamides (NRs), that inhibit the growth of breast and prostate cancer cells and tumours. The NRs he discovered cause degradation of mitogen-activated protein (MAP) kinase-interacting kinases (Mnk1 and 2), which can promote tumour progression.

Njar also has worked on the design, discovery, and clinical translation of Galeterone, a novel CYP17 inhibitor/androgen receptor degrading agent for the treatment of cancer. Galeterone was licensed by Tokai Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and advanced to Phase 3 clinical trials showing dramatic activity in men with hormone refractory metastatic prostate cancer. Because of its clinical efficacy, Galeterone and subsequent variants continue to be developed as novel therapeutics for prostate and pancreatic cancers.



Prof. Vincent Njar

Njar said of his on-going research effort: "I am relentlessly pursuing the development of Galeterone technology toward commercial success and medical impact. For example, two clinical trials were initiated just this year, based on recent preclinical studies from my lab. Specifically, we demonstrated that Galeterone impedes pancreatic cancer cell migration, invasion, and proliferation and inhibits tumour growth in mice."

Consummate academic and entrepreneur

Another engagement that Njar finds gratifying is passing on the knowledge and experience he has garnered over the years to other potential world-changers. According to him, "Through collaboration with Dr Brodie, I was able to acquire astute knowledge of cancer biology and oncopharmacology. This enabled me to train 11 PhDs in molecular medicine/life sciences, many postdoctoral fellows, and research associates who have all proceeded to reputable positions in academia, industry, and government."

Aside from being professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacology, Njar also heads the Medicinal Chemistry Section of the Centre for Biomolecular Therapeutics (CBT) at UMSOM. He has published over 120 articles, reviews and book chapters and is the lead inventor on over 50 issued patents and pending patent applications. He actively

participates in several drug discovery and development grant review committees nationally and internationally. His research is currently supported by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

But perhaps what gives Njar the greatest joy is being an entrepreneurial scientist, who is actively making a difference in people's lives with his researches and inventions. During a recent presentation, he explained why he chose to combine entrepreneurship with his academic acumen. He said, "In drug development, I could be called academic, but some drug discovery efforts are anything but academic. Academic's synonym is pedantic. Academic means it doesn't matter...I want to do things that matter. I certainly don't want to be associated with the term pedantic...When somebody is called an academic, it should mean that it does matter."

To back up his words with actions, Njar has taken his research discoveries a step further by founding two companies over the years that have helped him to direct the early development of his inventions and technologies. He first founded Terpene Pharmaceuticals, LLC. Thereafter, in 2018, he co-founded Isoprene Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (IPI), an early-stage small molecule oncology company developing oral therapeutics for triple negative breast cancer and other cancers. IPI was recently awarded a two-year, approximately \$2 million Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for a translational project to develop a novel therapeutic for triple negative breast cancer.

As the company's chief executive officer, Njar is focused on oncology applications of the NRs developed in his laboratory. He reveals what has made him a successful entrepreneur so far: "Being an entrepreneur means to undertake a high-risk, high-reward venture and be fearless in the process. Over the years, I have realised that entrepreneurship

means doing, doing, doing until something useful or impactful gets made. I believe in what I am doing, and I am not afraid to ask for help. Being a successful entrepreneur requires thorough planning, creativity, and hard work."

Career path and recognitions

Prof. Njar obtained B. Sc. in Chemistry at University of Ibadan in 1976 and went on to obtain a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in 1980 from University College London/University of London (UK). Following two years of postdoctoral research at Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, Shrewsbury, Mass. (USA), he joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) as Lecturer II. He was promoted through the ranks and became professor of Organic Chemistry in 1996.

During his tenure at University of Ibadan, he was visiting Professor at several institutions, including: Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA (1988, 1989, 1992 and 1993); Universite de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada (1990); University of Southampton, Southampton, UK (1991, 1992 and 1995); and University of Saarland, Saarbruecken, Germany (1994-1995). He joined the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1999.

Njar has been severally honoured for his extraordinary contributions to cancer research, which have enhanced cancer patients' care and survival. Early this year, he was made a distinguished professor, which represents the highest appointment bestowed on a faculty member at University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), recognising excellence as well as impact and significant contribution to the nominee's field.

His latest honour was being named, UMBs 2021 David J. Ramsay Entrepreneur of the Year – for his novel discoveries on possible cures for cancer. While introducing him for the award presentation, Albert Reece, executive vice president for medical affairs, UMB, and dean, UMSOM, said of Njar: "Dr Njar is an entrepreneur par excellence. First and foremost, he is an outstanding scientist. He has more than \$2½ million of extramural research funding active at the present time. For his profound and creative research, and his collaborative and congenial style of finding solutions, Dr. Njar is what I would describe as the epitome of what a biomedical entrepreneur should be."

Njar himself described the award as "very encouraging and has energised me to keep plugging on. I am optimistically cautious that my entrepreneurship will eventually produce at least one U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved anti-cancer drug for the benefit of mankind."

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TECHNOLOGY WITH PEACE OF MIND

Doing a background check the "write" way

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)

Every human, whether in business or not, loves to have value for his or her money. Regardless of the transaction involved, be it exchange of goods or service, people do all they can to ensure value is got.

For organisations generally, there is one fundamental objective beneath every employment - profitability. There is perhaps nothing as painful to any organisation or establishment as employing a new staff who is just not meeting up on all KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), after several months of being in the organisation. Worse still, there is a compulsion for resignation.

So, the questions I know many employers may want to ask are, how can I get to know so much about a new employee or a prospective one within a very short time frame? How do we know the rep that will do well in sales? How do we know the one that is resilient? How can you find out within a very short time an employee that has good organisational skills? etc.

It is no longer news that companies spend so much money to run background checks on candidates or prospective employees. This is wisdom. However, these results take a while before they are released, depending on the qualities desired in the new employee.

Graphological assessment is so unique in that it is fast, accurate and cheap. One uniqueness of graphology (handwriting analysis) is that it has the capacity to identify traits in the handwriting of people, which other psychological testing tools cannot reveal, within a few minutes.

Since the handwriting is like the graph of a persons's behaviour on

paper, there is a need therefore for employers - and especially the human resource managers - to pay attention to this tool, in order to have a robust recruitment process, in line with global standards. There is still what needs to be done before you employ that representative.

Having the right attitude to work is a lot different from a great aptitude. Such attitudinal issues, if not identified early enough, would still affect productivity eventually. The common mistake made is that employers assume that whoever has scored the highest in the aptitude test will naturally be the best salesperson.

In this edition, I will mention a couple of traits which can be found in the handwriting and their importance.

Reliability: This is one of such traits belonging to what is called success traits which many employers have selected as valuable to any establishment. The reliable person stands by his word, fulfills promises and finishes any task he starts. Such people are needed in any organisation.

Straight baseline indicates emotional restraint.

Slightly wavy indicate normal emotional flexibility.

Very wavy means emotions are out of control

There are a lot of ways of assessing reliability in the handwriting and for the benefit of readers of this column, a simple way of checking that is to examine the baseline of the handwriting sample of the prospective sales or medical representative with you. If the baseline is wavy or erratic, you have before you someone who

finds it so challenging to meet up with deadlines - for example, report deadlines. They have to go the extra mile to maintain focus and discipline. They get tired and discouraged easily too.

Whereas if the baseline of the writing is like "ruler writing" - that is, so straight in appearance - you have before you a perfectionist. The ideal here is for you to get a balance. This requires skill and some measure of training. It will be helpful to engage the services of a handwriting expert.

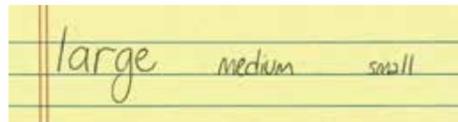
Please note that the handwriting sample that is acceptable for this analysis is the one written on an A4 paper, not the type with ruled lines.

Good social skills

One very important quality a sales or med rep should possess is good social skills. This has to do with relationship. You cannot talk about leadership, membership, followership - or even hardship - without talking about relationship. Some of the

most cerebral representatives still had to resign because they lacked this aspect of emotional intelligence.

If the handwriting sample has a right slant and is "large" in



appearance, similar to the pictorial illustration below, it shows someone who is very expressive and outgoing. Such people aren't likely to struggle initiating a conversation. They love duties that give them opportunities to move around than remain glued to one position.

Managers need this knowledge to deploy employees appropriately to various departments. Otherwise, there would be square pegs in round holes.

A handwriting sample that is very small in size, most times, is not typical of very successful sales people. It does not mean that they cannot work as medical or sales representatives at all; it only reveals that, in most cases, they are not likely to do with ease what the other reps with a big-sized handwriting and right slants will do effortlessly. All that ultimately affects efficiency at work, not just effectiveness.

We shall continue with other desirable qualities in the next edition; do not miss it. Always remember, if you must get it right, consider doing it the "write" way.

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Usifoh assures pharmacists of all-inclusive administration

continued from front page

had done their best.

Ohuabunwa urged the new president to uphold the Society's constitution in all his dealings, while also doing everything with godly reverence and a sense of duty to the profession.

He enthused: "I feel highly pleased and it doesn't happen often that you are happy to be succeeded. There is always this feeling that you should be in the lure of office, that you should stay one month or thereabout in office more. But for me there is nothing like that. I'm glad God granted me the grace to finish well.

"More importantly, when people succeed you, you are wondering if that is the best you could have. To be sincere, there were four gentlemen running the race, and any of them could be the president, but God in His infinite mercy has chosen whom I believe is the best among them all.

"For me, it gives me joy because I'm proud to say I'm succeeded by so and so, who already has cut for himself a niche in the field of Pharmacy,

which is the academia.

"My advice to him is to be even-handed, to show love, to follow the constitution and to trust God. He should do things out of fear of God and out of love for the profession. He shouldn't worry about who claps for him and who doesn't.

"There is a price for leadership because not everybody will support you. Even because of what you are doing well, some people are going to be opposed to you, just for being jealous. He should rise above that and he will be successful. He should use all the resources at his disposal."

In his response, Usifoh thanked God for the privilege to serve in such a capacity, saying that he would commence his administration with a retreat for NEC members to fine-tune strategies for their tenure.

He said: "It is the Lord's doing



Immediate Past President, PSN, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa (right) presenting the handover document to the new President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh, at the handing over ceremony, recently.

that I was elected and handing over has been done. It is actually a call to service. I have served in various capacities and I'm fortunate to have team members who are willing to serve.

"We are going to hit the ground running and I'm going to start with a retreat, to enable

me educate NEC members on how we are going to work and brainstorm on the blueprint of what we want to do.

"To me, we are all victors; we are going to work together as men of honour. It is a joint work, all of us will work together. It's a Pharmacy family."

Ohuabunwa, other stakeholders charge pharmacists to participate in policy making

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

To ensure that the pharmacy profession is not sidelined by decision-makers in Nigeria, pharmacists in the country have been charged to participate in national politics so as to influence formulation of favourable policies for the profession and the health sector, in general.

This was the thrust of the plenary session at the 2021 National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, recently.

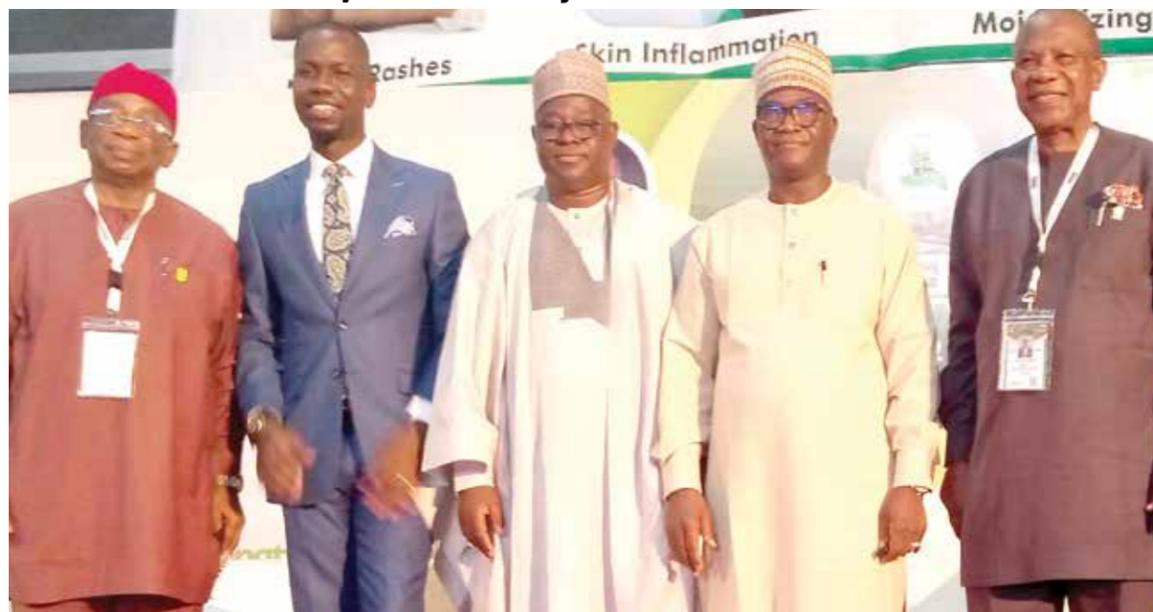
The session, which was chaired by former President of the PSN and Chief Executive Officer, Barata Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. U.N.O Uwaga, discussed the topic, "Strengthening Pharmacy Practice through Political Action".

Speaking on the topic, Uwaga noted that politics is relevant to every profession and especially the pharmacy profession, stressing that it is important for every pharmacist to join politics early enough, so that they can make significant impacts.

"Even if you don't have the resources to contest now, make sure you join a party and be a member," Uwaga said.

The immediate past President of PSN, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, had earlier pointed out that every profession must make itself relevant in any community it serves, adding that pharmacists in the country must make themselves relevant so that the profession can earn the recognition it deserves.

While Ohuabunwa urged all pharmacists across the country to continue to raise their voices



Ex-president of PSN and Chief Executive Officer, Barata Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. U. N. O Uwaga; member of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Hon. Enemi Alabo George, member of the National Assembly, Senator Sadiq Umar; S. A/Consultant to the Minister of Special Duties and Inter-government Affairs, George Akume; Pharm. Alliyu Zakariyu and immediate past president of PSN Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, during the plenary session at PSN Conference in Port Harcourt

for the profession, he noted that political power is relevant for any profession to get the needed recognition, stressing that pharmacists cannot afford to take the back seat in the political affairs of the country.

One of the speakers at the session, a member of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Hon. Enemi Alabo George, said it is disturbing to find people who ought to be in position of leadership abandoning it for the wrong people.

He added that, while he would have expected many pharmacists to be active players in the nation's politics, the reverse had been the case.

George, who is also the chairman, Rivers State House Committee on Appropriation,

stated that pharmacists have the power to influence decisions but are not utilising it. He averred that for pharmacists to influence policies that will favour the pharmacy profession, they must be part of the nation's politics.

The lawmaker said: "PSN should encourage members to join politics and should as well have a committee on politics. Pharmacists must be involved in the politics of the country to be able to influence policy. What pharmacists in Nigeria lack is action and interest. Like Plato said, one of the penalties of not participating in politics is that you get governed by your inferior. Don't say politics is a dirty game, be part of it."

Also speaking at the

session, a member of the National Assembly, Senator Sadiq Umar, stated that pharmacy practice in Nigeria can be strengthened through political action, adding however that such action requires all pharmacists to start joining politics individually and as a group, by participating at all levels and occupying the political space.

According to Sadiq, to be able to strengthen pharmacy practice through political action, the practitioners must first begin to focus on the patients and satisfy them while also paying more attention to their own capacity development.

"Having focused on these two things, political action requires us to get involved in national politics individually and as a group, occupy political space and participate at all levels. Also important is the cooperation and collaboration by those in politics. All pharmacists who have made it into politics should cooperate and discuss Pharmacy," Sadiq said.

The lawmaker, who is

continued on page 16



Trends in management of STDs and HIV

headaches, joint pain, weight loss, hair loss. If left untreated, late stages of syphilis can lead to loss of vision, loss of hearing, loss of memory, mental illness, infections of the brain or spinal cord, heart disease.

Treatment of syphilis: Syphilis can be easily treated with antibiotics, if caught early enough. However, the infection can be fatal in a new-born; hence it is important for all pregnant women to be screened for syphilis. The earlier syphilis is diagnosed and treated, the less damage it does.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is caused by a certain type of bacteria called chlamydia. Many people with chlamydia have no noticeable or outward symptoms in the early stages. It has also been established that about 90 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men with chlamydia have no symptoms, though it can still cause health problems later. Untreated chlamydia can cause serious complications; so it is important to get regular screenings and talk with a doctor or healthcare provider if someone has any concerns.

When symptoms develop, they often include pain or discomfort during sex or urination; green or yellow discharge from the penis or vagina, as well as pain in the lower abdomen. If left untreated, chlamydia can lead to infections of the urethra, prostate gland, or testicles, pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. Also, if a

continued on page 13

Sexually transmitted disease (popularly called STD), is a disease condition passed from one person to another through sexual contact, which could be as a result of unprotected vagina, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the disease. STD is sometimes also referred to as sexually transmitted infection (STI).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 1 million sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are acquired every day across the globe. In fact, in 2016 alone, WHO estimated 376 million new infections. Some of the most common sexually transmitted diseases include chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and trichomoniasis. Another deadly STD is HIV/AIDS.

Additionally, a WHO study has shown that more than 500 million people are living with a

form of STD called genital herpes simplex virus (simply herpes or HSV), and an estimated 300 million women have a human papillomavirus (HPV), infection which is the primary cause of cervical cancer. Similarly, WHO has said an estimated 240 million people are living with chronic Hepatitis B globally.

Symptoms of STD

STD in men: While it is possible to contact STD without developing symptoms, some STDs cause obvious symptoms in men which may include pain or discomfort during sex or urination; sores, bumps, or rashes on or around the penis, testicles, anus, buttocks, thighs, or mouth; unusual discharge or bleeding from the penis and painful or swollen testicles, among others. However, specific symptoms can vary, depending on the disease.

STDs in women: STDs don't

cause noticeable symptoms in many cases in women but in cases when there are symptoms, they will include pain or discomfort during sex or urination; sores, bumps, or rashes on or around the vagina, anus, buttocks, thighs, or mouth; unusual discharge or bleeding from the vagina; itchiness in or around the vagina. The symptoms can also vary, depending on the disease.

