

# pharmanews

Nigeria's Leading Health Journal

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L-R: Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, managing director, Pharmanews Ltd; Pharm. (Mrs) Hafsah Ameen-Ikoyi, national publicity secretary, ALPs; Temitope Obayendo, online editor, Pharmanews Ltd. and Pharm. (Mrs) Scholastica Lan, national chairman, ALPs, during the ALPs leadership visit to Pharmanews Ltd, to celebrate Obayendo, recipient of the PSN Journalist of the Year 2022 Award.

## NAFDAC vaccine lab to be ready in six months, says DG

By Temitope Obayendo

As part of preparations for the production of vaccines in Nigeria, the Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has stated that the agency's vaccine laboratory will be ready in the next six months. This, she said,

will boost the medicine security of the nation, as well as fortify the country against any eventualities, including disease outbreaks.

Adeyeye, who made the disclosure at the recent hybrid stakeholders meeting on pharmaceutical traceability, organised by NAFDAC in Lagos, revealed that the agency's vaccine

laboratory is about 70 per cent complete.

Recalling how the nation's healthcare system went through a difficult time during COVID-19, the NAFDAC boss stressed that having narrowly escaped the onslaught of the viral infection, the production

continued on page 16

44 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED MONTHLY PUBLICATION (1979-2023)

## pharmanews

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### DR MONICA EIMUNJEZE

Dr Monica Eimunjeze was a former acting director general of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). She currently serves as the director of registration & regulatory affairs for the agency.

A pharmacist of high repute, Eimunjeze graduated from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, with a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy in 1986. She proceeded to obtain a Master of Science (MSc) in Biotechnology, Innovation and Regulatory Science, from Purdue University, and thereafter a doctorate in Pharmacy from Mercer University, Georgia, USA.

Prior to her current position, she served as the technical assistant to the director-general of NAFDAC and as the director, drug evaluation and research.

Eimunjeze has coordinated several national and international programmes to support and strengthen regulatory capacity within NAFDAC, as well as working on several projects to institute regulatory reforms.

She has a varied experience in the pharmaceutical sector, spanning different areas of practice. Her industrial exposure with GlaxoSmithKline from 1989 to 1996 saw her holding several positions, including medical representative, quality manager and regulatory affairs manager.

She has attended several courses, workshops and conferences in Quality Management Systems (QMS), Clinical Trial Regulation, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Biotechnology and Regulatory Affairs.

Eimunjeze currently serves as a member of the Expert Scientific Advisory Committee (ESAC) Medicines for Malaria Ventures (MMV). She is a member of the Task Team for the creation of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and is NAFDAC representative at the United States Pharmacopoeia, as convention observer.

She also serves as focal person for the Economic Community of West African States Medicines Regulatory Harmonisation (ECOWAS MRH) for NAFDAC and is the focal person for Dossier Assessment in the Collaborative Procedure for Registration of WHO-Prequalified Pharmaceutical Products.

Dr Eimunjeze is a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (FPSND) and is married with children.



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## Inspiration

"Accepting personal responsibility for your life frees you from outside influences – increases your self-esteem – boosts confidence in your ability to decisions – and ultimately leads to achieve success in life." **Roy T. Bennett**

"You may only succeed if you desire succeeding; you may only fail if you do not mind failing." – **Philippos**

"No one achieves greatness by becoming a generalist. You don't hone a skill by diluting your attention to its development. The only way to get to the next level is focus." – **John C. Maxwell**

"With greater confidence in yourself and your abilities, you will set bigger goals, make bigger plans and commit yourself to achieving objectives that today you only dream about." – **Brian Tracy**

"Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." – **Winston Churchill**

"Don't let the fear of losing be greater than the excitement of winning." – **Robert Kiyosaki**

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved." – **Helen Keller**

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." – **Colin Powell**

"Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." – **Conrad Hilton**

"The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do." – **Unknown**

"Don't be distracted by criticism. Remember – the only taste of success some people get is to take a bite out of you." – **Zig Ziglar**

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**Celebrating 44 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2023)**

## Naira scarcity and worsening citizens' health

On 26 October 2022, Nigerians received news from the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, that the Federal Government had concluded plans to redesign the N200, N500 and N1000 notes. The goal, according to him, was to correct certain anomalies in the circulation of money in the country.