Specific sexually transmitted diseases and their symptoms

Syphilis is a bacterial infection. It often goes unnoticed in its early stages and the first symptom to appear is a small round sore, known as a chancre. It can develop on the genitals, anus, or mouth. Syphilis is painless but very infectious. Other symptoms of syphilis may also include rash, fatigue, fever,

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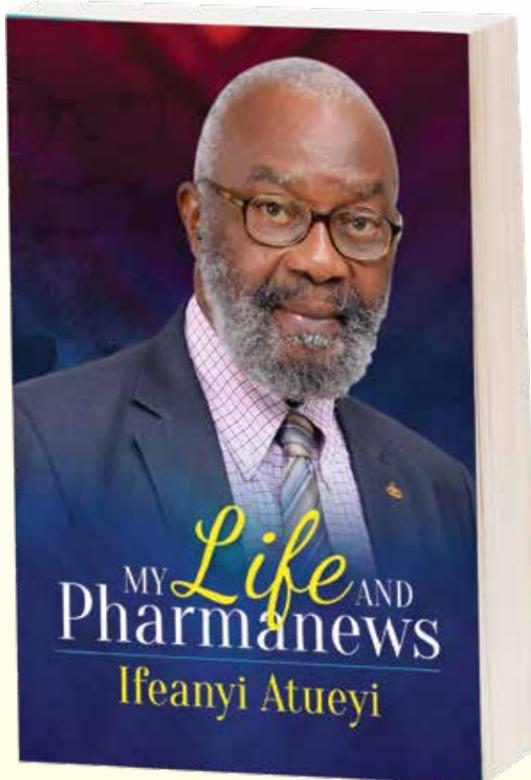
During the long holiday in my second year, 1963, I applied for a vacation job at Pfizer Products Limited (my sponsors) in Aba, and was accepted. At that time, the headquarters and manufacturing plant of the company were at Aba Industrial Estate. That was where I met for the first time, Mr Christopher Jones, the managing director; Pharm. Sam C. Opara, the national sales manager; and Dick Nwoke, a junior worker, who later got admission to study Pharmacy at the University of Ife. Pharm. Emma Achara was the Quality Control Manager and Mr Omiyi was in charge of OTC market. I remember that Pharm. E.N. Isong, Pharm. Israel Ohia and Pharm. Oranefo were medical reps.

This period should have been a great time for me because, despite being a beneficiary of the company's scholarship, I was being paid good allowance for the job I performed. However, the thought of obtaining a mere diploma at the end of my university programme the following year kept me unhappy. One thing was certain and could not be changed – it was a B.Pharm I wanted and nothing else. And I was determined to get it, however long it would take.

As the days progressed and I became increasingly concerned about my future, I concluded that I must take a step that would make me never to lose sight of my dream of a B.Pharm. After much consideration, I came to a decision – “Christopher”, my beautiful and highly cherished name, must be sacrificed. To me, losing that name for the sake of

A SEASON OF TURBULENCE (3)

(Excerpts from *MY LIFE AND PHARMANEWS* by Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi)



getting a degree in Pharmacy would spur me never to look back until my dream was fulfilled.

Therefore, on Wednesday, 18th September, 1963, just before returning to Ibadan, I went to the High Court registry in Aba and swore an affidavit, renouncing my beloved name. The content of the affidavit, a copy of which is still well preserved in my archives, reads:

I, Ifeanyi Atueyi of the University of Ife, Ibadan and a native of Okija in Onitsha Province, a Nigerian

citizen, hereby make an oath and state as follows:

That I am formerly known and called Christopher Ifeanyi Atueyi of the above-mentioned address.

That with effect from the 1st of October 1963, I should be known and called IFEANYI ATUEYI instead of Christopher Ifeanyi Atueyi

That all documents, certificates, etc. bearing my former name – Christopher Ifeanyi Atueyi – should remain valid for all purposes.

That any document, certificate etc, bearing my former name and executed after the 1st of October, 1963 should be null and void.

Having thus “burnt the bridge”, especially with that fourth declaration in the affidavit, I knew there was no going back to my former name and, consequently, no going back on my determination to obtain a B.Pharm. Soon after, I submitted the change of name for publication in a daily newspaper. And as soon as I returned to Ibadan at the end of the holiday, I informed the university about my change of name and provided the validating documents. From then on, my name became Ifeanyi Atueyi. The reason for this change of name was a secret I kept to myself. Even some friends and relations very close to me will only know about it from this book.

Temporary Consolation

I successfully completed the final session of my diploma programme (1963/64 session), in June 1964. However, just before graduation, I applied to Pfizer for employment with them. By this time, the company had moved its headquarters from Aba to 1, Henry Carr Street, Ikeja Industrial Estate, Lagos. Getting a job in those days was much easier, as graduates often never had to waste time looking for jobs. They could either get a scholarship for further studies or simply take up jobs from some companies who usually visited schools to recruit graduating students.

Fortunately, I received a letter of appointment from Pfizer as a medical representative, with effect from 15th June, 1964. The letter was dated 12th June and signed by the marketing manager, Mr F. Verzyllbergen, a German. I was placed on a salary of 840 pounds per annum during the training period of six months and then 960 pounds thereafter.

Other medical reps at that time included Mr S.K. Akinyemi (who later became a colonel in the Nigerian Army); Pharm. S. O. Opaleke from Kwara State; Pharm. Ransome Opuda, who introduced me to the customers both within and outside Lagos; and Pharm. R.A.M. Ozuzu, who was much older than all of us. In 1965, Mr Neimeth joined us as a manager-in-training. Another manager-in-training was Mr Chris Duru. Pfizer has since changed its name to Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

continues next edition

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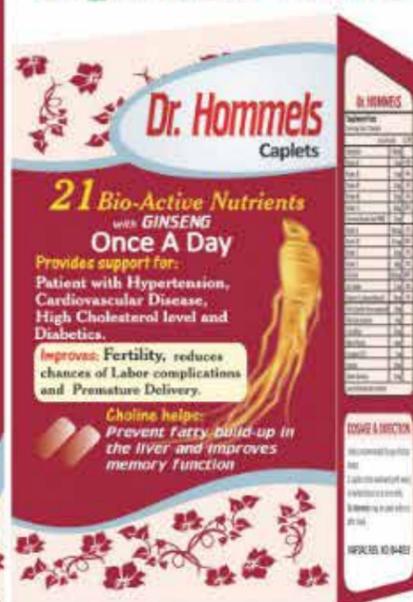
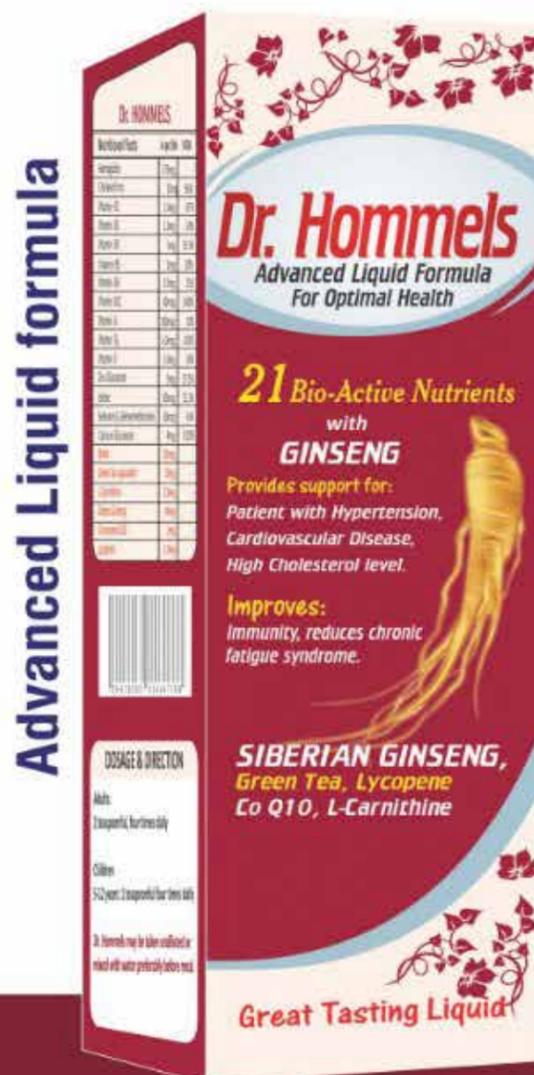
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Trends in management of STDs and HIV

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pregnant woman has untreated chlamydia, she can pass it to her baby during birth and the baby may develop pneumonia and eye infections.

In fact, in some women, the infection can spread to the fallopian tubes, which may cause a condition called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a medical emergency associated with fever, severe pelvic pain, nausea and abnormal vagina bleeding between periods among others. Chlamydia can also infect the rectum. Women may not experience symptoms if they have a Chlamydia infection in the rectum. If symptoms of a rectal infection do occur, however, they may include rectal pain, discharge, or bleeding. Additionally, women can develop a throat infection if they perform oral sex on someone with the infection. Though it's possible to contract it without knowing it, symptoms of a Chlamydia infection in your throat include cough, fever, and sore throat.

Treatment and prevention: The surest way for a sexually active person to avoid contracting Chlamydia is to use a condom during sexual intercourse. However, antibiotics can easily treat the disease. To practise safe sex, it is recommended to use protection with each new partner, get tested regularly for STIs with new partners, avoid oral sex, or use protection during oral sex.

Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis, also known as "Trich", is caused by a tiny protozoan organism that can be passed from one person to another through genital contact.

Symptom and treatment: the symptoms of this disease may include discharge from the vagina or penis, burning or itching around the vagina or penis, pain or discomfort during urination or sex, frequent urination. According to the American Centre for Disease Control (ACDC), less than one-third of people with Trich develop symptoms.

In women, ACDC said Trich-related discharge often has an unpleasant or "fishy" smell. If left untreated, it can lead to infections of the urethra, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility among others. One of the potent available treatment for Trich, according to ACDC, is through antibiotics.

Gonorrhoea

Also known as clap, gonorrhoea is a common bacterial sexual transmitted disease and if left untreated, may cause infertility. It can also cause infection in the rectum, vagina, throat, urethra, prostate gland, testicles, and pelvis.. The disease spreads through anal, vagina, or oral sex with a person who has the infection.

Symptom: Many people with gonorrhoea develop no symptoms. But when present, symptoms may include a white, yellow, beige, or green-coloured discharge from the penis or



vagina, pain or discomfort during sex or urination, more frequent urination than usual, itching around the genitals, or sore throat. A mother can also pass gonorrhoea onto a newborn during childbirth. When

that happens, gonorrhoea can cause serious health problems in the baby. This is why many doctors encourage pregnant women to get tested and treated for potential STDs.

Treatment: Treatment of

gonorrhoea typically involves antibiotics. The disease needs early treatment to stop the infection from progressing. If gonorrhoea occurs during pregnancy, it is essential to let the healthcare team know. The infection can pass on to the baby during delivery, so the new-born will usually need antibiotics right away. Some new-borns develop conjunctivitis, and gonorrhoea is one possible cause. The symptoms usually appear two to four days after birth and include red eyes, thick pus in the eyes, and swollen eyelids.

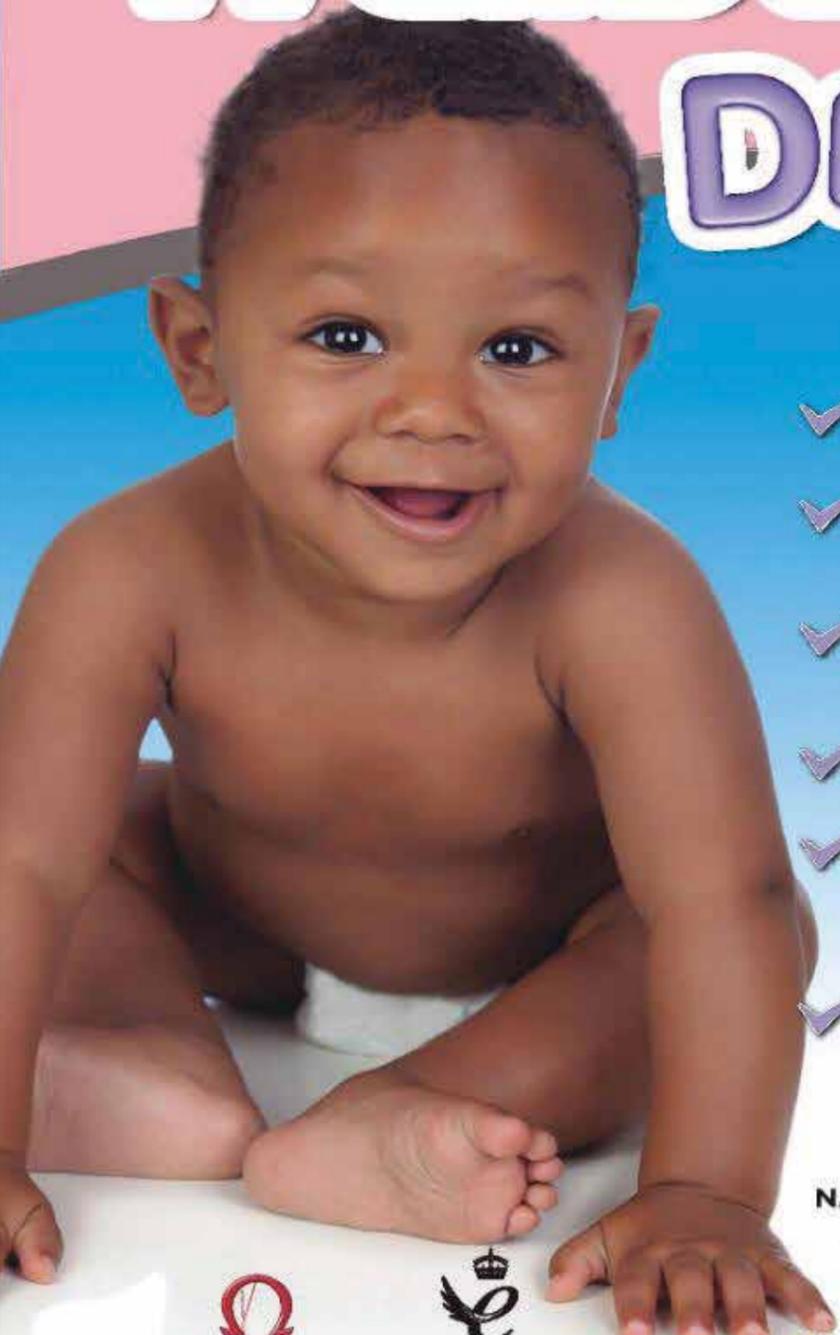
Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV)

Herpes is the shortened name for the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV). There are two main strains of the virus, HSV-1 and HSV-2. Both can be transmitted sexually. It is a very common STD. HSV-1 primarily causes oral herpes, which is responsible for cold sores. However, HSV-1 can also be passed from one

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Trends in management of STDs and HIV

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person's mouth to another person's genitals during oral sex. When this happens, HSV-1 can cause genital herpes. HSV-2 primarily causes genital herpes.

The most common symptom of herpes is blistery sores. In the case of genital herpes, these sores develop on or around the genitals. In oral herpes, they develop on or around the mouth. Herpes sores generally crust over and heal within a few weeks. The first outbreak is usually the most painful. Outbreaks typically become less painful and frequent over time.

If a pregnant woman has herpes, she can potentially pass it to her foetus in the womb or to her new-born infant during childbirth. This so-called congenital herpes can be very dangerous to new-borns. This is why it is beneficial for pregnant women to become aware of their HSV status.

Treatment

There is no cure for herpes yet; however, medications are available to help control outbreaks and alleviate the pain of herpes sores. The same medications can also lower chances of passing herpes to a sexual partner. Effective treatment and safe sexual practices can help to live a comfortable life with herpes and protect others from the virus.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Human papillomavirus (HPV)



is a virus that can be passed from one person to another through intimate skin-to-skin or sexual contact. It is a viral infection that commonly causes skin or mucous membrane growths (warts). According to medical experts, there are more than 100 varieties of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), just as there are many different strains of the virus and some are more dangerous than others.

Symptom of HPV: In most cases, the body's immune system

defeats an HPV infection before it creates warts. When warts do appear, they vary in appearance, depending on which kind of HPV is involved, which may include:

Genital warts: These appear as flat lesions, small cauliflower-like bumps or tiny stem like protrusions. In women, genital warts appear mostly on the vulva but can also occur near the anus, on the cervix or in the vagina. In men, genital warts appear on the penis and scrotum or around the anus. Genital warts rarely cause discomfort or pain, though they may itch or feel tender.

Common warts: Common warts appear as rough, raised bumps and usually occur on the hands and fingers. In most cases, common

warts are simply unsightly, but they can also be painful or susceptible to injury or bleeding.

Plantar warts: Plantar warts are hard, grainy growths that usually appear on the heels or balls of your feet. These warts might cause discomfort.

Flat warts: Flat warts are flat-topped, slightly raised lesions. They can appear anywhere, but children usually get them on the face and men tend to get them in

the beard area. Women tend to get them on the legs.

Cervical cancer: Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by HPV infections, but cervical cancer may take 20 years or longer to develop after an HPV infection. The HPV infection and early cervical cancer typically do not cause noticeable symptoms. Getting vaccinated against HPV infection is the best protection from cervical cancer.

Because early cervical cancer does not cause symptoms, it is vital that women have regular screening tests to detect any precancerous changes in the cervix that might lead to cancer. Current guidelines recommend that women ages 21 to 29 have a Pap test every three years. Women ages 30 to 65 are advised to continue having a Pap test every three years, or every five years, if they also get the HPV DNA test at the same time. Women over 65 can stop testing if they've had three normal Pap tests in a row, or two HPV DNA and Pap tests, with no abnormal results.

Treatment: While many STDs have treatment, there is no treatment for HPV. The infections often clear up on their own. There's also a vaccine available to protect against some of the most dangerous strains, including HPV 16 and HPV 18.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

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Ohuabunwa, other stakeholders charge pharmacists to participate in policy making

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currently representing Kwara North Senatorial District at the Senate, also said there is need for a platform that will be guiding pharmacists in politics so as to know what to focus on at every point in time.

In his words, "It is very important to have a platform that will be guiding us. Thank God we have the PSN; but the platform must be everywhere and very bold. Motivating the pharmacists in the country is another thing that must be done to strengthen pharmacy practice in the country but this starts with self-motivation, then pharmacists must be well

remunerated. It is also important to strengthen regulations and laws relating to pharmacy practice; this should also go along with implementation and compliance with our laws."

Also speaking, Pharm. Alliyu Zakariya, special assistant and consultant to the Minister of Special Duties and Inter-government Affairs, George Akume, explained that, while man is a political animal by nature, pharmacists must actively participate in the nation's politics if the profession must overcome the challenges facing it.

Zakariya decried what

he considered unwholesome disregard for the pharmacy profession in Nigeria, lamenting that the profession is currently under threat in the country, especially with the way government is not giving the required recognition to pharmacists.

"The government constituted COVID-19 taskforce and pharmacists were not there. This is a big threat to the profession. President Muhammadu Buhari recently constituted the Health Reform Committee, with only about two pharmacists but there are about 15 physicians in the committee. This is also a threat to

the pharmacy profession. This is the reason we pharmacists need to participate in the politics of the country, or else we would go under.

"Nigeria is operating representative democracy. If you don't have representatives, you will not have a voice. Pharmacy must have strong representatives and that is when we can have a voice. There is need for political and social networking. We also need to build mutual relationship with relevant professional bodies, like the Nigeria Union of Journalists, among others, that would help us to make our voice louder", Zakariya said.

Trends in management of STDs and HIV

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is a deadly disease that can also be transmitted sexually. Simply put, HIV is a deadly sexually transmitted disease. HIV is an infection that attacks the body's white blood cells called CD4, a cell that enhances the body's immune system. The disease weakens a person's immunity against infections. WHO stated that a normal CD4 count in human body ranges from 500–1,200 cells/mm³ in adults and teens but if a person's CD4 cell count falls below 200, his immunity is severely compromised, hence the person is prone to infections.

From WHO's records, at the end of 2019, about 38 million people in the world were living with HIV. Unfortunately, about 7.1 million people living with the disease within the same period did not know that they had it.

The national HIV prevalence in Nigeria, according to WHO, as of March 2019, is 1.4 per cent among adults aged 15–49 years; whereas, previous estimates had indicated a national HIV prevalence of 2.8 per cent. UNAIDS and the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) have also estimated that there are 1.9 million people living with HIV in Nigeria.

Women aged 15–49 years are more than twice as likely to be living with HIV as men (1.9 per cent versus 0.9 per cent). The difference in HIV prevalence between women and men is greatest among younger adults, with young women aged 20–24 years more than three times as likely to be living with HIV as young men in the same age group. Among children aged 0–14 years, HIV prevalence according to the new data is 0.2 per cent.

Also, viral suppression among people living with HIV aged 15–49 years stands at 42.3 per cent (45.3 per cent among women and 34.5 per cent among men). According to UNAIDS and NACA, a total of 11.3 million adults were counselled and tested for HIV in 2016, four times as many as in 2012.

In view of the rise in the infection curve, WHO has recommended that anyone who may be at the risk of HIV should go for testing. The agency has also urged that whoever is diagnosed with HIV should be offered and linked to antiretroviral treatment, as soon as possible. The agency said if this measure is taken consistently, the treatment will prevent HIV transmission to others.

HIV currently does not have cure. It is a lifelong condition, but scientists are working to find a cure for the virus. However, with medical care, including treatment, called antiretroviral therapy, it is possible to manage HIV and live with it for many years.

Origin of HIV and how it spreads

Scientists have made efforts to trace the evolution of HIV and it has been discovered to be a variant of a virus that infects African chimpanzees. For instance, Bette Korber and



colleagues at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico used a computer model to calculate the mutations found in HIV and estimate when it would have jumped from chimpanzees to humans.

Other set of scientists have suspected that the Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) was transferred from chimps to humans when people consumed infected chimpanzee meat. The same scientists then conducted more research into how SIV could have developed in the chimps. They discovered that the chimps had hunted and eaten two smaller species of monkeys (red-capped mangabeys and greater spotted monkeys). These smaller monkeys infected the chimps with two different strains of SIV. Once inside the human population, the virus mutated into what we now know as HIV. This likely occurred as long ago as the 1920s. All the scientists have held that HIV spread from person to person throughout Africa over the course of several decades. Eventually, the virus migrated to other parts of the world.

HIV in a human blood sample was first discovered by scientists in 1959. Studies of some of the earliest known samples of HIV provide clues about when it first appeared in humans and how it evolved. The first verified case of HIV is from a blood sample taken in 1959 from a man living in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The sample was retrospectively analysed and HIV was detected.

HIV is transmitted through bodily fluids that include blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids, and breast milk; hence it is mostly contracted through unprotected sex or needle sharing. Scientists consider vaginal or anal sex as the most common route of transmission of HIV, especially among men who have sex with men.

Other ways the virus spreads include through sharing of

needles, syringes, and other items for injection drug use; sharing of tattoo equipment without sterilising it between uses; during pregnancy, labour, or delivery from a woman to her baby; during breastfeeding; through "pre-mastication," or chewing a baby's food before feeding it to them; through exposure to the blood of someone living with HIV, such as through a needle stick.

Medical experts have however pointed out that HIV does not spread through skin-to-skin contact. Also the virus does not spread through hugging, shaking hands, kissing, air or water, sharing food or drinks, drinking from fountains, tears, or sweat (unless mixed with the blood of a person with HIV), sharing a toilet, towels, or bedding, mosquitoes or other insects.

Stages and Symptom of HIV

HIV infection happens in three stages and without treatment, it gets worse over time and eventually overpowers the body's immune system.

First Stage: This stage is called acute retroviral syndrome or primary HIV infection. Most people do not know right away when they have been infected with HIV but they may have symptoms within two to six weeks after they have contracted the virus. This is when the body's immune system puts up a fight. The symptoms are similar to those of other viral illnesses, and are often compared to flu. The symptoms typically last a week or two and then go away. Early signs of HIV include headache, fatigue, aching muscles, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, red rash that doesn't itch (usually on the torso) and fever.

Second Stage: this stage is also referred to as the clinical latency symptoms. After the body's immune system loses the battle to HIV, the flu-like symptoms will go away but there is a lot going on inside

the body. Doctors call this the asymptomatic period or chronic HIV infection. In the human body, cells called CD4 T cells coordinate immune system's response. During this stage, untreated HIV will kill CD4 cells and destroy the body's immune system.

According to experts, those infected with HIV may realise it after they have some symptoms such as being tired all the time, swollen lymph nodes in the neck or groin, fever that lasts more than 10 days, night sweats, weight loss with no obvious reason, purplish spots on the skin that do not go away, shortness of breath, severe-long-lasting diarrhoea, yeast infections in mouth, throat or vagina, bruises or bleeding that cannot be explained, among others. However, HIV can still be treated at this stage but if not treated, it will give way for other diseases.

Third stage: the third stage of HIV is the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) stage and this occurs when the CD4 cell count falls below 200 cells/mm³, which makes the person vulnerable to opportunistic infections and AIDS-defining conditions.

HIV treatment

HIV is treated with antiretroviral therapy (ART), consisting of one or more medicines. ART does not cure HIV but reduces its replication in the blood, thereby reducing the viral load to an undetectable level. ART enables people living with HIV to lead healthy, productive lives. It also works as an effective prevention, reducing the risk of onward transmission by 96 per cent. Medical experts say ART should be taken every day throughout the person's life and that people can continue with safe and effective ART if they adhere to their treatment. In cases when ART becomes ineffective, due to reasons such as lost contact with healthcare providers and drug stock outs, people will need to switch to other medicines to protect their health.

HIV medications

According to medical experts, more than 25 antiretroviral therapy medications have been approved to treat HIV. The medications work to prevent HIV from reproducing and destroying CD4 cells, which help the immune system fight infection. This helps to reduce the risk of developing complications related to HIV, as well as transmitting the virus to others. Antiretroviral medications are grouped into six classes: nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs); non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs); protease inhibitors; fusion inhibitors; CCR5 antagonists, also known as entry inhibitors; and integrase strand transfer inhibitors.

Treatment regimens

To treat HIV, a healthcare provider will help a person with HIV to choose a regimen based on their overall health and



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Trends in management of STDs and HIV

continued from page 17

personal circumstances. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for instance, generally recommends a starting regimen of three HIV medications from at least two of the drug classes. This combination helps prevent HIV from forming resistance to medications.

Many of the antiretroviral medications are combined with others so that a person with HIV typically takes only one or two pills a day. These medications must be taken every day, exactly as prescribed. If they're not taken appropriately, viral resistance can develop, and a new regimen may be needed. Blood testing will help determine if the regimen is working to keep the viral load down and the CD4 count up. If an ART regimen is not working, the person's healthcare provider will switch them to a different regimen that's more effective.

Side effects

Side effects of ART vary and may include nausea, headache, and dizziness. These symptoms are often temporary and disappear with time. Serious side effects can include swelling of the mouth and tongue and liver or kidney damage. If side effects are severe, the medications can be adjusted. The costs for ART vary according to geographic location. Some pharmaceutical companies have assistance programs to help lower the cost.

HIV is preventable

While advising people on how to prevent HIV, Dr Gregory Thompson, Adam Husney and Peter Shalit, of the University of Michigan health system, submitted that HIV is often spread by people who do not know they have it. So it is always important to protect oneself and others by taking some important steps which include practicing safer sex.

The medical experts said: "Use a condom every time you have sex (including oral sex) until you are sure that you and your partner aren't infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted infection (STI). Don't have more than one sex partner at a time. The safest sex is with one partner who has sex only with you. Talk to your partner before you have sex the first time. Find out if he or she is at risk for HIV. Get tested together. Use condoms in the meantime. Don't drink a lot of alcohol or use illegal drugs before sex. You might let down your guard and not practice safer sex. Don't share personal items, such as toothbrushes or razors. Never share needles or syringes with anyone. If you are at high risk for getting infected with HIV, you can take antiretroviral medicine to help protect yourself from HIV infection. To keep your risk low, you still need to practice safer sex even while you are taking the medicine."

The experts also stated that effective ART prevents HIV transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding. According to medical experts, someone who is on ART and virally suppressed



will not pass HIV to their sexual partners. Condoms prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and prophylaxis

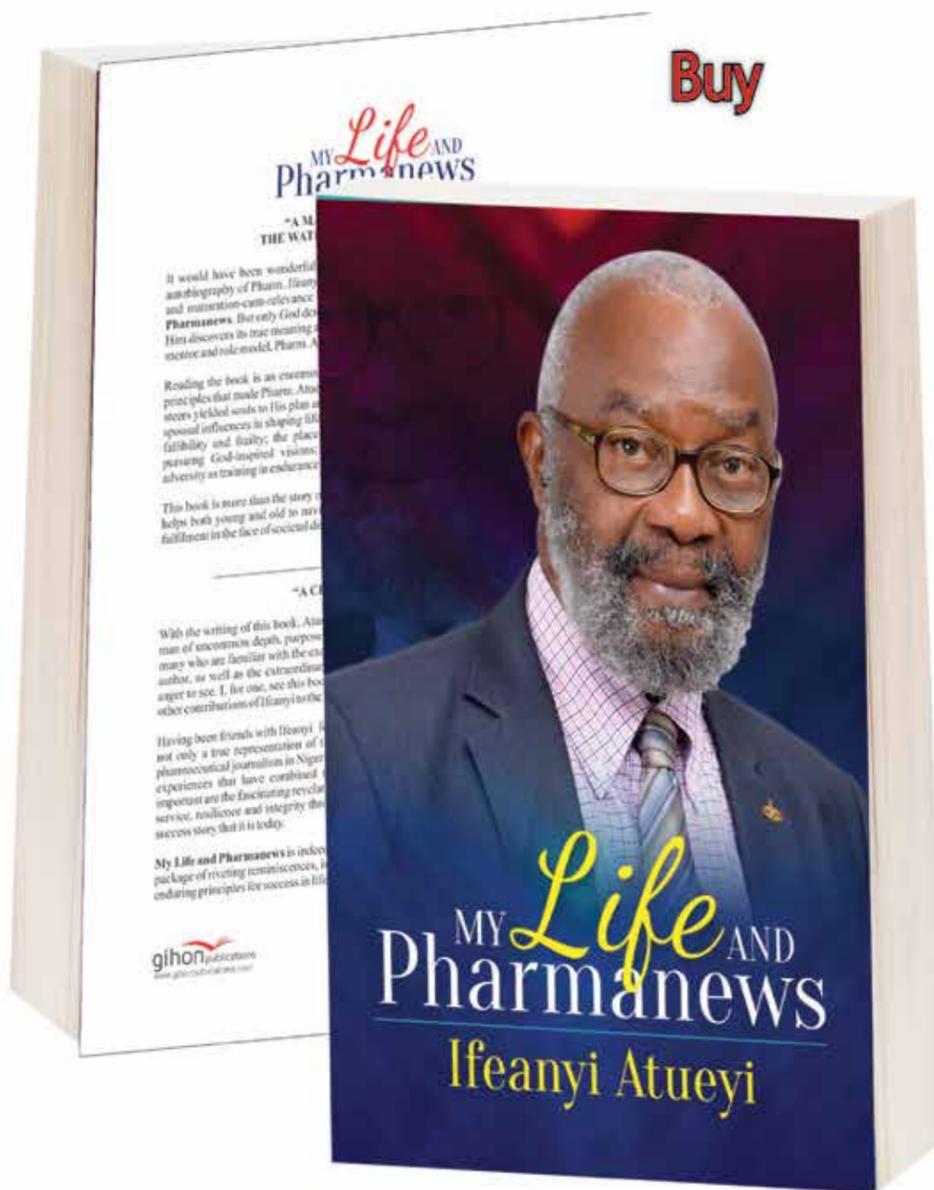
use antiretroviral medicines to prevent HIV. Harm reduction (needle syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy)

prevents HIV and other blood-borne infections for people who inject drugs.

Another way to prevent getting HIV, according to the experts, is pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). A combination of HIV drugs taken before potential exposure to HIV, PrEP can lower the risk of contracting or spreading HIV when taken consistently.

Report compiled by Ranmilowo Ojalumo with additional report from WHO, University of Michigan Health System, Webdr, Avert, Mayo Clinic, Medical News Today, American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Everyday Health, UNAIDS, National Agency for the Control of AIDS, UCSF Health, WIRED and Health Line.

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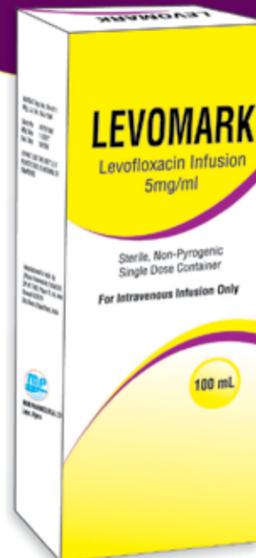
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Mega Lifesciences, experts, charge diabetes patients on lifestyle management

- Recommend 10,000 steps, 50 mins physical exercise daily

By Temitope Obayendo

Worried about the alarming rate of diabetes cases in Nigeria, with the country ranking second among nations with highest burden of the disease, Mega Lifesciences, a leading pharmaceutical company, in collaboration with medical practitioners, have urged Nigerians, especially diabetes patients to embrace healthy lifestyle practices, which they described as a necessary intervention in achieving better blood sugar control.

The company therefore advocates reduction in consumption of processed foods, noting that saturated fat and trans fat have been implicated in diabetes, with relevant studies showing that people who consume processed meat like sausage and *kilishi* five times a week have increased chances of developing diabetes. It added that other studies have revealed that those who eat eggs five times a week also have a higher risk of diabetes.

In previous years, Mega Lifesciences has played an active role in diabetes care in Nigeria, having products which are well adopted in the management of diabetes. Beyond pills, Mega Wecare has always been an active partner in patient care, through collaboration with the medical community, especially under its Good Health By Yourself (GHBY) initiative.

Speaking at a media parley organised by the company in commemoration of World Diabetes Day 2021, themed: "Access to Diabetes Care; If Not Now, When?", Professor of Endocrinology at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Olufemi Fasanmade, emphasised the importance of physical activities in preventing and controlling blood sugar.

The endocrinologist, who prescribed 10,000 steps daily as practical solution against diabetes, cancer and other diseases, said Nigerians already have the remedies to prevent or manage diabetes.

The remedies, he said, include active movement and change in diet - from westernised (processed) foods to natural foods - stressing that healthy diet means a lot in the control of terminal diseases.

Fasanmade said: "The best things we can do are in our hands; it is in you moving. Move more, move more. There are many devices to count steps - some are on our phones, while some can be strapped to wristwatches. We need to count 10,000 steps per day to keep away diabetes, cancer and others.

"One of the reasons for the urban prevalence of diabetes is lack of recreation. Urban dwellers are afraid of kidnappers, assassins, *okada* riders, and so they would rather lock themselves in their flats than do exercise.

"Another factor fuelling the development of the condition in the cities is the consumption of bad foods, which are the cheapest types of food in urban areas. It is cheap to buy meat pie and *Gala*



L-R: Managing Director, Mega Lifesciences, Manesh Mehra; Professor Olufemi Fasanmade, College of Medicine, University of Lagos and Dr Chinasa Amadi, lifestyle medicine practitioner.

than to buy *garri* and *oha* soup, because they are very expensive. It's also cheaper to buy a bottle of soft drink for N150 than to buy a ball of watermelon for N1000," he asserted.

On the cost implication of diabetes management, the expert explained how financially demanding it is for an average Nigerian, saying one would need between N5000 and N14000 monthly to purchase strips for testing of blood sugar, which must be done once or twice a day. Thus, he urged patients to always strive to have their blood sugar under control, which he said will prevent them from spending so much on medications and devices.

"That shows how difficult diabetes is for those who are living with it. So how can we cope with such cost? The simplest thing to do is to ensure that your blood sugar is so controlled, so you may not need to check as often. When your diabetes is well controlled, you don't need to check your blood sugar every day, but if your diabetes has progressed further then you have to check very often" he counselled.

Dr Chinasa Amadi, lifestyle medicine practitioner, spoke extensively on why Nigerians need to change their orientation about diet and physical activities, noting that predictions had shown that the prevalence of diabetes might get worse if people don't embrace a better orientation of healthy lifestyle.

Not even a genetic history could condemn anyone to developing the condition, she said, saying it had been established that genetic predisposition to diabetes is only 10 to 30 per cent, while prospects have 70 per cent chance of not coming down with diabetes.

Amadi, who is also the founder of Ariella Health & Fitness Ltd, indicated that Nigerians are very busy but not active, a situation which she said had led to a surge in the cases of diabetes in the country.

She recommended 300 minutes of physical activity weekly, in addition to abstinence from smoking and alcohol drinking, while also warning against sleep deprivation.

According to her, "It is expected that we move more, as Nigerians are very busy people but not active people. When you have diabetes, the recommendation is 300 minutes a week of physical activities. We have to change the concept of gym membership to exercising normally. If you have a staircase, you can walk up and down the staircase intentionally. Sleep deprivation worsens your insulin resistance, studies have shown. So, appropriate sleep is necessary.

"National Institute of Health studies actually showed that those who eat more plant-based meals have better diabetes control. Why are we not eating more plant-based food? If you don't have time for your health, you will definitely have time for sickness. In lifestyle medicine, where we prevent, treat and in some cases reverse chronic conditions diabetes, it's important for you to know that you need to control your numbers.

"We need to reduce the number of processed foods we eat these days. Somehow, we eat more *semo* these days than *garri*. Our *garri* is so good but everybody is running away from it. Our soups are so nice but we prefer to eat bread than to eat potato. We prefer to eat small chops than to eat yam or beans. We need to go back to the basis of our diet choices."

The Managing Director, Mega Lifesciences, Manesh Mehra, restated the vision of the firm as including taking free screening to communities and smaller towns across the nation to help them stay healthy.

His words: "We want to take medical outreach and quality education about diabetes and its complications and lifestyle to the people. This way, we hope to grant them access and helping them take control of their health."

In her own contribution, Pharm. Ibukun Adetuyi, diabetes care manager, Mega Lifesciences, examined the myths surrounding diabetes, while highlighting efforts the organisation had been making towards correcting the widespread misconceptions.

She added that, while the firm in collaboration with healthcare practitioners was able to screen several thousands of patients pre-COVID, it was transitioning to the digital space by reaching Nigerians through specially created social media handles on Facebook and Instagram.

Adetuyi further revealed the company's plan to raise awareness in commemoration of this year's World Diabetes Day by providing free screening and aerobics, in partnerships with four major pharmacies across the country. She noted that other smaller community activities had also been scheduled, saying they were part of the things the company was doing to tackle the growing global concern of diabetes in Nigeria.

According to her, "There is so much that can be done because diabetes is largely a lifestyle condition, but there are a lot of misconceptions about the condition, as some people view it as a spiritual, mystical, condition."

In his closing remarks, Mr Amit Raghuvanshy, business head, Mega Lifesciences, expressed the company's commitment to improving access to diabetes care, especially in the areas of education and awareness.

"In the next couple of days, we will roll out free screening and free aerobics in multiple centres across Nigeria," he said.

Under its diabetes care portfolio, Mega Lifesciences has products like Panfor SR, a suitable once daily metformin; as well as NAT B, a high potency formula for nerve rejuvenation used in the management of diabetic peripheral neuropathy, which have been in use over the years.

Unrestricted access to antimicrobials fuelling antibiotic resistance - Experts

By Temitope Obayendo

Medical practitioners, including public health physicians, consultant clinical microbiologists and pharmacists, have identified unrestricted access to antimicrobials by members of the public as the leading cause of antibiotic resistance in the country, calling for concerted efforts in preventing a backward slide to the pre-antibiotics era in Nigeria and the world at large.