With the new naira notes launched on 15 December, 2022, the CBN assured that both the old and the new currencies would remain in circulation till 31 January, 2023, when the old notes would cease to be legal tender. Emefiele also enlightened Nigerians on the expected benefits of the exercise, which was last conducted 20 years ago. These, he said, included enhancing economic growth, by reducing inflation; strengthening macroeconomic parameters; collapsing illegal economic activities; and stabilising exchange rates.

Sadly, while the motives for the redesigning initiative might have been laudable, events have since turned the policy to a nightmare for many Nigerians, with virtually all the banks in the country claiming to be in short supply of the new notes. Even after the extension of the expiration date of the old notes was shifted to 10 February, 2023, Nigerian did not fare any better, as the new notes remained scarce, and consequently disrupting

business activities across the country.

As a measure to ease the hardship, the Supreme Court temporarily granted an *ex parte* order directing that the new naira notes and the old ones should continue to be used as legal tender until 15 February, 2023. This, again, did not achieve much in alleviating the suffering of the citizenry, leading the apex court to extend the *ex parte* to 22 February. President Muhammadu Buhari has also directed the CBN to reintroduce the old N200 notes into circulation to ease the implementation of the policy.

A major dimension of the crises and controversies surrounding the new cash policy that should be of concern to the government and other stakeholders in the health sector is the negative impact on the health of Nigerians. The widespread hardship foisted on Nigerians by both the unavailability of the new notes and the endless wrangling over the validity of the old notes continues to be a threat to our national psyche and wellbeing. As the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) recently noted, when the naira redesign impasse is added to the unduly long week of prevailing fuel scarcity, "then

it becomes all too obvious that these forces are conspiring to further reduce the unacceptable life expectancy of the Nigerian citizen put at 53."

People suffering from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as high blood pressure, diabetes and depression are particularly at a greater risk here. Corroborating this concern, Dr Anthony Omololu, former chairman, Association of General and Private Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (AGPMPN), recently warned of a surge in the incidence of non-communicable diseases and mental disorder, with the current level of hardship and trepidation in the country. Indeed, Nigerians have begun to witness increased manifestations of symptoms of acute mental health disorder, with viral videos showing men and women stripping themselves naked in banking halls out of frustration.

Aside from NCDs and mental disorder, many Nigerians are increasingly grappling with malnutrition and undernutrition, with many families unable to access funds to buy the food they need. Prior to this time, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) had estimated that nearly 6 million children

aged 0-59 months in northwest and northeast Nigeria are likely suffering and expected to suffer from acute malnutrition from May 2022 to April 2023. With the ongoing monetary crisis, there is the inevitable reality that more children and adults will be subjected to the harsh consequences of malnutrition and undernutrition.

The case of the man, who recently slumped and died in a commercial bank in Agbor, Delta State, readily comes to mind here. While the exact cause of death was not made known, it is arguable that whatever underlying ailment he had must have been exacerbated by the lengthy time he spent queuing in the bank to get money. There are many other similar cases that go unreported daily.

From all indications, the current situation in Nigeria is surely not in favour of the health of the Nigerian masses. We therefore call on the Federal Government and the CBN to further review the current cash policy in such a way as to mitigate suffering and reduce the chances of physical, psychological and emotional breakdown among the populace.

Moreover, as the PSN has rightly suggested, all government hospitals should be compelled to initiate treatments, especially in the Accident and Emergency Units and In-Patients department while acceptable payment modalities are being sorted.