The experts made the submission at a virtual media dialogue with stakeholders, organised by St. Racheals Pharma, in commemoration of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, saying all hands must be on deck from all sectors, in order to stem the tide in the country.

They agreed that government, medical practitioners and the general public must collaborate to preserve the few antibiotics currently in the market to ensure their continued effectiveness, as no new ones are currently being introduced.

Dr Esohe Ogboghodo, a public health physician and head, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) noted that in addition to unrestricted access, other factors fuelling antimicrobial resistance in Nigeria include ineffective regulation of antibiotics distribution, poor adherence to prescriptions by patients, storing of unfinished doses for future use, and over prescription of antibiotics by practitioners.

She said: "Unrestricted access to antimicrobials over the counter from pharmacies, under-regulated patent medicine vendors and hawkers may be the biggest driver of resistance in Nigeria.

"These stores often sell drugs that are outside the list of medicines approved for them. In addition, there are also several itinerant drug sellers that go about hawking unapproved and often poor quality medicines to the public, including antimicrobial agents.

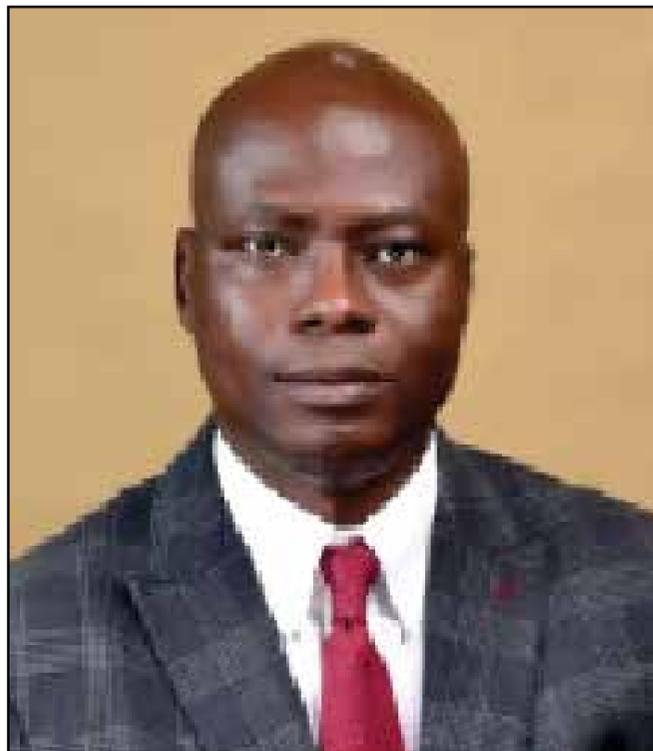
"The ease of access and overuse of antimicrobials have resulted in an increasing resistance of bacteria to antibiotics, which is paradoxically leading to a loss of effectiveness."

Ogboghodo, who is also chairman of UBTH's Infection Prevention and Control, disclosed that antibiotics were being over-prescribed by health workers, sometimes as a result of patients' demand, while they were also being over-used by the public.

According to her, "Poor adherence to antibiotics prescription by individuals has also been implicated. Factors contributing to poor adherence to antimicrobial treatment include financial incapability to



Dr Esohe Ogboghodo



Dr Bamidele Mutiu

purchase full dose, long duration of treatment and side effects experienced.

"Furthermore, the unfinished doses of antimicrobials are usually kept for future use, or given to other persons with similar complaints".

Another panelist at the media parley, Dr Bamidele Mutiu, a consultant clinical microbiologist at the Lagos State College of Medicine and Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, also blamed health practitioners for contributing to antibiotics resistance in the country.

According to him, some doctors prescribe the drugs without proper investigation to ensure whether or not antibiotics are required. Thus, he said, the theme of this year's World Antimicrobial Awareness



Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun
Managing Director, St. Racheal's Pharma

Week (WAAW) - "Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance" - should start with health practitioners.

He said, "Every time we come in contact with patients, within and outside the hospital, we should tell them 'you don't need antibiotics, unless it is indicated, backed up by laboratory diagnosis, microbiological evidence and sensitivity testing.' I can tell you we, the health workers, are also guilty.

"For some of us, every patient they see, they are adding antibiotics (to their prescriptions) to increase the amount they (patients) will pay and increase profit. We should look inward because we the health workers have a role to play."

The Managing Director of St. Racheal's Pharma, Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun, in his contribution, traced the problem of antibiotic resistance in Nigeria to the country's high out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure.

According to him, the pressure on patients to pay often leads to sub-optimal purchase of antimicrobial doses thereby encouraging microbials to be resistant to available drugs.

"I hereby state my unequivocal support to the House of Representatives' bill championed by Hon. Bello Kaje to make children's healthcare

services free. This will revolutionise care for children in Nigeria. This bill has passed the second reading and must be supported by everyone.

"If parents don't have to worry about out-of-pocket expenditure, this will directly translate into full dispensing of antimicrobials thereby enhancing eradication of microbes and leading to reduction of antimicrobial resistance," he stressed.

Dr Ogboghodo also highlighted the consequences of antibiotic resistance which she described as a major public health problem. According to her, it reduces the doctor's choice of treatment, limiting specific antibiotics suitable for that infection.

Continuing, she said: "It increases mortality. Many nosocomial (hospital acquired) infections are already caused by bacteria resistance to all known antibiotics and many researchers believe that we will return to the pre-antibiotic period.

"It increases human pain, infections become refractory, and the patient remains in hospital longer than they should have or are forced into the hospital, because it is necessary to use intravenous therapy.

"The occurrence of resistance in hospitals is considered an indicator of poor quality care services," she said.

The experts therefore stressed the need for a rational use of the antibiotics currently circulating in the country as a way of preserving them and reducing the growing antibiotic resistance in the country and the world at large.

NAFDAC preparing Nigeria for vaccine production – Adeyeye

- Says COVID-19 has created exciting opportunities, strategies to tackle future challenges

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Professor Mojisola Adeyeye, has said that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened its operations, saying NAFDAC has now moved to a higher level of efficiency, such that it is now preparing the country for vaccine manufacturing.

The NAFDAC DG, who was the keynote speaker at the 94th Annual National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, spoke on "COVID-19 Lessons: Broadening and Strengthening the Nigerian Pharmaceutical/Health Sector".

In her address, Adeyeye said although the pandemic wreaked a lot of havoc across the globe, it also heralded exciting opportunities that spurred creation of strategies and viable tools necessary to respond effectively to current challenges and also provide sustainable solution to future challenges.

According to the NAFDAC boss, COVID-19, which was first reported in China, in December 2019, and spread throughout the globe in less than three months, exacted enormous pressure and created challenges in many areas of the health sector, noting that it also caused disruptions of the socioeconomic wellbeing of the general public.

While analysing the effects of the deadly virus on the world, Adeyeye said COVID-19 created unprecedented pressure on healthcare systems and exposed the inability of the existing capacities to provide full and affordable access to quality healthcare. She added that the pandemic affected even the most resourceful and advanced healthcare systems in the world.

Adeyeye also said that uncertainties over how the pandemic would progress added further complexities to the uncertain healthcare environment, since there was no vaccine or effective treatment at the beginning. This, she said, affected health programmes planning and budgeting, adding that the disruption of the pharmaceutical supply chain, travel restrictions and lockdowns led to the disruption of medicine supplies.

Adeyeye said NAFDAC, in particular, was confronted with many challenges when the pandemic broke out in Nigeria. According to her, ensuring business continuity amid the restriction of movement, to guarantee continued availability and access to safe, quality and efficacious medical products, was one of the challenges the pandemic posed to it.

She said: "Disruption of the global pharmaceutical supply chain, due to travel restrictions/lockdowns and attendant shortages in medical product supplies; limited supply of COVID-19 related health products, due to disruption in the global supply chain and increase in demand for these products by the public; and the need to proactively fight the proliferation of substandard and falsified medical products due to surge in demand for COVID-related products are some of the challenges imposed on the agency by COVID-19."

Other challenges imposed on NAFDAC by the pandemic, according to Adeyeye, include



**Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye
DG NAFDAC**

increase in regulatory workload due to large volume of applications for COVID-19 related products/consumables, health risks to NAFDAC's frontline workforce that are ensuring NAFDAC's business continuity in the ports and other formations, the need for the regulatory agency to proactively provide up-to-date guidance and regulations in response to the evolving crisis and to support the development and expedited approval of safe and efficacious treatments for COVID-19 and COVID-related infections.

She however noted that some of the moves and programmes that the agency was already embarking on before the pandemic broke out helped a lot to confront the global disease in Nigeria.

According to her, "In line with the agency's mandate, policies, programmes and projects, measures had been in place to ensure ready access and quick availability of safe, efficacious and quality assured medical products."

As part of the agency's preparedness for emergency before the pandemic broke, Adeyeye noted that the agency had migrated from physical and manual processing to electronic processing of product registration and issuance of permit, adding that NAFDAC was already undergoing World Health Organisation benchmarking audit, while also having increased investment in regulatory infrastructure, and was set to be a reference listed regulatory authority (ML3).

According to Adeyeye, "NAFDAC leveraged its antecedents and existing infrastructure. We ensured that the nation's pharmaceutical supply chain was not adversely affected. We ensured the availability of safe, effective and quality assured COVID-19 related products, vaccines and technologies.

"The agency also embraced business-continuity strategies, developed and implemented protocol for workplace preparedness and prevention of COVID-19 infection, ramped up the complete migration of all application submissions and processing to electronic platforms, deployed digital tools and expanded use of alternative regulatory approval pathways".

The NAFDAC boss disclosed that before COVID-19, Nigeria had only 21 approved alcohol-based

hand sanitizers. During the pandemic, however, 231 more were approved. She also said that before the pandemic, there was no approved locally made nose mask and other personal protective Equipment (PPE) in the country, noting that during the outbreak, 10 nose masks were approved and accordingly, the first NAFDAC-approved medical mask has been exported to the United States of America from Nigeria.

Adeyeye pointed out that NAFDAC now aims to have full visibility over all products moving within the pharmaceutical supply chain in Nigeria, having earlier instituted the Pharmaceutical Traceability Desk in 2019.

"The Nigeria National Pharmaceutical Traceability Strategy guided the development of a five-year implementation plan and it is the first step in positioning Nigeria to be a leader in driving the monitoring of regulated products supply chain or traceability of pharmaceuticals in Africa", Adeyeye said.

To achieve the set goals, the NAFDAC DG also said the agency is currently collaborating with other agencies and institutions within and outside the country, including the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID), African Union 3S (Smart, Safety, Surveillance), the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the University of Maryland and the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC).

Adeyeye averred, "The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted pharmaceutical healthcare systems of all countries, irrespective of resourcefulness and advancement. For the pharmaceutical sector, there was disruption of the medical products supply chain and a sharp increase in the demand for COVID-19 related consumables.

"NAFDAC responded to these challenges, using its antecedents and infrastructure, by ensuring that the nation's pharmaceutical supply chain was not adversely affected. Notwithstanding the numerous challenges, the pandemic has heralded exciting opportunities that spur the creation of strategies and the development of viable tools necessary to respond effectively and rapidly to current challenges and provide sustainable solutions to future challenges."

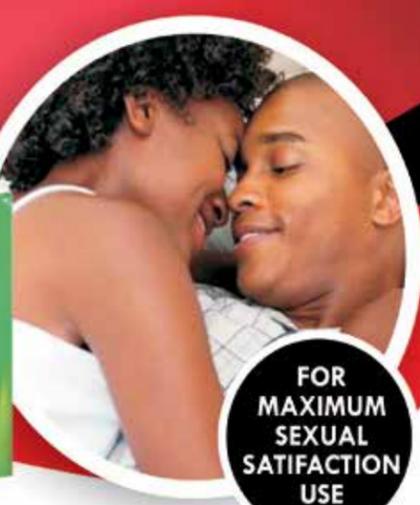
She added, "NAFDAC's regulatory preparedness guidance made the agency to be at high alert for the advent of COVID-19 vaccines. COVID-19 vaccine has been successfully used as a pilot for supply chain monitoring, using GS1-driven traceability, with Nigeria leading globally. Adverse events following Immunisation reporting has improved significantly, using Med Safety App.

"Reliance and collaboration have contributed to the relative success of the COVID-19 vaccine launch in Nigeria. Despite the pandemic, NAFDAC has moved from Machine Learning one (ML1) in 2018 to ML3, ready for assessment, thus preparing Nigeria for vaccine manufacturing."

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Shalina unveils VJ Adams as new host of Shaltoux lozenges' contest

By Adebayo Oladejo

Shalina Healthcare Nigeria Limited, makers of Shaltoux Lozenges, has unveiled Adams Adebola, popularly known as VJ Adams, a Nigerian video jockey and television presenter, as the new host of the online music contest, the Shaltoux lozenges' "My Voice, My Identity", in Lagos, recently.

This followed the demise of the initial host of the online vocal challenge, Lanre Fasasi, a Nigerian musician and music producer, popularly known by his stage name, Sound Sultan. The contest was initially billed to run from February to April 2021, but will now hold before the end of the year.

According to the company's Senior Head of Marketing, Sandeep Sahu, "The unfortunate death of the former host brought about the necessary changes and delay in the contest. We really appreciate the efforts and the talents of the former host which had been very impactful and brought an enduring life into the contest."

Speaking in the same vein, Head of Pharma Business West Africa, Shalina Healthcare Nigeria, Arun Raj, said the company has to go ahead with the programme, not just to keep the objectives of the contest alive but also as a way to create lasting memories of the former host.

"In this regard, VJ Adams, one of Nigeria's foremost video jockeys, television presenter and an accomplished musician cum executive producer, comes as an appropriate replacement."

The Consumer Brand Manager, Oluwabusayo John, said that the competition reflects the essence of the Shaltoux lozenges brand, which is to help consumers retain their voice, as every individual's unique identity is in their voice, adding that one of the objectives of the contest is to connect Shaltoux lozenges, with its loyal consumers' lifestyle and aspirations.

According to her: "My Voice, My Identity", an online vocal challenge, is an initiative of Shalina Healthcare Nigeria Limited. It is a contest for budding musicians and music enthusiasts to showcase their unique voices and win exciting prizes. The host will drive the unique digital contest through his online platforms to connect millions of music-loving Nigerians to the amazing benefits that the Shaltoux lozenges brand brings to the marketplace.

"Every contestant is to create freestyle 30 to 60-seconds-video, follow Shalina Healthcare's social media handles and invite friends to follow. Featuring packs of Shaltoux lozenges in the short video will be an added advantage. Videos with the best creativity and traction, including voice quality, creative rendition, and high number of engagements will be selected for the grand finale."

Suresh K., head of consumer business, West Africa, said the challenge is to get the brand connected to most of its loyal customers.

He said from the online vocal challenge, weekly winners will emerge, and they stand the chance of winning fantastic cash and consolation prizes with lots of branded items until the grand finale. Meanwhile, eight finalists will be judged at the grand finale, with the top three winning cash

prizes.

Suresh K further disclosed that the 2nd runner-up will win N200,000, the 1st runner-up N300,000 and the star prize winner, N500,000. There will also be weekly prizes, which include N100,000 each for two weekly winners in four weeks and N20,000 each for five runners up weekly for four weeks.

The judges, who are to sit as panelists alongside the host, VJ Adams include Matlou Tsotetsi, a South African seasoned marketer and brand communication strategist, and other media personalities. They are mainly to select the best performances from the participants after a thorough evaluation.



Head of Marketing, Shalina Healthcare Nigeria, Mr Sandeep Sahu; Head of Business West Africa, Mr Arun Raj; new host of Shaltoux "My Voice My Identity" singing challenge, VJ Adams; Head of Consumer Business, West Africa, Mr Suresh Karuppiahsamy and the Country Brand Manager, Shaltoux, Busayo John, at the contract signing ceremony with VJ Adams in Lagos, recently.

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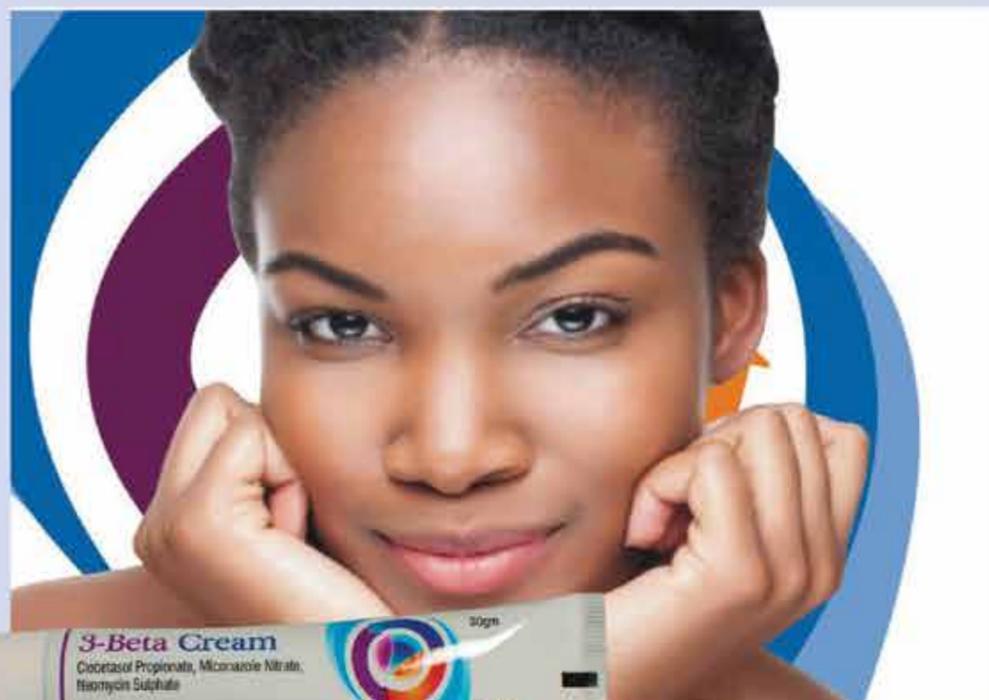
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Cultural intelligence for leaders

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

Today, if you are a business owner, an executive or someone working in a multinational company, there is a high probability that you will have other nationals in your company, or as a business partner or an associate. However, even if you are one of the few people who have always worked with only Nigerians, I strongly believe they will have different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and ways of life. Therefore, there is need to develop cultural intelligence, in order to have a successful and strong relationship with people from other cultures. This will enhance our job and business performance, as well as help us in our career advancement.

Culture and cultural intelligence

Culture encompasses the values, customs and norms that a group of people share. In other words, it is the way of life of people that determine the standard of their behaviour.

Cultural intelligence is an outsider's ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures in the same way the person's compatriots would.

Culture determines the parameters of the socially acceptable behaviour in a society while individuals in the society determine their behaviour. This is the major reason why individuality shapes behaviour in the society, and not just culture.

Understanding cultural differences

There are remarkable differences in how people from different cultures think, communicate, relate, make decisions, solve problems, build

trust and give feedbacks.

For instance, when it comes to power distance, Nigeria, China and Russia are high-power distance countries, while America, United Kingdom, and France are low-power distance countries. Power distance is the extent to which a member of a culture expects and accepts that power is distributed unequally. In other words, the relationship between a boss and a subordinate working together in Lagos is quite different from their counterparts working together in Los Angeles.