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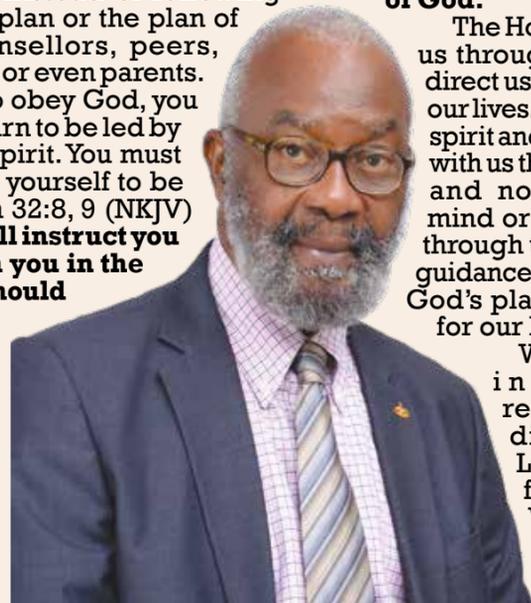
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## Divine illumination

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

**C**hildren of God can learn how they can be led by the Holy Spirit, instead of being directed by their circumstances, their senses or even by other people. One cannot claim to be a child of God if he is not led by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."**

When you are led by the Spirit of God, you follow God's plan for your life, instead of following your own plan or the plan of your counsellors, peers, guardians or even parents. In order to obey God, you have to learn to be led by the Holy Spirit. You must surrender yourself to be led. Psalm 32:8, 9 (NKJV) says, **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no**



**understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you."** If you don't understand what the Lord is saying to your spirit, you'll have some difficulty in following His plan and purpose for your life. But happy is he who follows the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We must understand that God contacts us, relates and deals with us through our spirit. God is a Spirit and man is also a spirit being. John 4:24 (NKJV) says, **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."** God is not a physical being and so does not respond to the call of the flesh. He is not a mind and so does not respond to the call of the mind – intellect and emotions. He deals with us through our spirit.

Man is a spirit, he has a soul (mind, will and emotions) and he lives in a body. He is a triune being. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) says, **"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

It is the spirit man or the inward man of a believer that hears what the Spirit of God is saying. Romans 8:16 (NKJV) says,

**"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."** You cannot feel the presence of God because feeling is a function of the flesh, and the unregenerate mind cannot receive from God. That is why Romans 2:2 (NKJV) says, **"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God."**

The Holy Spirit guides us through our spirit to direct us to God's will for our lives. He dwells in our spirit and communicates with us through the spirit and not through the mind or body. It is only through the Holy Spirit's guidance that we can fulfil God's plan and purpose for our lives.

We are individually responsible for discerning the Lord's leading for ourselves. We do not need or depend on our pastors, counsellors, guardians,

teachers, parents, or friends to discern God's leading and plan for our lives. When you depend on yourself to understand God's will for your life, you're spiritually powerful. However, many spiritually weak Christians depend on other people for their guidance and leading. They do not exercise their rights and privileges as children of God. These third parties can be relevant only in confirming what the Holy Spirit has already revealed to you.

Christians who do not exercise the power of the Holy Spirit are spiritually weak. Holy Spirit is a gift of God to His children and one may decide not to use the gift at all, or use it partially. For instance, many years ago when I attended a conference in Dallas, USA, a very good friend gave me some gifts which included a shaving set. I kept that shaving set for many years without using it until I gave it out to another person.

The Holy Spirit is our Helper, Comforter, Teacher and Guide, but if you don't ask for His services, He will remain dormant. He will not impose Himself on you. I have often engaged the Holy Spirit as my business consultant, instead of paying so-called experts. One thing is obvious. No one can do for you what the Holy Spirit should do for you.



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# You motivate or demotivate yourself

By George O. Emetuche

"The more you believe in yourself, the more you win."  
- The selling champion.

The new year has gradually taken off. It's ideal to set clear goals this year and work hard to achieve them. Be positive in all you do.

## Learn from the agama lizard

Let us learn from the agama lizard that fell from the *iroko* tree. The lizard fell from the tree, looked left and right and nodded its head in approval and celebration because it believed in the concept of: "If you don't celebrate yourself, nobody will!"

It's not easy to fall down from the mighty *iroko* tree, hence the celebration by the agama. Celebrate your wins this year; no matter how small or big. Motivate yourself. Inspire your world. Keep being positive.

We just need to develop the right mindset before setting out. This mindset positions us to do the right things at all times. You have what it takes within to achieve your goals; just believe and work it.

## The sculpture determines the shape

The artist who molds an artwork determines the shape of the work. This is where creativity comes in. The artist molds and creates beautiful piece that will stand out anywhere.