Decision shapes destiny. Different organisations have their process of making decisions. Also, different cultures have different ways of making decisions, independent of power distance. Some cultures value consensus in decision making, others operate top down decision making process.

In America, a boss maintains a low-power distance with his workers; however most decisions are top-down. In Japan, there is a high-power distance relationship but decision making is consensus.

The time it takes to make a decision is also important. A Japanese conglomerate will painstakingly plan its decisions and once made it is final and implementation is pretty fast. An American start-up will make quick decisions but subject to continued adaptation during implementation.

Let's look at how people from different cultures think. We have specific thinkers and holistic thinkers. A specific thinker analyses a problem or an object by isolating it from his environment. Europeans and North Americans are specific thinkers. Cultures that think specifically are either principles-first thinkers or applications-first thinkers. The French and the

Russians are principles-first thinkers; whereas, the Canadians and the British are application-first thinkers.

A holistic thinker analyses a problem or an object by considering the environment in connection to the object. Asians and Africans are holistic thinkers. To make this practical, the way you prepare your presentation for a Japanese should be different from the way you prepare your presentation for an American, due to their different ways of thinking.

What about effective ways of building business trust with people from different cultures? In Nigeria, personal relationships are at the core of business relationships. In other words, for you to succeed as a business leader in Nigeria you must develop excellent interpersonal skills.

A typical successful Nigeria business leader knows the importance of attending social functions, being a member of a prestigious club and attending lunch or dinner with a client. For Nigerians to trust you, knowing you is more important than your competence. On the other hand, a German will trust you sorely based on your past performance or quality of work.

Communication is the cornerstone of business. Inability to effectively communicate can harm productivity, performance or profitability. However, different cultures have different ways of communicating. Most Americans and Europeans use low-context communication, where what they mean is conveyed directly in their words. On the flip side, most Africans and Asians use high-context communication, where most of what they mean is conveyed in facial expressions, body language, and gestures, not in words.

The major take home based on the above is the fact that people



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are different, cultures are different and there is no one-size-fits-all in cultural adaptations. We must learn to adapt.

How do you improve your cultural intelligence?

Become aware of your own relative cultural biases: It is easy to have biases when it comes to our culture compared to others. However, the first step towards cultural intelligence is to be aware of our thinking when it comes to other people's cultures.

Respect and value cultural differences: Appreciating other people's cultures for what they are will open our mind to learn about them.

Adapt to accommodate cultural differences: We must develop the ability to adjust to other people's cultures.

ACTION STRATEGY: Identify your relative cultural biases. Start to respect and value other people's cultures.

AFFIRMATION: I adapt to other people's cultures. I am blessed and highly favoured.

Sesan Kareem serves as Co-founder, HubPharm, www.hubpharmcares.com and Principal Consultant, Sesan Kareem Institute, www.sesankareem.com.ng.

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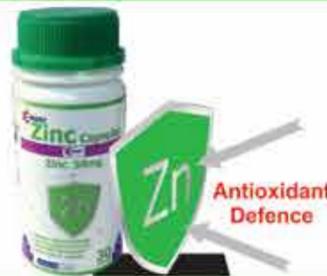
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COVID-19 and other pandemics in history

By Patrick Iwelunmor

The emergence and recurrence of infectious diseases has lent credence to the fact that nature is never static. It is also a warning signal to the scientific world to gear up for more complicated emergencies in future. The pharmaceutical and medical worlds, in particular, have to be ahead of the times, through cutting-edge research and drug development, to ensure that the world is not overwhelmed by any infectious disease.

In the history of mankind, infectious diseases have impacted humanity negatively, while equally opening up new vistas in pharmaceutical and medical researches. Unfortunately, mankind's shift into agrarian life about 10,000 years ago worsened the threats posed by these diseases. With human communities getting more connected, diseases like influenza, smallpox,

leprosy, malaria, and tuberculosis wreaked great havoc and created a sense of trepidation among mankind.

The first historically documented pandemic occurred during the Peloponnesian War in Athens, Greece in 430 B.C. The disease was carried across the Athenian walls during the siege. According to historians, around two-thirds of the population died from the disease.

This was followed by the Antonine Plague, which emerged in 163 AD, and is now seen as an early version of smallpox. This plague started with the Huns infecting the Germans, who then passed it to the Romans. It was from the Romans that the plague spread throughout the entirety of the Roman Empire.

With the steady growth of human civilisations, which witnessed the conquest of empires around the world, infectious diseases gathered greater momentum to spread. In 541 A.D., the Justinian plague broke out in Egypt, spreading across Palestine and the Byzantine Empire, and eventually reaching the Mediterranean. This particular plague was significant with the impact it had on that generation. Emperor Justinian's political calculations to hold on to power were affected by the plague, which also took a great toll on about 26 per cent of the world's population.

Contemporary times

Recent history has had its share of the pandemics, albeit with greater sophistications in the medical sciences. After leprosy had ravaged Europe throughout the 11th century, it was followed by the infamous Black Death of the 14th century, which remains the second and largest outbreak of the bubonic plague and claimed the lives of 30 to 60 per cent of the European population. In 1665, the bubonic plague appeared



again, causing the death of 20 per cent of London's population.

With the advent of the 20th century, influenza pandemics became recurrent. Between 1889 and 1890, 360,000 died from the Russian Flu. This figure was minimal, compared to the 50 million deaths that resulted from the Spanish Flu pandemic that began in 1918.

The 1918 pandemic was shortly followed by the Asian Flu pandemic that saw two waves in the 1950s. The final pandemic of the 20th century was the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, which was first identified in 1981. The spread of HIV/AIDS is still considered to be a pandemic, as more than 32 million lives have been lost to this disease over the past four decades.

Jolts and lessons

The most recent pandemics are the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) pandemic and the current COVID-19 pandemic which have been caused by the coronavirus. The SARS pandemic killed 774 people before it was put in check through effective quarantine efforts. For global health agencies, the SARS pandemic was as a wake-up call which revealed the world's unpreparedness to deal with and prevent the spread of emergent infectious diseases which have the propensity to develop into pandemics.

There were suggestions that the lessons learned in the SARS pandemic were deployed in the management and control of the H1N1, Ebola, and Zika outbreaks. Surprisingly, despite this suggestion, the world was caught napping and unprepared for COVID-19, going by its declaration as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 11 March, 2020.

More than 4.13 million deaths have been attributed to COVID-19, with over 192 million confirmed cases, as of 22 July, 2021. Apart from the loss of lives and number of cases, COVID-19 shattered the economic fortunes of the world and created a form of social restriction that made normal human interaction a taboo. It has also impacted negatively on mental health, food security and the global population.

The COVID-19 pandemic also taught the whole world great lessons on how to prepare for future emergencies, as many scientists warn of their inevitability in the future. There is the likelihood that the strategies that have been implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19 will remain in place to continue to protect the world from the spread of infectious diseases in the future.

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YEAR	AWARD	WINNER
2015	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN.
2016	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN.
2017	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, OAU, Ile-Ife.
2018	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN.
2018	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Isa Muhammad
2019	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN.
2019	PANSITE Award	- Yusuf Wada (Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto)
2019	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Frank Eze
2020	PANSITE Award	- Izukanne Emembolu (Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIZIK, Awka)
2020	Outstanding Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. (Mrs) Olubukola George
2020	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Daniel Uchekukwu Eze
2021	PANSITE Award	- Martin Chukwunonso Nwofia (Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State)
2021	Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN.



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Millet, healthy ancient grains

By Pharm. Ngozika Okoye

B. Pharm., MSc (Clinical Pharmacy), MPH, FPCPharm
(Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency)



Panicum miliaceum

Millet is a cereal grain that belongs to the Poaceae family, commonly known as the grass family. Botanically known as *Panicum miliaceum*, millet is called *dawa* in Hausa, *achara* in Igbo and *okababa* in Yoruba. Millet is a small, round whole grain grown in India, Nigeria, and other Asian and African countries. It comes in varieties that differ in colour, appearance, and species. Pearl millet is the most widely produced variety intended for human consumption. Still, all types are renowned for their high nutritional value and health benefits.

Constituents

Millet is rich in calories, fat, carbohydrate, dietary fibre, protein, vitamins (like folate, niacin, pantothenic acid, riboflavin, thiamine, pyridoxine, vitamin E, tocopherol alpha, vitamin K), calcium, iron, copper, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium and zinc. Millet is also rich in phenolic compounds, especially ferulic acid and catechins.

Preparations

It is common to see millet sold dried, puffed like rice, or ground like wheat flour. It may be soaked, fermented, boiled, toasted or baked. This grain is processed to make snacks, pasta, and nondairy probiotic beverages, breakfast porridge, side dish, salad add-in, or cookie or cake ingredient. Dried millet can be cooked like couscous or quinoa.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

The ferulic acid and catechins act as antioxidants to protect the body from harmful oxidative stress. Studies in mice link ferulic acid to rapid wound healing, skin protection, and anti-inflammatory properties. Catechins bind to heavy metals in your bloodstream to prevent metal poisoning.

Millet is rich in fibre and non-starchy polysaccharides, two types of undigestible carbs that help control blood sugar levels. This cereal also has a low glycemic index (GI), meaning that it's unlikely to spike the blood sugar levels. For instance, a study in 105 people with type 2 diabetes determined that replacing a rice-based breakfast with a millet-based one lowered blood sugar levels after the meal. A 12-week study in 64 people with prediabetes gave similar results.

Millet helps in slowing down muscle degradation, aids in sleep, helps in relieving

menstrual cramps, aids breast milk production and improves skin elasticity. Millet contains tryptophan, an amino acid that lowers appetite and helps in

managing weight. It digests at a slower rate and keeps the stomach full for a longer period of time. Millets are high in fibre and satiate hunger quickly, preventing from overeating. People who want to lose weight should incorporate millets in at least one of their main meals.

Foxtail Millet contains both fibres and phytonutrients, the combination of which is believed to reduce the risk of developing colon and breast cancers.

Magnesium present in millet causes relaxation of the muscles that line the inside of the arterial wall, which helps to reduce blood pressure. Millet also reduces the severity of asthma, frequency of migraines and relieves menstrual cramps. Tryptophan in millet raises the serotonin level in the body which helps in reducing stress.

Adverse effects

Millet contains antinutrients — compounds that block or reduce your body's absorption of other nutrients and may lead to deficiencies. For example, one antinutrient called goitrogenic polyphenols interferes with the production of thyroid hormones and inhibits iodine uptake and utilisation by the thyroid gland, causing goitre.

Economic uses and potentials

Millets are traditionally important grains used in preparing alcoholic beverages and brewing millet beer in some cultures. A 120kg bag of millet cost N10,500 in 2018, N15,500 in 2020 and N26,000 in 2021. The global millets market is set to cross USD 12 billion by 2025. Opportunities abound in the cultivation, distribution, sales, pharmaceutical, food and beverages industries.

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....Championing Healthy Living

NANNM laments exodus of over 6000 nurses from Nigeria

-Tasks FG on better working conditions for nurses

By Temitope Obayendo

The National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) has decried the migration of over 6000 nurses and midwives from the shores of the country, saying if no urgent steps are taken by the government to stem the tide of brain drain in the healthcare workforce, the country's healthcare delivery system will continue to experience setbacks.

The association therefore urged the government to scale up the remuneration of nurses, as well create conducive and safe environment for them to operate, noting that studies have shown that a healthy work environment can lead to more engaged nurses, decreased burnout, lower turnover and better patient care.

Speaking in an interview with *Pharmanews*, the NANNM President, Com. Michael E. Nnachi, stated that there are proofs that nurses and midwives in the country work in very difficult environments and are poorly remunerated. This, he said, exposes them to numerous diseases and ill-treatment, victimisation, violent attacks and kidnapping experiences.

He further bemoaned what he considers to be excessive workload of Nigerian nurses, stressing that standard nursing practice ethics stipulate a nurse-patient ratio of one to four, whereas an average nurse in the country is in charge of 16 patients, or in some cases 25 patients.

"At times, there will be one nurse taking care of all the patients in a 20-bed ward. So, there is no way the best professional care can be given to patients because you



Com. Michael E. Nnachi

need to monitor them to make sure things are going well as expected. If you don't monitor, you will not know that things are going wrong with the patients," he noted.

The NANNM president further highlighted key areas of nursing practice to be addressed by the government to improve the working conditions and boost the efficiency of nurses in the country.

According to him, these include: "Proper placement of nurse graduates and interns (in the scheme of service); improved salary package

(special nurses salary structure); upward review of professional allowances (shift duty, teaching allowance, call duty, specialty allowance for midwives/ other specialty nurses); payment of desirable hazard allowance for being most exposed to diseases/hazards; provision of safe working environment; payment of any outstanding allowances/benefits; payment of uniform allowance; employment of more nurses and midwives to reflect WHO provided nurse-patients ratio."

Stressing that nurses need the best conditions of service and

should have priority attention by the Nigerian government, Nnachi noted that the ideal work environment for nurses is one in which there is enough staff on duty to assist all of the patients and meet their needs quickly.

In his words, "Healthier work environments lead to more satisfied nurses which will result in better job performance and high quality of patient care, which will subsequently improve healthcare organisation financial ability.

"For effective and efficient healthcare delivery, the nurses need to work in a decent environment where there is adequate staff, safety, adequate remuneration, available functional tools, less stress, suitable protective device, etc., which will provide the nurses and midwives the opportunity to effectively deliver the best of patient outcomes. The situation is in the contrary, as Nigerian nurses and midwives work in a very tight corner, and highly restricted and difficult environment.

He continued: "Nurses and midwives are among the most critical and important professionals in healthcare delivery. They are the cornerstone of the healthcare system. No healthcare facility can do without the nurses and midwives. Their roles and services are indispensable to humanity."

Nnachi, while expressing hope of government's swift response to NANNM's call, also appealed to nurses and midwives to continue to render compassionate and qualitative services to healthcare consumers who depend on their indispensable roles for better healthcare.

▶ University News ◀

Encourage students' participation in campus politics, Oyewo charges pharmacy faculty deans

Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The immediate past Chairman, Board of Fellows (BOF) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Professor Mbang Femi- Oyewo, has called on deans of faculties of pharmacy in Nigeria to actively encourage their students to participate in school politics. This, she says, will prepare the students to participate in national politics when they eventually graduate.

Femi-Oyewo made this call at the plenary session of the recently concluded 94th Annual National Conference of the PSN, held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

During the session, themed "Strengthening Pharmacy Practice through Political Action, some pharmacy students and young pharmacists had complained that their lecturers were not encouraging them to participate in their school politics, as some deliberately scheduled important academic

activities, such as tests, for the same time that other students were busy with campus politics.

"We will rather go for our test, rather than going for political visits or engaging in any campus political activities, because we don't want to fail", one of the pharmacy students said.

The young pharmacists lamented that since they were not participating in politics right from school, it would be difficult to show interest in national politics when they finish their studies.

Reacting to the complaints, Femi-Oyewo, a former dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Abeokuta, concurred that such anomaly must be immediately addressed.

According to her, "For lecturers to be fixing tests on the day of political visit or political activities in the campus is wrong. It is an anomaly. It is the fault of the dean. The dean of every

faculty of pharmacy should discourage such development."

Speaking further, the former BOF chairman said, "When I was the dean of faculty of pharmacy at Olabisi Onabanjo University, I allowed my students to participate in campus politics. We gave them moral support. Eventually, our student won an election as Student Union Government (SUG) president of the school.

"All deans of faculties of pharmacy should start encouraging pharmacy students to participate in campus politics."



Professor Mbang Femi- Oyewo

Moving up to extraordinary leadership

Great leadership in the digital age

By Prof. 'Lere Baale

The objective of this series is to guide the ordinary leader to do extra little things that will help move them up into extraordinary leadership level.

According to World Economic Forum, in the digital era, we are bombarded with constantly evolving technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data and cryptocurrencies. As a result, organisations have adapted to these rapid changes with a shift from traditional forms of leadership to redefining what leadership means today.

Digital leadership is about empowering others to lead and creating self-organised teams that optimise their day-to-day operations. Leadership is no longer hierarchical – it needs participation, involvement and contribution from everyone.

But why is digital leadership important? Today, leaders need to deal with unprecedented changes and an unpredictable and challenging future, due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This revolution is driven by the advent of new technologies. In such a world, leadership will play a bigger role than ever. Leaders will have to create and show the way forward amid transitions, disruptions, chaos and ambiguity.

In this chaotic world, strong leadership is more important than ever. Good leaders will need to steer their teams forward and navigate the tides in the face of these chaotic transitions.

The role of digital leaders will be prominent as they will need to steer, design and build systems that create an inclusive future for everyone. Here, we look at strategies to create leadership at all levels.

Building participation and accountability

The digital economy is driven by rapid ongoing developments. Leaders cannot take ownership of everything. A leader cannot know it all, and the top-down approach is no longer sustainable.

Leaders need to empower their teams to work with autonomy and freedom, and to take decisions. Organisations need to create leaders at all levels by building participation and accountability. They need to learn from people working on the ground, take inputs and trust them. Every member of the team should be encouraged to contribute ideas, insights and knowledge for achieving shared goals.

Leaders need to build an environment where people take ownership of things and are accountable. When people care about the tasks they are performing, and work with their heart and soul, great things are possible.

Providing visionary direction, clarity and purpose
The digital world is not about

technology, but people. As our day-to-day lives are increasingly immersed in technology, it is easy to lose perspective on things that matter. Leadership needs to communicate with purpose and provide direction. Leaders need to create a compelling vision, and communicate with clarity so that everyone understands what the team is trying to achieve and why.

Great leaders have the ability to decipher complexity and present simple steps towards achieving a task. Leadership also needs to be vigilant, and to create a long-term sustainable value proposition for all stakeholders.

In this digital age it's easy to get lost in the technological aspects of daily life. However, there is a growing need for leaders to create a compelling vision, which provides others with a perspective on things that matter. Leaders need to show their teams the goals that they are trying to achieve, and why. One characteristic of a great leader is having the skill to break down seemingly impossible, complex tasks into simple, workable steps that work towards achieving the tasks. They also need to keep a watchful eye over the progress of these steps, while delegating tasks best suited to their team members' skills.

Furthermore, leaders need to possess a positive energy that is contagious, and inspires others to be a part of their vision – as a wise person once said, "People achieve great things when they are driven by a strong purpose, and find work meaningful. When people know the why, they figure out the how."

Leaders need to energise everyone and inspire them with an inclusive vision. People achieve great things when they are driven by a strong purpose and find work meaningful. When people know the why, they figure out the how.

Being a good communicator and nurturing others

According to the Forbes Report, which examined the data behind leadership, there are several core traits that define an effective modern leader. One of these is providing others with encouragement and praise, which the report defines as "the

most important factor in coaching – more so than technical or strategic expertise."

The report also emphasises the crucial importance of two-way listening and communication between members, which makes everyone feel valued and a part of the team. Communication enables leaders to gain insights into how others feel. Understanding the emotions of others, including what stresses them or makes them happy, enables leaders to identify where tensions lie and how to solve them; in the long run, this promotes an increase in productivity and wellbeing amongst team members.

Empowering people to experiment, innovate and execute

The average age of an S&P company was 33 years in 1964. This was reduced to 24 years by 2016, and is expected to shrink to 12 years by 2027. There are forces of creative destruction at play, and leaders need to be on top of their game to survive and thrive.

The paradox of leadership lies in staying focused on the present, while also visualising the future and creating a roadmap to reach it. Innovation is the way to remain immune to creative destruction and disruptions. Leaders need to drive innovation and experimentation, and to continuously evolve to meet dynamic needs.

When organisations create a culture of learning, failures and experiments lead to inventions and innovations. Creating leadership at all levels provides the support required for teams to iterate their way to success.

Building employee participation on all levels

As already noted, leadership in this age is no longer hierarchical – rather, it emphasises employee empowerment and building independent teams. In the past, leaders overstretched themselves, trying to get everything done. To avoid such a scenario now, leaders need to invest time, energy and human resource which allow us to see the impact of our leadership. There is a growing importance of



hiring specialists and strategists who can help you focus your resources on the proper channels, saving you both time and money.

A top-down approach is no longer effective because it makes others feel insignificant and undervalued. In contrast, leaders should empower their teams to work with as much autonomy and freedom as possible to make independent decisions within their teams. No matter how junior, every member of the team should be encouraged to contribute their unique ideas, and individual knowledge, to achieve shared goals.

Building bridges and finding solutions

Technology has shattered the barriers and reduced the distances between industries, societies and places. The world is more interconnected than ever. Leaders who understand the value of diversity, inclusion and open-mindedness can navigate the challenges of technological disruptions.

The way that traditional industries operate is undergoing rapid transformation. The rise of the sharing economy, online marketplaces and digital platforms for ride-sharing, hotel booking and peer-to-peer lending means that teams need to remain open to new opportunities on the horizon.

Leaders need understanding of various business functions, industries and technologies to conceptualise the right solutions for new situations. New industries will emerge from innovations and technological developments. It will be important for teams to be open-minded and tap into new avenues for growth outside their comfort zones.

Agile teams and quick decision-making

The speed at which you do things can be the difference between success and failure in the digital economy. Leaders need a mechanism to make their teams more agile, to deal with sudden changes and challenge the status quo.

Digital leadership requires
continued on page 50

Integrity in hospital practice: Biogenerics award prize value soon to hit N5m

- As Prof. Emeje, Madu, Amiebor others win May & Baker, Pfizer, BSF awards

As part of efforts to encourage integrity in hospital pharmacy practice, especially in public hospitals across the country, the Managing Director, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited, Pharm. Osak Uwubannwun, sponsor of the Biogenerics Integrity Award for pharmacists in public hospitals, has disclosed plans to increase the monetary value of the award from the current N1, million to N5 million in no distant time.

Uwubannwun revealed this during the prize presentation to the winner of the 2021 edition of the annual award, Pharm. Olubukola Moteehat Olu-Lawal of State Hospital, Osun State, during the Award/Dinner Night of the recent 94th Annual National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) in Port Harcourt.

Olu-Lawal received a cash prize N1 million, while each of the two runners-up received N100,000.

Expressing gratitude to the award sponsor, Olu-Lawal said she has decided long ago to carry out her assignment at the hospital with integrity, even without anticipating reward from anyone. She described the award presentation as the best moment of her life, saying it had been unexpected.

"I have been attending to patients with integrity. I make sure I do everything the right way but I was not getting anything in return. It looked like there could never be a reward for my integrity;

By Rannilowo Ojalumo



Managing Director, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited, Pharm. Osak Uwubannwun (2nd from left) presenting the dummy cheque of N1,000,000 to the winner of the award, Olubukola Moteehat Olu-Lawal (middle) flanked by a staff of Biogenerics Nigeria Limited and award committee members, during the presentation of the award cheque at the conference.

sometimes I would be asking myself 'are people not seeing what I am doing?' But this night represents an answer to my prayer," the emotional Ola-Lawal said.

In a related development, Head of Research and Development (R&D) at the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD), Professor Martins Emeje, has emerged winner of the prestigious May and Baker Excellence Award in Pharmacy.

The award, which carries a N500,000 cash prize, was presented

to Emeje also at the Award/Dinner Night of the PSN conference.

Speaking shortly after receiving the award from the Managing Director of May and Baker, Mr Patrick Ajah, Emeje applauded the DG of NIPRD, Dr Obi Adigwe, for creating the conducive environment for research to thrive, which he said was responsible for his recognition.

He also commended May & Baker for the award, stating that the recognition would spur him to do more for the pharmaceutical

sector and the advancement of the Nigerian society at large.

Similarly, Pharm. Irene Oseghale bagged the 4th BASF West Africa's Best Young Female Pharmacist Award 2021. Oseghale claimed the \$1000 cash prize attached to the award, while Pharm. Oge Nwankuro and Pharm. Ebere okoli emerged first and second runners-up respectively.

On the same Award Night, the National Chairman, Clinical Pharmacists Association of Nigeria (CPAN) Dr Joseph Madu bagged the National Pfizer Excellence Award. Madu who is a clinical pharmacy specialist at Cedith Pharmaceuticals & Cedith Clinical Pharmacy, Port Harcourt, received the award in recognition of his numerous contributions to community pharmacy practice in Nigeria.

Other recipients of the National Pfizer Excellence Award are the immediate Past Chairman of the Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN), Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley Amibor (Hospital Pharmacy Practice category); Oluranti Onanuga (Hospital Pharmacy Practice), Oyinlade Kehinde (Hospital Pharmacy Practice), Akinrinola Ibukun Afolabi (Hospital Pharmacy Practice), Adetutu Ajemigbitise (Hospital Pharmacy Practice) and Ngozi Ehboh (Community Pharmacy Practice).

Ohuabunwa tasks ACPN leadership on dedication, harmony

By Adebayo Oladejo

The immediate past President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, has advised the leadership of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) to remain committed to the goal of advancing the interests of the association, while remaining united, noting that the general acceptance of the new chairman, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, is an indication that ACPN is on the path of greatness.

The respected pharmacist said this during a recent courtesy visit by the national executive members of the ACPN, led by Oladigbolu, to the PSN National Secretariat, Pharmacy House, in Anthony, Lagos, few days before the expiration of Ohuabunwa's tenure.

Addressing the delegation, the former PSN president debunked rumours of a rift the ACPN leadership, saying certain decisions he took were simply to correct isolated anomalies.

He said, "We thank God for the successful transition and for giving us a brand new leadership. The world is a dynamic place and one of the things that happen in life is that we do come and go. So the most important thing is to do our best when we have the opportunity, as history is always there to judge us on what we did and what we didn't do well. But it becomes a problem when a human being attributes infallibility to himself; it is a bad thing.

"I am indulgent, I am tolerant, and I have a fatherly posture, but I believe in discipline because a society without discipline is bound to fail. Discipline is what keeps an association going and



Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN, presenting a gift to the immediate past PSN president, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, with Pharm. Ambrose Eze, national secretary, and Pharm. (Mrs) Ashore Omokhafa, national treasurer, during the ACPN courtesy visit to the Pharmacy House on Wednesday.

maintain regularity and credibility. So I think the issue on ground had been a personal issue all along; so it does not in any way affect the relationship between the PSN and ACPN.

Ohuabunwa added, "I have no issue with ACPN, as it's a very important part of me as the PSN president, as a former chief executive officer of Neimeth, as a pharmacist and an elder in the profession. So I cannot have an issue with a technical arm as important as ACPN. Even if any issue arises at

all, it has to be settled and we move on."

Speaking further, Ohuabunwa urged the ACPN executives to be determined to do their best in rendering exceptional services, regardless of challenges, stressing that the reward of their service will come sooner or later.

Responding to the remarks, Oladigbolu said that the association's visit was to show appreciation to him for his continual support and fatherly role over the years, adding that it was also to seek

his elderly advice, while intimating him with the plans of the ACPN for the next three years.

Oladigbolu further noted that the visit was very significant, as it was his first visit to the PSN Secretariat since his assumption of office as national chairman.

The ACPN boss further seized the opportunity to state some of his administration's plans, including the community pharmacy expansion scheme, the clean medicine initiative, the depth and growth of Pharmacy practice, as well as the leadership trust project, which he said the association will vigorously work on.

Oladigbolu said, "Our mission was to come with all our executive

members, but due to distance issue, finances and other logistic reasons, we had to come as we are. We are here to seek your support as we hit the ground running on our programmes and as we plan to have our inauguration very soon."

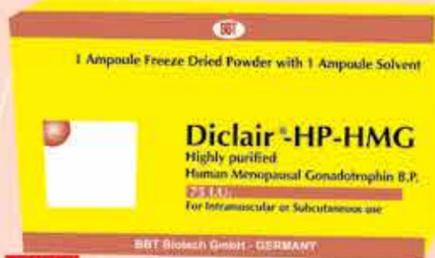
Others in attendance at the meeting were Pharm. Ambrose Eze, national secretary, ACPN; Pharm. Mrs Ashore Omokhafa, national treasurer, ACPN, and Pharm. Charles Oluwaseyi, head of admin, ACPN national secretariat.

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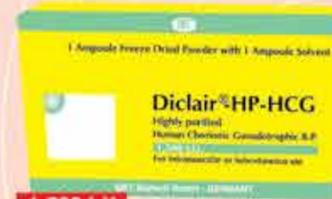
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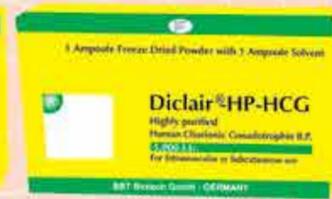
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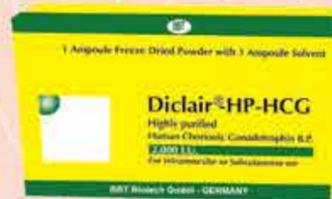
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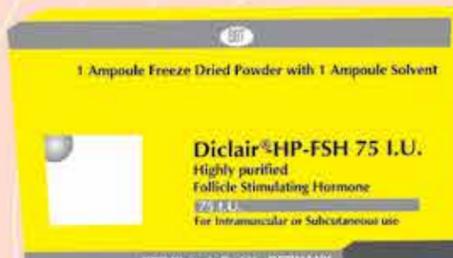


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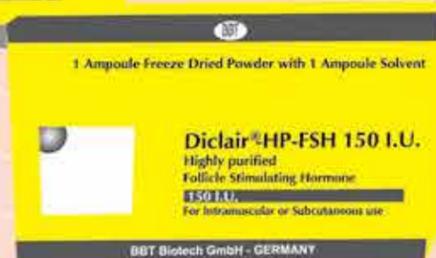
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PSMSN is here to create value for pharma companies – Oyeniran

Patrick iwelunmor

Pharmacist Tunde Oyeniran is the national president of the Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing Society of Nigeria (PSMSN). In this exclusive interview with **Pharmanews**, he reveals the core objectives of the association and how it will improve the lot of pharmaceutical sales and marketing professionals in Nigeria. Excerpts:

What is the core vision of the Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing Society of Nigeria?

Basically, it involves individuals who work for various companies in the departments of sales and marketing. We are giving them a common platform to be able to network, interact, share challenges and develop best practices.

As a new association, how do you intend to make yourself relevant to the pharmaceutical landscape in Nigeria?

The very existence of the organisation and the response we have received so far shows that there is a gap. When you have a gap to fill in any vacuum, then your usefulness is assured. Despite the fact that we are creating a group, we are also conversant with the fact that we need to create value for these organisations. People must see the reason to belong. So, we are there to create value.

The pharmaceutical industry is virtually the only industry I know that you sell on credit almost permanently. Our customers now have a sense of entitlement to credit. They pay you depending on the strength of your brand and can decide when and how to pay. We have a role to play by talking to ourselves that we cannot continue like this. We have to create a standard of payment that will enable us get our money on time. It is even worse now that when you sell to institutions like hospitals - both private and government-owned, ministries and agencies of government - they buy from you and take as long as three years to pay you; whereas you cannot go to government hospitals and buy anything on credit.

The implication is that they tie down our money, making us unable to restock. Most companies don't want to confront them because they may blacklist them and decide not to patronise them again. As an association, we plan to step in, in cases like this.

There are also unethical practices from various stakeholders that we have to put in check and set standards because we have a code of conduct which everyone will have to subscribe to and which encourages clarity, responsibility and legality.

The issue of training is also there. We must provide minimum training for medical sales reps because you can't give what you don't have. Our association will be at the forefront of championing these causes. In the future, we hope to collaborate with other stakeholders to create a minimum standard, just as it is done all over the world.

What would you say are the major factors militating against pharmaceutical sales and marketing in Nigeria?

There are two ways to look at these things. When you say pharmaceutical marketing and sales, these are the only two departments that bring money into the organisation; every other department spends the money.



Pharm. Tunde Oyeniran

So, it is crucial that they know how to do this and that they are doing it the right way and to the satisfaction of their employers.

Profitability in the industry is low. Banks do not want to lend pharmaceutical companies money because they know that their profitability may not be able to sustain it. And due to the fact that most of our products are imported, every time there is a problem with the exchange rate, it affects the industry. Prices begin to fluctuate. This is not good for anybody, especially the patient who is also facing his own economic challenges.

Another issue is that of pharmaceutical security in Nigeria. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was obvious that we depended on India for most of our products and APIs. It was therefore very difficult for the industry when they stopped exporting some of their raw materials. Except for Emzor which has just started primary manufacturing, most pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria depend on India and China for their raw materials and this does not augur well for us. The challenge here is the inability of the industry, as a whole, to manufacture APIs for our own use.

For those of us in marketing and sales, the impact of foreign exchange on our operations and purchases is critical. Government should pay attention and invest in activities that would help us achieve pharmaceutical security which is next to food security in terms of importance. Anybody can be sick at any time. You can imagine the billions of naira that are being spent on medical tourism abroad.

Above all, when our products

are bought on credit, our money is tied down and this greatly affects our cash flow. We need to seriously sit down and look into these issues in order to sanitise the sales and marketing departments of our industry.

Many Nigerian pharmaceutical brands are still struggling to get their own share of the market, partly due to the preponderance of foreign brands. Is your association working on addressing this issue?

Because our members are responsible for brand building in their respective companies, we as a body cannot influence how they go about it. However, we can only advocate for skill improvement so that we can be well equipped to give the multinationals a run for their money. They are not necessarily stronger than us. The only thing we can do to give our members an advantage is to improve their skills.

To achieve this, we need to cooperate among ourselves. We also need data to be able to succeed. We used to have a book known as the PMG-MAN Audit, put together by the indefatigable Professor Lere Baale. Ever since then, nothing has happened. You cannot be a good marketing manager without data. Therefore, skill, data and pharmaceutical security are areas we feel will help us immensely.

How would you describe your relationship with the PSN?

As a pharmacist, PSN is my mother association and I must relate with them as such. As an organisation, we are looking at ways through which we can cooperate. As at now, we don't

have much in terms of official collaboration.

We cannot deny the PSN, NAFDAC and PCN because they are regulators and controllers. We shall need them as time goes on but we do not say that they must endorse us. We need a standard in the way we market our products just as it is done in organised climes. We must engage medical doctors, pharmacists and nurses and have conversations that border on the smooth fulfilment of our professional oaths of office. When there are no rules, there are no standards. As an association, we shall strive to ensure best practice in pharmaceutical sales and marketing. If people are not persuaded about your quality, communication,

education and the advantages you offer, you cannot survive for a very long time as a brand.

What do we expect from you in the coming years?

In the coming years, we are going to focus on everything we can do to make the lives of our members better. We are going to focus on what we can do to make the pharma industry better, especially issues that make pharma marketing more profitable. Like I have stated earlier, there is a long way to go, in terms of creating awareness for our association, setting the standard, as it is, and to continue to meet the stakeholders.

Our objective is not only to make life better for ourselves but also to create a professional group of pharmaceutical sales and marketing professionals. We shall ensure that all our members subscribe to a code of conduct that will enhance our activities as trained professionals.

Your advice to the pharmaceutical industry, especially pharmaceutical manufacturers?

My personal advice is that, as an industry, we need to invest in people. We also need to cooperate and face our common problems so that we can demand a minimum kind of behaviour. There are people who deliberately import substandard products into the country. There is a need for us to cooperate to stop such people.

We also need to engage government the more. APIN, NIROPHARM and PMG-MAN should collaborate more. They must not be seen to be singing divergent tunes - in the interest of the industry.



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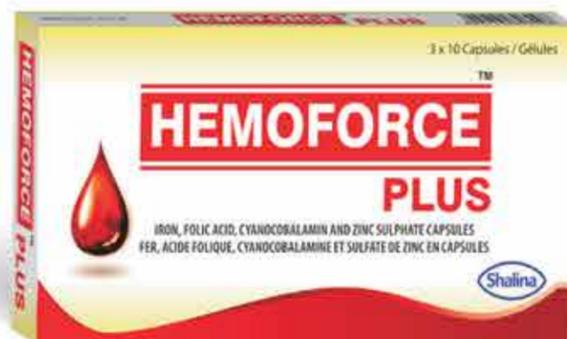
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Uduak Olayemi emerges winner, BOF 2021 research grant

By Temitope Obayendo

A lecturer in the Department of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Pharm. (Mrs) Uduak I. Olayemi, has been declared winner of the Board of Fellows (BOF) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) 2021 Research Grant, which comes with a cash prize of N1 million.

Presenting the cheque to Olayemi at the BOF's office in Lagos recently, the outgoing Chairman, BOF, Prof. (Mrs) Mbang Femi-Oyewo, congratulated her for emerging winner out of 32 applicants, following a thorough screening process by the research committee. She noted that the grant is to support her ongoing research work, which will facilitate easy completion of the project.

The awardee is a PhD student with the research topic, "Isolation and Characterisation of Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors from South Western Nigerian Plants Relevant in Parkinson's Disease and Associated Depression".

According to Femi-Oyewo, "The Board through its committee has worked on modalities to call for submission of research proposals and the guidelines established. Research proposals were received and assessed using external assessors by the committee. The committee has since submitted its report. The winner of the N1m BOF 2021 Research Grant is Pharm. (Mrs) U. I. Olayemi, from Obafemi Awolowo University, Department of Pharmacognosy and Faculty of Pharmacy".

The erstwhile BOF chairman disclosed that the grant was formerly N300,000, but having considered the effect of inflation in the country and the cost of completing academic research, the committee reviewed it upward to N1 million. She further explained that the award should have been presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the just concluded 94th Annual National Conference of the PSN, held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, but due to some personal engagements of the awardee, the Board had to shift it to a future date to allow the winner to be in attendance.

The veteran academician charged Olayemi to fly the flag of the Board as high as possible, noting that being the winner of the grant had automatically made her a flagbearer of the Board. She also assured the grantee of Board members' availability to assist in whatever capacity in the course of her project, as the Board expects the publication of her findings in two high impact journals.

"We expect to see the result of the research in two high profile journals. Make the chairman of the Research Grant Committee and myself your mentors, because our objective is to mentor young pharmacists. We are available to guide you through", she stated.



Outgoing Chairman, BOF, Prof. (Mrs) Mbang Femi-Oyewo (right) presenting the cheque of N1 million to the winner, Pharm. (Mrs) Uduak I. Olayemi.



L-R: Chairman, BOF Research Grant Committee, Prof. Kemi Odukoya; Winner, BOF 2021 Research Grant, Pharm. (Mrs) Uduak I. Olayemi; outgoing Chairman, BOF, Prof. (Mrs) Mbang Femi-Oyewo and Secretary, BOF, Pharm. (Chief) Lanre Familusi, at the award presentation.

Femi-Oyewo also mentioned another category of award – the Best Graduating Student Award – which the Board gives to support best graduating students in their courses of study in all accredited faculties of pharmacy in Nigeria universities.

While revealing that the award comes with the sum of N50,000 and a plaque, she stated that 23 students from the accredited universities received the prize while she was in office.