You are like a sculptor who has the ability to mold what he or she desires. You can create the world you want. You have an enormous ability within. No one can stop you, not even your environment. Believe that 2023 is your best year so far. You need to motivate yourself every day. You need to inspire your world. Nobody will do this for you.

## Conquer the inner you!

Conquer your environment! Where you are coming from does not really matter. What matters is where you are at the moment, and where you are headed. Sit at the driver's seat and take charge.

## Stay on the driver's seat

As a salesman, entrepreneur, or professional, you must decide to stay in charge. No matter what the projections say about 2023; no matter what the economic outlook is communicating; you must still choose to be positive. Yes, be positive and keep doing your best. This mindset is what gets the results, not the other way.

Self-doubt leads to failure. The person who demotivates himself is setting himself up to fail. You have what it takes to achieve your goals this 2023. The pencil is in your hands to write your script. Tell a beautiful story about you. Do what you do with passion and determination in order to succeed. Wake up every day and say: Yes I can! Do what you love and what makes you happy. Be passionate about your job or business because that's where the blessings will come from.

## Passion and determination are priceless

Don't be driven by money; rather, be consumed by passion to make a difference. Lionel Messi once said, "Money is not a motivating factor. Money doesn't thrill me or make me play better because there are benefits to

being wealthy. I'm just happy with a ball at my feet. Motivation comes from playing the game I love. If I wasn't paid to be a professional footballer, I would willingly play for nothing." This is the mindset that leads to greatness.

You must love yourself and what you do. This brings out your best. Glow and bring sunshine everywhere you go. Be happy with your job and celebrate yourself. If you are at the wrong job or business, then it's time to get a new one.

When you love what you do, you give it your best and it's your best that guarantees your way to the top. If you don't celebrate yourself, nobody will. Remember the agama lizard. When you are happy with yourself, your environment will be happy with you. Let it be a duty you owe

yourself that you inspire yourself daily.

Experts agree that happiness is our own choice. It's only you who can make yourself happy. Aristotle puts it this way "Happiness depends upon ourselves." The happy you is activated from within. This is why I like the agama lizard! The agama understands these life's lessons.

## Negativity leads to failure

Bring along sunshine anywhere you go. You can't give happiness if you have not created happiness within you. Happiness lives within.

Start-ups, emerging leaders, and professionals need to pay particular attention to this: Don't let any form of disappointment affect you negatively; this is a duty. Personal motivation ignites the fire in you for great performance, no matter what you see and how tough it seems; always inspire yourself. Nobody is under obligation



to do this for you; you are the one who will be celebrated when you succeed and not any other; so keep doing your best and inspire yourself always!

Remember that smart hard work pays. Win from within. Keep moving forward. Move from good to better, then to best.

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VITABIOTICS



# Inquest

with  
**Patrick Iwelunmor**

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The interconnectedness between climate change and the escalation of infectious diseases remains one of the serious issues baffling scientists, especially those in the medical sciences. This is the main reason the World Health Organisation, other international agencies and forward-thinking nations of the world are concerned about the quality and urgency of human response to emerging climate and environmental realities that pose threats to the socio-economic and health outcomes of populations across the world.

Many infectious diseases thrive in areas where nature unleashes its fury on the environment. The last flood disaster that ravaged Nigerian communities is a typical example. According to UNICEF, that development led to the death of 600 persons and the displacement of 1.3 million others. Diseases like cholera, viral diseases (especially water-borne infections, such as diarrheal diseases), hepatitis A and E, air-borne infections and vector-borne diseases (such as yellow fever, west Nile fever (WNF) and dengue fever) usually rear their ugly heads in flooded environments. These diseases usually take a huge financial toll on communities where

they are prevalent and sometimes lead to the overstretching of medical facilities.

While they destroy livelihoods like crop farming, mining, fishing and other forms of animal husbandry, thereby leading to food shortage and food insecurity in the long run, it is also important to note that flood disasters could also affect primary healthcare facilities, thereby making the dispensation of medical care difficult or impossible. Moreover, when people with different medical histories and cultural as well as religious backgrounds are forced by unforeseen circumstances to live together in IDP camps, there would definitely be more risks of disease transmission.