Also congratulating the awardee, the Chairman, BOF Research Grant Committee, Prof. Kemi Odukoya, urged her to sustain her culture of diligence, saying that her thoroughness

in adhering to the proposal guidelines earned her the award.

"This fund is a challenge for you, as all eyes are on you, your department, faculty and institution for the result," Odukoya said.

The professor of Pharmacognosy also counselled the grantee to strive to strike a balance between her academic work and family, as one must not suffer for the other.

While charging her to plan the research work in phases, Odukoya told Olayemi that the Board expects progress report of each phase of the investigation on or before due

date, as stipulated in her letter.

The awardee was also mandated to renew her practicing licence with the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) as soon as possible, saying the Board required a copy of it.

In her response, Olayemi, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the BOF and the research committee members, assuring them that she would not let them down.

While acknowledging that doing research in public universities is very challenging, she said the grant would help her a great deal in completing the investigation in good time.

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Building a high-performance pharma sales team (2)

In the first part of this article, we had written, inter alia, "...the sales and marketing function of any organisation is the only revenue-generating function in a commercial set up. It means, from the foregoing, that for the firm to survive, grow and thrive, its sales personnel must perform well above the break-even point, consistently." That still stands. It also bears repeating that it is the responsibility of the CSO (chief sales officer), who, in my opinion, should be the CEO. The national sales manager or anyone in that role is just the CSOO (chief sales operations officer)

We also listed and discussed the following issues as germane for building an HPST:

- i. Setting and communicating clear objectives
- ii. Reward and sanction system must align with your objectives
- iii. Celebrating success
- iv. Real-time performance tracking

We will proceed with additional issues (again, not in any particular order)

a) Product knowledge. Pharmaceutical products are highly technical and require full dose of information to market. I am a strong believer in benefits and information sales, instead of focusing on price sales. Price is relative and variable. Positioning sales strategies on low price is a shortcut approach and is mostly not sustainable in pharmaceuticals. It affects organisations' bottom line and may present a product as substandard.

Organisations must have a working product or brand department that must ensure staff training and retraining. This unit must work with an avalanche of industry data to ensure that the sales team have the relevant information at all times. It is a sin to send a salesperson to the field without proper and current product knowledge training. One can only liken it to sending a soldier to the battleground without a gun.

b) Sales commission. This is a dicey terrain that requires diplomacy. Most companies do not like discussing it. Even when discussed, many do not implement it. There are various methods of calculating sales commissions. Adopting an accounting software that

is very transparent to all stakeholders is the best choice.

I prefer commission based on per pack sales that is tied to timely payment. Sales commissions must be paid

as and when due, to encourage the sales team and reduce the propensity of theft. Sales mark up by the salesperson must be discouraged. Sales commission is what drives a salesperson, not salary; however, a combination of the two is surely a jackpot.

c) Create and sustain a strong sales culture. According to a recent research by Deloitte, 88 per cent of employees and 94 per cent of executives believe that a distinct corporate culture is important to the success of a business. This is doubly important for a sales team as it is the culture of the team that will motivate and inspire both new and old employees to perform well, stay competitive and maintain high results.

Indeed, given that the survey also found a strong link between employee happiness, job satisfaction and the perceived strength of company culture, it's vital you put the effort into creating a space where your salespeople feel challenged, valued and supported if you are looking at ways to improve sales performance.

By setting out clear expectations of what you expect from your employees and putting a strong emphasis on hitting goals as a way of measuring performance, you can cultivate a high-energy, productive and competitive atmosphere where salespeople can push themselves to succeed. As sales can be a solitary job, you should invest time in creating a cohesive team through bonding exercises and regular team meetings; after all, the team that supports each other will be stronger as a result.

d. Give continuous support. How often do you allow your salespersons access to the existing accounts before hammering on new leads? Imagine a situation where no existing client was transferred to a salesperson on resumption. Imagine where his or her newly established big buyers are confiscated by the head office in the name of "proper handling", when there is no case of poor channel management. Imagine lack of field coaching and

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Organisations must have a working product or brand department that must ensure staff training and retraining. This unit must work with an avalanche of industry data to ensure that the sales team have the relevant information at all times. It is a sin to send a salesperson to the field without proper and current product knowledge training. One can only liken it to sending a soldier to the battleground without a gun.

clinical presentation by the management team. In all these scenarios, the sales person is bound to be discouraged and in most cases will be on the lookout for new opportunities in a competing company or eventually leave the sector.

e. Continuous Training. What team can improve without the relevant training? There's a reason why 80 per cent of high-performing sales teams rate their sales training process as outstanding or very good. Regular training sessions can help them develop new skills, helping to lead a sales team to success. Get to grips with the newest technology within the industry and brush up on old skills that might

have become a little rusty over time. Get them to practise and use roleplay – preferably with their colleagues - to help them improve their selling skills, as well as occasionally listening to calls to see whether they can improve in any way.

Make the time for coaching or training days, too. Though they might work for a few hours less that week, the benefits they will bring back to the business in terms of skills will be invaluable. High performance sales training doesn't have to be dull - it actually, can be a lot of fun for all involved.

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PSN 2021 conference: Pharmacists share experiences

The 94th edition of the PSN annual conference, tagged Garden City 2021, was held from 1 to 6 November, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Reactions have trailed the conference as participants bore their minds to **Ranmilowo Ojalumo** on their overall assessment of the event. Their views are presented below:

Satisfactory, but for logistics - Dr. Elijah Mohammed, registrar (PCN)

The conference was satisfactory and the organisation was very good. However, the venue was too far from the exhibition ground and also far from the main town, where a lot of people lodged. The logistics of movement was the major challenge, otherwise, the conference was satisfactory



A wonderful gathering of eagles - Pharm. Chukwuemeka Obi, CEO Pharmacy Plus

The conference was okay, in as much as we all know that the biggest room in the world is the room for improvement. Every venue will always present its own challenges, but it was a wonderful conference. It was the gathering of eagles - pharmacists from all over the country and some from other countries. We enjoyed the conference.

The exhibition was equally good. There were few things that ought to have been done better, but we always look forward to improving. We are already looking forward to "TINCITY 2022"- that is the next conference in Jos and we pray that God should keep all of us alive. But I want to tell the PSN that



we can be better, especially for the exhibitors. Let the exhibitors get value for their money and you would keep them coming back as much as possible.

We expected better organisation - Mr. Patrick Ajah, managing director/CEO, May & Baker PLC



Truthfully, the exhibition could have been better; the organisation should have been better than what we saw, going by the experience that we had at May & Baker. This was the 94th edition and I must say we expected a better experience.

I do understand that the organising committee had a challenge with the venue, but even at that, I believe the conference should have been better organised than this, especially when it was happening in Port Harcourt. The

organisation was not what it should be, from accreditation of delegates to the opening ceremony and every other thing was not what it should be.

For instance, the exhibition stand, with the kind of money paid, should have been better organised. People coming to the conference didn't know where the exhibitions were. People didn't know how to access the stand. The distance from the conference hall to the exhibition ground was the biggest problem. It was difficult for people to access the exhibition ground from the hall; the distance was too far. Companies that paid huge amounts of money to build stands were completely disconnected from the people at the conference, and we should have had a better way of organising it.

Thursday was supposed to be for picnic. People went there, no arrangement was made for any picnic; the hall was empty. Look, we should be much better than this. No programme was started on time. We never keep to time.

Exhibition stand, hotels too far from venue - Dr A. Peter, marketing manager, Cadila Interpharma

In terms of attendance, I would give the organisers of the conference kudos because we had a large attendance - both young and old pharmacists attended the conference. I saw a lot of people that I had not seen before and everybody was excited. However, there was a challenge in the area of logistics. The exhibition stand was too far from the conference hall. A lot of pharmacists had to ask questions before they could locate the exhibition ground, which is not good enough. Then, the hotel for lodging was also far from the venue, this is another challenge, but it's not a bad outing at all.

The TINCITY Jos conference next year should be a good one. There are good hotels in Jos. Jos



is a good venue. You can also get direct flight easily. I am sure the organisers of the Jos conference have learnt a lot of lessons from the Port Harcourt conference.

Successful, despite hiccups - Pharm. Osak Uwubanmwen managing director, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited

The only regret for the conference was that we didn't use the initial venue. In the area of attendance, 4000 pharmacists coming to Port Harcourt is a very good thing. It is good for the future of Pharmacy; it is good for the pharmacy profession and I hope we get the best from the new president so that we can continue to project Pharmacy in positive light in Nigeria.

On the overall, I think it was a successful conference, no matter the hiccups.



Good, but not excellent - Dr. Joseph Madu, national chairman, Clinical Pharmacists Association of Nigeria (CPAN)



Let me start by saying that it is not easy to organise an event. Most times, men will do their best and leave the rest for God. The organisers of the conference tried their best but maybe I should give them "good" in terms of rating but not excellent, even though I am a member of the Local Organising Committee.

There is a saying that proper

preparation prevents poor performance. I think there was no proper early preparation and that resulted in many things being muddled up, or should I say there was a "fire brigade approach" to many things. I understand that the initial venue was cancelled and by the time the committee would realise it, things couldn't meet the required expectations. So it made the conference not to be as excellent as some other conferences in the recent past made

I must say the truth that there were notable challenges in the conference and it really bothered the conference participants. The organisers of the next edition of the conference should not only start planning on time, they should also have plan A, plan B and even plan C. For instance, we are not happy that top government officials were not present all through this conference.

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World Diabetes Day: ACPN tasks FG on accessibility, affordability of diabetes medications

By Adebayo Oladejo

The Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) has lamented that nearly 100 years after the discovery of insulin and other diabetes medications, they remain largely inaccessible to the majority of Nigerians, even as reports indicate that more than six million adults are battling the condition in the country.

The call was contained in a press release, signed and made available to the media by the National Chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, in commemoration of this year's World Diabetes Day (WDD).

According to Oladigbolu, the theme of the 2021 WDD, "Access to Diabetes Care: If Not Now, When?", which will run from 2021 to 2023, is particularly relevant to the state of diabetes care in Nigeria more than most other countries of the world.

While disclosing that about 5.8 per cent of adult Nigerians are said to be diabetic, the ACPN leader noted that the figure is a tip of the iceberg as it is estimated that two-thirds of the diabetes cases in Nigeria remain undiagnosed.

Oladigbolu further remarked that the Nigerian healthcare system is generally "sub-optimal, ridden with inequality and lack of access to diabetes care, high cost



Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu

of medicines, lack of quality assurance checks for service providers in the healthcare system and disorderly drug distribution system."

He called on the Minister for Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, to as a matter of urgency order the closure of all open drug markets in the county, saying to

do otherwise is to continue to play with the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

The ACPN chairman also urged the Ministry of Health to intervene in the running of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), especially as regards the misinterpretation

of its guidelines and the misdirection of its payment mechanism that has kept the coverage of health insurance in Nigeria at an abysmal level, while undermining the well-being of people living with diabetes.

He added: "Community pharmacies are accessible to the people and their knowledge, skills and setups are suitable for diabetes education. ACPN has therefore commissioned a countrywide community pharmacy-based Diabetes Education Programme, which is a 12-month, individualised care programme, based on the Standardised Diabetes Self-Management Education Programme.

"This collaborative study will enrol over one thousand diabetic patients nationwide and it will be characterised by baseline clinical and pharmacotherapy assessments, as well as assessment of baseline diabetes knowledge of these patients."

Afonchies sensitises Ajah, Addo residents on diabetes

- Conducts free medical screening on over 100 people

By Adebayo Oladejo

To mark this year's World Diabetes Day, Afonchies Pharma Limited, a leading chain community pharmacy in Ajah, Lekki, Lagos, has organised a sensitisation and screening programme for the people of Ajah, Addo, and the surrounding communities in Lagos State.

Celebrated annually on 14 November, World Diabetes Day was initiated in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, to address growing concerns about the escalating threats posed by diabetes.

Speaking with *Pharmanews* on the occasion, the Managing Director, Afonchies Pharmaceuticals Limited, Pharm. Adebayo Afon, who was represented by the company's Head of Operations, Pharm. (Miss) Olatunde Bedford, explained that the free medical screening and awareness outreach was organised to have an impact in the community where their pharmacies are located, by making the people to understand diabetes as one of the common diseases that affect millions of people worldwide.

According to him, World Diabetes Day was set aside globally to draw attention to the health condition that is fast becoming a global pandemic, adding that the theme for this year to 2023 commemoration is "Access to Diabetes Care: If Not Now, When?"



A cross-section of participants at the screening programme

He further explained that diabetes is not a result of consuming sugar or sugary things, but rather, as a result of the body's ability to handle its glucose supply, noting that the glucose comes from various kinds of food eaten.

Speaking on the response of people towards the medical screening, the pharmacist in charge of the exercise, Pharm. Opeyemi Abdulrasheed Abdulsalam, said he was overwhelmed with the impressive turnout, saying people were eager to know their health

status and what to do to live a healthy lifestyle

According to him, having regular exercise, eating right and constantly checking one's Body Mass Index (BMI) could lead to early detection and management of diabetes, stressing that there is a need for proper education and enlightenment about the condition, especially for the elderly and those already managing the condition.

"With proper education, lifestyle modification, including

quitting of smoking, drinking alcohol, regular exercise, healthy diet and weight reduction, a diabetic patient can live as long as God has designed it, if the person follows medical instructions. The condition does not occur only in older people as is commonly believed, but also in children," she said.

While Afonchies for organising the screening, one of the benefactors, Mrs Taiwo Elizabeth Ajewole, expressed happiness that such a programme could be organised in the community, saying if other organisations around could embrace the good gesture, life would be good for all in the community and beyond.

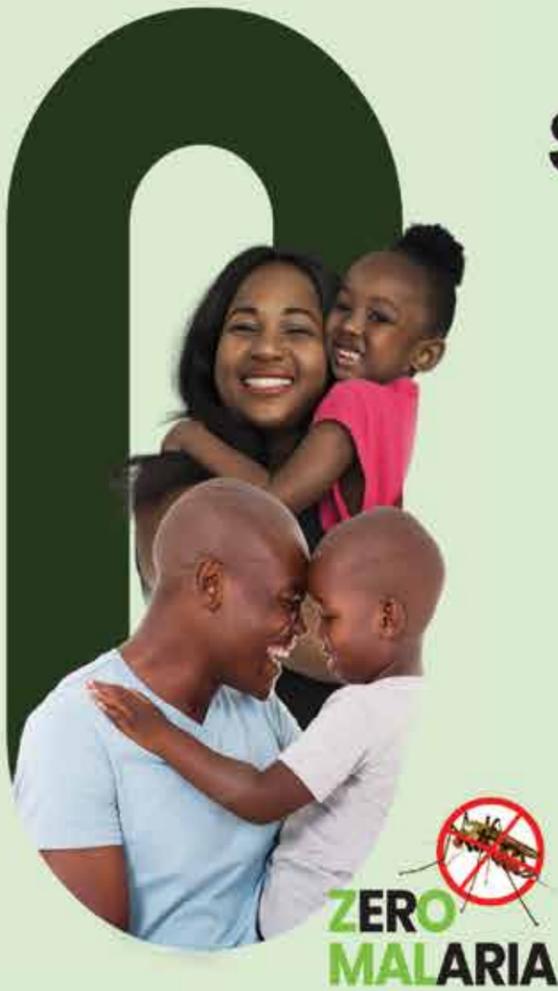
Speaking further, Ajewole commended Afonchies for the programme, while urging the company to extend the exercise to other parts of the community, as there were other people who would be willing to participate but lived far away from where the programme was taking place.



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Five healthier food alternatives for your family this Christmas

By Pharm. (Dr) Onyinye Chiekwe
(Pharmbree25@gmail.com)

Christmas is a season of enjoyment and hearty eating. While most people will succumb to the extra calories that will come with the season (after all, Christmas comes once in a year), others are determined to stick to their diet plan, no matter what.

There is some good news, however. What if you could indulge in some Christmas delight and not feel guilty afterwards because you put your diet on hold or because you went against your doctor's advice? Yes, there are a lot of healthier alternatives to what you term "Christmas enjoyment" that are still very enjoyable (possibly more enjoyable). You can share in the Christmas festivities and still be tip top.

Here are the top five healthier food alternatives for your family this Christmas:

Yoghurt, instead of ice cream

Ice cream is delicious (and

irresistible after taking that first scoop). However, it is also high in calories and added sugar and low in nutrients. Even low-fat and no-added sugar ice cream are still calorie-dense.

Ice cream is high in carbs, which are stored as fat, if you do not work them off immediately. Consuming too many carbs put you at a higher risk for diabetes. Although ice cream contains some B-vitamins and minerals, the risks far outweigh the benefit; so you should consume little of it.

Yoghurt is a healthier alternative for your family. It comes from milk, so you still get the B-vitamins, minerals and other nutrients found in dairy food. It also has more health benefits. Most yoghurt products contain live strains of good bacteria (probiotics). Probiotics may help some gastrointestinal conditions like constipation, colon cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, *H.*

pylori infection. These live cultures are also known to boost your immune system and discourage *Candida* vaginal infections in women. Calcium in yoghurts helps prevent osteoporosis. Although not as healthy as regular yoghurt, frozen yoghurt is also a good alternative.

Fresh homemade juice, instead of packaged juice

The nutritional value of packaged juice cannot match that of a fresh one. In fact, contrary to what you may think, studies have revealed that packaged fruit juices are not necessarily healthier than soft drinks. Packaged juice is generally low in fibre with a good amount of sugar (fructose). It is easy to consume more sugar from fruit juices because of the low fibre content (which gives it a low satiety value).

When the liver gets more sugar than it can metabolise, it gets stored

as fat. In addition, packaged fruit juices do not make you feel full; you may be able to finish one pack at a go. However, one glass of your freshly blended mango or apple and freshly squeezed orange makes you feel full; thanks to the pulp and fibre it retains. Your family also gets the direct health benefits of the individual fruits. It is a win-win with homemade fruit juices.

Dark chocolates, instead of white chocolate

Note that you should generally limit your chocolate consumption because of the sugar and calorie content. But in your choice of family treats, choose dark chocolates. Chocolates come from cocoa beans. Cocoa beans are rich in minerals and antioxidants; cocoa contains more phenolic antioxidants than most food. White chocolate contains small quantities of cocoa (more cocoa butter, sugar and milk), while dark chocolate has cocoa as its main ingredient (less sugar). Thus dark chocolates possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, reduce the risk of heart diseases, and improve brain functions.

Antioxidant effects of cocoa may directly influence insulin resistance and reduce the risk of diabetes. Research suggests that the benefit of moderate consumption of dark chocolates outweighs the risk.

Water, instead of soft drinks

It is a no brainer; water is unarguably the healthiest drink. However, as you may know, the average soft drink contains 90 per cent water. It may not seem too bad; after all it is just like drinking sugary water. But there is a dark side to this. Besides containing zero nutritional value, carbonated soft drinks (soda) do not replace the water you lose. Instead, they worsen dehydration by increasing urine production.

Also, regular consumption leads to weight gain and other health problems like fatty liver – due to excess sugar consumption (like with packaged juice), not to mention their high-calorie content, the bloating they cause and the negative effect on your teeth. Water serves as a lubricant for your body, regulates your temperature and *actually* replaces the water you lose. Water also has zero calories and zero sugar, only complete refreshment for your family.