There are also risks of sexual exploitation and violence, as has been witnessed in many IDP camps in Nigeria, where the availability of basic necessities like food are usually rationed or limited. This leads to the sexual exploitation of the vulnerable, especially children and young adults who may not necessarily understand the implications of their actions in the face of hunger, poverty and hopelessness. They could end up contracting various types of sexually-transmitted infections

## Climate change and infectious diseases

which could damage their reproductive systems and affect their fertility in future.

The problem of global warming is another issue that most nations of the world are worried about,

bearing in mind its tendency to cause not only the displacement of humans but that of animals from one habitat to another. It is important to note here that when animals are displaced from their natural habitats, they form new ones by encroaching on territories where they struggle to adapt. In the course of their adaptation to the new environment, they can transmit diseases to either human or animal populations. Also, as the earth becomes troubled by rising temperatures, diseases like Ebola, Lassa, Rift Valley fever, and Monkeypox will increase, along with the risk of international transmission.

Consequently, all over the world, proactive governments find innovative ways to tackle the problem of climate change. One of such ways is the establishment of ecological funds by the Nigerian government to ensure that all the necessary palliatives are put in place to check the excesses of nature. This special fund was established in 1981 through the Federation Account Act 1981, on the recommendation of the Okigbo Commission. Decree 36 of 1984 and 106 of 1992 as well as the allocation of Federation

Account modification order of 2002 subsequently modified the act. The Fund which originally constituted 1 per cent of the Federation Account was reviewed to 2 per cent in 1992, and later 1 per cent of the derivation allocation was added, thus bringing the total percentage to 3 per cent.

Unfortunately, while the cardinal objective of this Fund, as conceived by government, was to have a pool of fund that would be principally devoted to the funding of ecological projects towards containing the rise of serious ecological problems nationwide, many state governments in Nigeria have mismanaged it. In fact, a former governor was sent to jail on account of his mismanagement of ecological funds to the tune of N1.2b, while others are engulfed with litigations at various stages.

Governments in sub-Saharan Africa must begin to think differently. Rather than convert funds meant for the development of infrastructure in their communities to personal use, they should emulate their counterparts in developed countries of the world where there are very stringent punishments for those who abuse the power bestowed on them by their office through different categories of sleaze. It can be argued that the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria and its attendant socio-economic and health outcomes could have been averted, if the ecological funds had been put into proper use.

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# Secret to graceful ageing

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor



**T**ry this little exercise. Relax all your muscles and focus on taking really deep breaths. Then slowly release the air from your lungs. Do this several times.

The air that enters our lungs brings life. And as we quicken our breathing through aerobic exercise, brisk walking or running, we feel invigorated and may even experience a feeling of euphoria.

As you fill your lungs with fresh air, rich in oxygen, these oxygen molecules pass through the walls of the alveoli into the blood. Attaching to the haemoglobin, the beating of the heart pumps this newly oxygenated blood back out to all parts of the body. This in turn releases oxygen which enters the cells, giving energy and life.

Within each cell in the body is a furnace called the mitochondrion. Imagine yourself in front of a crackling, warm fire. It burns safely and quietly most of the time. But occasionally, a cinder flies and lands on your carpet, burning a little hole in it. One cinder by itself does not pose much of a threat; but if this sparking and popping continues month after month, year after year, you will end up with a pretty ragged carpet in front of your fireplace.

This simple illustration demonstrates how the mitochondria within the cell reduces oxygen by the transfer of electrons to create energy into the form of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), and produces a by-product of water. This process goes on without a hitch at least 98 percent of the time. But the full complement of four electrons needed to reduce oxygen to water does not always happen as planned and a "free radical" is produced!

The cinder from the fireplace represents a free radical, and the carpet represents our body. Whichever part of the body receives the most free radical damage is the first to wear out and potentially develops a degenerative disease.

If it is your eyes, you could develop macular degeneration or cataracts. If it is your blood vessels, you could have a heart attack or stroke.

If it is your joint space, you could develop arthritis. If it is your brain, you could develop Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Together we have just imagined the "bright" side of oxygen and the life and warmth it brings, but we may never have known the demise that unruly free radicals causes, otherwise known as OXIDATIVE STRESS.