Dried fruits and nuts, instead of sweets and candy

Of course, your kids love candy and sweets (so do you, if we will be honest). You may be willing to indulge or overindulge their cravings for sweets just because it is Christmas. However, candy provides nothing but calories and an increased risk for cavities and childhood obesity. Replace sweets and candies with dried fruits and nuts, homemade popsicles, fresh fruits and nuts (try dates, apples, bananas and tiger nuts). Even if you have a sweet tooth, your teeth look better without cavities.

There are other great food options, including drinking more red wine than beer, cooking with olive oil than vegetable oil, eating more chicken (white meat) than beef (red meat), adding a good amount of vegetable salad or coleslaw to your fried rice or jollof rice so that your family eats more vegetables than rice. Also, make it a point to add more vegetables to your soups; so that you eat more vegetables with your swallow.

God bless you, merry gentlemen and ladies. Have a Merry Christmas!

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Events in Picture



A cross-section of participants at the 94th PSN conference with members of Board of Fellows in the front roll at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.



Pharm. Peter Iliya, zonal director, Abuja PCN zonal office; Pharm. Mrs F. Njoku, PCN Anambra State Officer; Registrar PCN, Dr E. Mohammed and Pharm Mrs Chioma Chukwujekwu, Enugun State PCN officer at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.



L-R: Former PSN Presidents, Pharm. U. N. O Uwaga, Pharm. Yaro Budah; former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Henry Odein Ajumogobia and former PSN president, Anthony Akhimien, at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.



President, Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSSA), Dr Teresa Pounds (4th left); Chairman, Clinical Pharmacists Association of Nigeria (CPAN), Dr Joseph Madu (5th Left) with members of CPAN at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.



A cross-section of PSN past presidents and other important personalities during 94th PSN conference opening ceremony in Port Harcourt.



Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi (Right); Prof. Noel Wannang, Pharm. Chukwudum Maduneme (4th Right) with other pharmacists from Jos at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.



L-R: Fg Offr A Abdulsalam, Flt Lt IT Omolegbe, Flt Lt NS Aliero, Managing Director, Pharmanews Limited, Pharm (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, Lady Joan Atueyi, Wg Cdr OA Odularu, Flt Lt S Shuayb, Flt Lt IJ Abubakar, the 94th PSN conference opening ceremony in Port Harcourt.

Sanwo-Olu, Yakasai, Anyakora highlight benefits of bilateral relations to pharma sector

- As 2nd Pakistan-Africa TDC kicks off

By Patrick Iwelunmor

Stakeholders have enumerated the long-lasting benefits of the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Nigeria, especially with regards to the pharmaceutical sector, at the commencement of the 2nd Pakistan-Nigeria Trade Development Conference, holding at Eko Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, from 23 to 25 November, 2021.

Declaring the event open on Tuesday, Chief Host and Executive Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, described the conference as an avenue for both Pakistan and Nigeria to explore important trade and manufacturing opportunities for the development of their respective industries.

Describing the city of Lagos as one of the biggest hubs for business on the African continent, Sanwo-Olu added that the city offers a lot of advantages, in terms of its pivotal position in the West African sub-region.

"Welcome to the city of Lagos. We welcome you to the Centre of Excellence. We welcome you to the commercial nerve centre of the country. We welcome you to the city that has the largest black population in the world. We welcome you to a state that, if it were a nation, would be the fourth or fifth largest GDP in Africa. We welcome you to a state that has a GDP that is bigger than Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, put together", he said.

On what the conference has in store for the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry, foremost pharmacist and former President



L-R: Hassan Ali, secretary, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan; Prof. Chimezie Anyakora, CEO, Bloom Public Health; Honorary Consul-General of Pakistan in Nigeria, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, and His Excellency, Abdul Rasak Dawood, Federal Minister, Commerce and Industry, Pakistan, at the opening ceremony of the 2nd Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference, at Eko Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, stated that Nigeria, as a country, has a lot to benefit from Pakistan in terms of improving its local manufacturing capacity to meet up with global best practice.

According to him, Pakistan, being a huge player in the global pharmaceutical firmament will impact positively on Nigeria, through technology transfer and upgrade of facilities as well as increasing local manufacturing.

"What I see is a situation where we are going to have a lot of joint ventures between our local manufacturers and the already existing manufacturers in Pakistan, who are also ready to support us. I can see so many big companies from Pakistan. Apart from pharmaceutical companies, they have over 200 companies. And you know their FDA doesn't joke with quality. This is why I have been with them for the past 22 years. They even awarded me the title of Honorary Consular-General

because of the role I have played over the years in bringing them into the Nigerian pharmaceutical market to do mutually-beneficial business. I believe the Nigerian pharmaceutical landscape will come out better and stronger with such bilateral relationships", he said.

On his part, CEO of Bloom Public Health, Professor Chimezie Anyakora, whose company is building its reputation as one of the most credible technical partners to health-related innovations within and outside Nigeria, observed that the conference is a win-win and portends a lot in terms of advantage to the Nigerian pharma sector.

He commended the organisers of the conference for providing the avenue for Nigerian business people to learn from others how to be global players while also calling on the federal government to create opportunities that will enable Nigerian companies compete favourably with their counterparts from the developed world.

"Pakistan is currently ahead of us in terms of pharmaceutical manufacturing. They do vaccine; they do APIs and a whole lot of things. This partnership will help Nigeria leapfrog into playing at that level. As a matter of fact, Bloom Public Health is engaged by the Pakistani High Commission to facilitate the process and make it mutually-beneficial", he said.

According to the organisers, the event which wraps up on Thursday, 25 November, is expected to feature exhibitions and other important trade presentations by many Pakistani and Nigerian companies.

Leadership

Great leadership in the digital age

continued from page 35

adaptability to handle pressure and constant changes, and to take decisions with agility. The projects you're working on can lose significance very quickly through no fault of your own. In these moments of uncertainty, experts should be trusted to resurrect things, pivot the organisation and show the way forward.

Constant evolution and reskilling

The inertia of past success can be crippling for the future. Leaders need nimbleness to adapt and equip their teams with skills for the future. Innovations and disruptive technology will have a significant bearing on workforces, processes, companies and industries.

The World Economic Forum's 2020 Future of Jobs report suggests that, by 2025, no less than 65 per cent of all employees will require significant re-and upskilling. Of these, about 40 per cent are expected to require additional training of up to six months, while 15 per cent will require reskilling lasting 6-12 months and 10 per cent will require additional skills training of more than a year.

Digital leaders will need to

address the skill gaps, prepare themselves and their teams to face the future by creating an environment of lifelong learning. With the adoption of new technology and solutions, new professions, skills and industries will emerge.

The challenges ahead

The World Bank's 2019 report, The Changing Nature of Work, contains an interesting observation: IKEA, the Swedish furniture retail giant, took 30 years after its founding in 1943 before it started expanding in Europe. It reported revenue of \$42 billion after seven decades. However, the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba reached one million users in just two years. It accumulated more than 9 million online merchants and annual sales of \$700 billion in 15 years, using digital technologies.

Disruptions in the digital world occur at a phenomenal rate. They have the power to impact the way entire industries operate. All actors, from regulators to policy-makers, governments and digital leaders, need to proactively analyse the risks involved and come up with solutions for mitigating them.

Last year, there were stories about Facebook's security

breaches, privacy policies and data sharing. Millions of users were exposed and serious concerns were raised about the soft underbelly of the digital economy. This is just the sort of issue that digital leadership needs to tackle head-on.

Leaders need to create systems that ensure transparency, a thorough audit of processes and the highest ethical standards. Dealing with personal data, privacy of individuals and corporate information requires enforcement of stringent compliance and transparency.

In a world driven by devices and technology, how you lead people will make the critical difference. Leaders in this new age need to inspire, engage and lead with optimism. Technology can play a role in reducing racial, gender and economic inequalities for vast numbers of people. By empowering others to pinpoint and solve critical problems, digital leaders will have the power to shape the future of our world.

In summary, leaders in the digital age need to address the following important issues:

- * Building participation and accountability
- * Providing visionary direction and clear purpose
- * Being a good communicator and nurturing others

- * Empowering people to experiment, innovate and execute

- * Building employee participation on all levels

- * Building bridges and finding solutions

- * Building agile teams and making quick decisions

- Constant evolution and reskilling

- Adjustment into digital challenges ahead

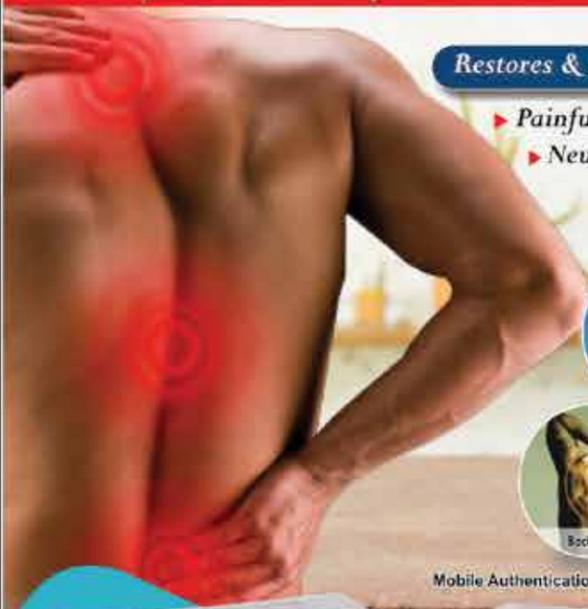
The great leadership in the digital age will need to empower their teams to work with autonomy and freedom. And to take decisions, they need the power to inspire, engage and lead others with clarity and optimism; they need to focus on building their communication skills, encouraging autonomy among team members; and they need to clearly identifying their goals.

Leaders in this digital age will need to address disruption in the ecosystem with direction, volatility with vision, uncertainty with understanding, chaos with clarity, ambiguity with agility, risks with resilience, and embrace divergence instead of fighting it.

Through their ability to empower others to identify and overcome key obstacles, digital leaders can successfully alter the direction of the future of their organisations.

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Atueyi, Okoli, Obi, Verghese, others receive PSN presidential award

continued from back page



Pharmanews Publisher, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, receiving the award plaque from immediate past President, PSN, Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, as Lady Atueyi, wife, and Pharmanews Editor, Mr Patrick Iwelunmor, look in admiration.

Mohammed, Pharm. (Dr) Bakau Ali, Pharm. Dr Kingsley Nnalue, and Pharm. Usman Aminu Muhammad.

The PSN committee chairmen who were honoured were Pharm. (Barr.) Chiedu Mordi, chairman, Law & Ethics Committee; Dr Dan Orumwense, chairman, Inter/Intra-Professional Development and Relationship Committee; Pharm. Paul Enebeli, chairman, Political and Legislative Action Committee; Dr Lolu Ojo, chairman, Research, Documentation and Industrial Liaison Committee; and Dr John Nwaiwu, chairman, Lagos Pharmacy Tower Project Committee.

Oluabunwa also recognised 10 staff of the society, namely Mrs Omolare George,

Mrs Ann Edetelen, Mr Anthony Umoebuarie, Pharm. Victor Ogbonna, Mr Anthony Nathaniel, Mrs Ngozi Lambert, Mr Hamza Usman, Pharm. Okame Okah, Mrs Ekomobong Ovien and Mrs Uche Ohaegbu.

Companies that were honoured included the Emzor Group, Phillips Pharmaceutical Nigeria Limited, May & Baker Nigeria PLC, Worldwide Healthcare, Neimeth International Pharmaceutical PLC, Pfizer Global Limited, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited and GlaxoSmithkline Pharmaceutical Limited.

Also, the immediate past Chairman of AHAPN, Dr. Kingsley Amibor; immediate past Chairman of NAIP, Pharm. Ignatius Anukwu, immediate past Chairman, NAPA, Prof. Emmanuel Ibezim and Chairman Board of Fellows, PSN, Prof. Mbang Femi-Oyewo, were honoured.

The PSN NEC members recognised by Oluabunwa were Pharm. Munir Elelu, deputy president, North; Pharm. (Dr) Ejiro O. Foyibo, deputy president, South; Pharm. Olugbenga Falabi, national secretary; Pharm. Odudu Samuel Akpaete, assistant national secretary; Pharm. Gafar Lanre Madehin, national treasurer; Pharm. (Dr) Murtala Isa Umar, national financial secretary; Pharm. Ijeoma Okey-Ewurum, national publicity secretary; Pharm. Margaret O. Ilomuanya, editor-in-chief; Pharm. Martins O. Oyewole, internal auditor; Pharm. Alkali Albert Kelong, unofficial member; and Pharm. Udeorah Egbuna, unofficial member.



Pharm. (sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, his wife and other guests at the PSN dinner/award night

as various committee chairmen of the Society, former chairmen of the technical arms of PSN, members of the National Executive Council (NEC) and staff of the PSN for their various contributions to his administration.

While announcing the award beneficiaries at the Award/Dinner Night of the conference, Oluabunwa singled out 82-year-

old Atueyi for his overwhelming support Pharm. Atueyi has attended the annual national conference for 48 years without interruption. He also appreciated the Managing Director, Emzor Group, Dr Stella Okoli; Managing Director, Embassy Pharmaceutical Limited, Sir Nnamdi Obi; Managing Director, Jawa International Limited,

Varkey Verghese, and Pharm. Deji Osinoike who were also bestowed with the PSN presidential award for supporting his tenure.

Other beneficiaries were Mr Emmanuel Umenwa, Pharm. Sam Ubachukwu, Sir Ike Onyechi, Pharm Ndukwe Uma Ndukwe, Pharm. Ayodele Olokodana, Dr Stephen Majekodunmi, Pharm. Livinus Emeronye, Pharm. Isa



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CONTRA-INDICATIONS & CAUTION:
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CONTRA-INDICATIONS:
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Why we're including pharmacies, private hospitals as vaccination centres – FG

continued from back page



L-R: Director of Administration, NIMR, Alh. A.S Yunusazazzau; Director General NIMR, Professor Babatunde Salako; Mukhtar Mohammed, secretary of the Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19; and Prof. Ravindra Gupta, University of Cambridge, chairman of the occasion.

Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) and the Clinical Pharmacists Association of Nigeria (CPAN), in separate forums, appreciated the gesture from the government.

The planned inclusion had been disclosed by Secretary to the Government of the Federation, and Chair, Presidential Steering Committee (PSC) on COVID-19, Boss Mustapha, while fielding questions from journalists at the Conference on Health Advances Innovation and Research (CHAIR), recently organised by the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR).

Mustapha had asserted that since 70 per cent of Nigerians access their healthcare through private facilities, government would only be able to reach 30 per cent of its population with vaccination, if it is restricted to government facilities only.

Aby represented by Mukhtar Mohammed, secretary of the PSC, Mustapha, who was the special guest of honour at the 10th CHAIR, said it had become imperative for the FG to collaborate with the private sector to have effective and robust vaccination coverage for Nigerians.

According to Mustapha, "70 per cent Nigerians get their healthcare through the private facilities. And discussions have started, that even if we are to float all the public healthcare facilities with vaccines, we will still not reach 30 per cent coverage. Therefore, we need to work with the private sector to have more innovated approach

to ensure that people can access these vaccines through whatever mechanism.

"The government has started by issuing the directive of vaccine mandate to federal civil servants by 1 December. That is just the beginning, as we will be expanding vaccination centres to private health facilities, pharmacy stores, markets, parks, etc., to ensure that people have access to vaccine wherever they are", he stated.

Also, while delivering the keynote address at the conference, Executive Director/CEO, National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Dr Faisal Shuaib, informed the participants of the progress made so far by the agency in vaccination coverage in the country, stating that the goal is to have 50 per cent of the eligible target population vaccinated by January 2022 ending.

Shuaib revealed that, for this target to be actualised, selected pharmacy stores would be included in the list of vaccination centres, in addition to private hospitals and other designated venues for the exercise.

Explaining other strategies to be deployed by the agency to meet the January target, the NPHCDA boss said, while total the eligible population is 111,776,503 out of the total population of 216,797,455, only 5,573,349 people had been vaccinated with at least one dose, leaving the agency with 50,314,903 people to reach before Christmas.

He disclosed the different

approaches the agency will be deploying to meet this new target, saying: "We are implementing five approaches to achieve optimisation of process in developing the approach for COVID-19 vaccination roll-out. These include: Vaccination in primary, secondary and tertiary facilities; expansion to private health facilities and corporate institutions (public and private, including selected pharmacy stores); establishment of mass vaccination sites; leveraging fixed and outreach R.I sessions; and establishment of temporary posts – drive-throughs, community pop-ups."

Speaking on the theme of the conference, "COVID-19 Pandemic: Consolidating the Gains and Addressing the Shortfalls", Director General NIMR, Professor Babatunde Salako, applauded the efforts of NIMR and other institutions in mitigating the effects of the pandemic, while raising concerns on the direct and indirect impacts of the disease on Nigerians.

He drew attention of the audience to the effect of the pandemic on other disease areas, especially in Nigeria that bears the highest burden of tuberculosis, HIV and malaria.

He said, "The control of these diseases has indeed suffered a setback over the past year due to the shift on public health focus to the COVID-19. In addition, the indirect effect on mental health has also emerged.

"We must continue to pay particular attention to these disease of poverty both at individual researcher and

government levels in order to alleviate the suffering of those afflicted with them, otherwise the gains of COVID-19 control may be lost to upsurge in HIV, malaria and tuberculosis."

In a related development, National Chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, has felicitated with community pharmacists on their planned inclusion in the vaccination exercise by the FG. While noting that the information was yet to officially reach him, he assured his members that since the new was coming from the presidential steering committee on COVID-19 and the NPHCDA, they should be optimistic about the implementation.

Oladigbolu, who spoke with *Pharmanews online* in a telephone chat, welcomed the development, saying that it will give Nigerians improved access to vaccines, which will improve healthcare outcomes in the country.

In the same vein, CPAN national chairman, Dr Joseph Madu, maintained that community pharmacists are highly trained healthcare personnel on drug matters, adding that their proximity to the members of the community in which they practise can also help in educating the public on myths surrounding the COVID-19 situation.

He expressed optimism that the FG & NPHCDA would extend the use of community pharmacies as vaccination centres to other vaccine preventable diseases and not just COVID-19, saying this is in line with international best practices.

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Why we're including pharmacies, private hospitals as vaccination centres – FG

- As ACPN, CPAN, laud decision

By Temitope Obayendo

The Federal Government has revealed reasons for its plan to include pharmacies and private hospitals as vaccination centres, saying it is in line with its target to vaccinate 50 per cent of Nigerians by the end of January 2022.

The government added that it had observed that public health facilities alone cannot meet the healthcare needs of the citizenry, with 70 per cent accessing healthcare through private firms.

Pharmacists across the country have lauded this decision, describing it as a positive response to their long-time yearning to be part of the vaccination exercise, being the most accessible healthcare practitioners to patients in the community.

The leaderships of the



L-R: Former PSN President, Ahmed Yakasai; President, Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA), Dr Teresa Pounds; immediate past PSN President, Mazi Sam. Ohuabunwa; NAPPSA President-elect, Pharm. Emmanuel Ezirim; and former PSN President, Pharm. Yaro Budah at the 94th PSN conference in Port Harcourt.

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Atueyi, Okoli, Obi, Verghese, others receive PSN presidential award

-- As Ohuabunwa takes a bow

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The popular saying, "One good turn deserves another", came to play recently at the 94th Annual National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) in Port Harcourt, as the outgoing president, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, gave an appreciation

award to **Pharmanews** publisher, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, for supporting him throughout his tenure.

Ohuabunwa also honoured other notable stakeholders and organisations in the pharmaceutical industry, as well

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