This oxidative stress is the underlying cause of almost all degenerative diseases. Right from the skin, you can see significant difference between the youngest and the oldest members of several generations. As on the surface (on the skin) so also the same decay is happening inside our bodies too.

Free radicals are mainly oxygen molecules or atoms that have, at least,

one unpaired electron in their outer orbit. In the process of utilising oxygen during normal metabolism within the cells to create energy (called oxidation), active free oxygen radicals are created. They essentially have an electrical charge and desire to try to get an electron from any molecule or substance in the vicinity. They have such a violent movement that they have been shown chemically to create bursts of light within the body. They are the

"area boys" in our society – in this case, our bodies.

If these free radicals are not

rapidly neutralised by an antioxidant, they may create even more violent free radicals or cause damage (aka oxidative stress) to the cell membrane, vessel wall, proteins, fats or even the DNA nucleus of the cell.

## Our allies and defenders (antioxidants)

An antioxidant is any substance that has the ability to give up an electron to a free radical and balance out the unpaired electron, which neutralises the free radical. Our body has the ability to produce three major antioxidant defense systems but not all we ultimately need. The rest of our antioxidants must come from food or nutritional supplementation.

As long as adequate amounts of antioxidants are available for the amount of free radicals produced, no damage is done to the body. But when more free radicals are produced than antioxidants available, oxidative stress occurs. When this situation persists for a prolonged period of time, we can develop a chronic degenerative disease and begin to



lose the war within.

Balance is the key to winning this ongoing war! We must always be armed with more antioxidants than free radicals in our body at every point in time.

(Continues next edition)

Mrs Chima Ejimofor is the Lead partner of Infinite Health Consult, and is available for the purchase of quality nutritional supplements, health talks and wellness seminars. She is based in Lagos, Nigeria. Telephone/WhatsApp: 07033179632, email: infinitehealthconsult@gmail.com

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# Adejoke Ayoola: Illustrious nurse administrator, educator and advocate

By Ola Aboderin



**Prof. Adejoke Ayoola**

Shortly after receiving a landmark donation of 15 million dollars from an anonymous alumnus towards the establishment of its School of Health in 2021, the management of Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, set in motion the processes that would bring the vision to reality. Paramount among the considerations was the need to “search for a dean with vision, passion, experience, and expertise to lead the school.”

That search was significant for two reasons. One, Calvin University, which had been in existence for 145 years, had built a reputation for itself as a first-rate liberal arts institution, with students from 47 US states, 49 countries, and four Canadian provinces. Two, it was the first time in its history that the institution would have a School of Health and the management understand the multifaceted implications of getting it right from the beginning.

As the search intensified for a capable administrator, one name that stood out among the list of “high calibre candidates” reviewed by the search committee (which included Provost Noah Toly and others in the upper echelons of the school’s management) was that of Prof. Adejoke Bolanle Ayoola. According to Prof. Toly, “Prof. Ayoola not only met but also clearly excelled in the critical leadership requirements established by the committee.” Accordingly, she was named the founding dean of the School of Health, with effect from 1 July 2022.

Indeed, the choice of Ayoola could not have been easier for the search committee. Aside from being renowned throughout Michigan for her life-changing public health initiatives, she had also established herself as one of the top-ranking nursing professors and administrators in the US and the world at large.

Just a year before her historic appointment as dean, she had emerged as one of three nursing professors in the state of Michigan and among just 230 distinguished nurse leaders around the world to be inducted as Fellows by the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). According to the AAN, the recognition was for her extraordinary contributions towards improving healthcare around the world. “Induction into the Academy is a significant milestone in a nurse leader’s career in which their accomplishments are honoured by their colleagues within the profession,” it said.

### Made for impact

Interestingly, despite the novelty of the School of Health initiative for Calvin University and her high-stakes position as the founding dean, Ayoola was neither daunted nor fazed by her appointment. Rather, she expressed the readiness of one who had prepared and waited all her life for such a grand opportunity. According to her, “I love creatively designing new programmes in collaboration

with people and in response to identified needs. The idea of serving as a founding dean of the School of Health is exciting because it will provide me with opportunities to work with stakeholders to shape the School of Health’s programmes.”

Ayoola’s infectious confidence sprang from five factors – her unparalleled passion as a healthcare practitioner; her transformational vision as a consummate educator and administrator; her depth of knowledge and expertise as a prolific researcher; her records of success in launching and executing health programmes that continue to improve the quality of lives of women and girls; as well as her unwavering faith in God.

Records from Calvin University show that from the time she joined the institution’s nursing department in 2007, Ayoola has demonstrated uncommon commitment towards improving the reproductive health of women. “Reproductive health problems are not just problems for developing nations, they are right here in Grand Rapids,” she once said.

Subsequently, in 2008, she helped to start a discussion on women’s health between Calvin’s nursing department and women in three Grand Rapids neighbourhoods (Baxter/Madison, Creston/Belknap, and Burton Heights). She started by asking the women what they believed they were in need of and how Calvin could help partner to meet those needs.

One of the concerns raised by the women was unintended pregnancy. In response, in 2012, Ayoola created the popular Preconception Reproductive Knowledge Promotion programme (PREKNOP). Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the initiative allowed Calvin nursing students, under the supervision of Calvin faculty and staff, to teach women about the many aspects of reproductive health.

Following the success of PREKNOP, women in Grand Rapids desired for their daughters to be taught the same things. This led Ayoola to, in 2016, establish the annual HEALTH Camp (Health, Education, and Leadership Training for a Hopeful Future), an interdisciplinary camp with the goal of promoting a culture of health among young girls. According to Calvin University, “Ayoola has made a big investment in Grand Rapids neighbourhoods, working alongside her colleagues and students to equip and empower women to make better choices for their own health and the health of their families. And she’s also placed a premium on investing in her students, which has yielded great returns.”

Beyond Grand Rapids and

Michigan, Ayoola has also been helping communities across the United States and the world to design PREKNOP and HEALTH camp programmes that are relevant to their cultural contexts. Moreover, in recognition of her expertise in maternal health research and innovative designs of community-based interventions, she has started collaborative projects in African countries, including in her home country of Nigeria.

### Background to success

Ayoola’s passion for healthcare and women’s health, in particular, started from her early years in Nigeria. “I’ve seen a lot of women go through tough times,” she said, as she reflected on growing up in Nigeria. “And I think of Christ, He’s come to give us life, so what can I do myself being a woman, and what can we do to improve women’s health? Those are questions that got everything started for me.”

These questions inspired Ayoola to study Nursing at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, graduating in 1991. Thereafter, she served as nurse tutor (graduate assistant) Department of Nursing, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (1994-1998). Obtaining her master’s degree in Nursing from same OAU, Ile-Ife, in 1998, Ayoola proceeded to serve as programme officer, Women Health Promotion Project, Ile-Ife (1998-1999); programme officer, Action Health Incorporation, Lagos (1999-2000); senior nurse tutor, Post-Basic Nursing School, National Ear Care Centre, Lagos (2000-2003).

After earning her PhD at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA, in 2007, Ayoola served as assistant professor, Department of Nursing, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA; associate professor, Department of Nursing, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, before being made a full professor in August 2020.

### Awards and recognitions

Ayoola has earned several awards and recognitions for her numerous accomplishments as health practitioner, educator and administrator. Aside from being inducted into the 2020 Class of Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing, she also won the Excellence in Nursing Research Award, by the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Society (Kappa Epsilon Chapter) in 2009; the Distinguished Alumni Award, by Obafemi Awolowo University College of Health Sciences, Ife-Ife, Osun State, in 2012; the New Investigator Award, by the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) Women’s Health & Transitions in Childbearing Research Sections, in 2013; the Faculty Lectureship Award, by Calvin College, 2013 Academic Year; the Nurse Faculty Scholar Award, by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012-2015; the Carnegie Foundation African Diaspora Fellowship, in 2017; and the Mid-Career Investigator Award, by the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS), in 2019.

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# Parenting the “write” way (2)

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)



speaking. Till I come your way next time, always remember “if you must get it right, you must do it the WRITE way”.



MacJob O.E (@dipomacjob)  
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07062456737 (Text)

We began the conversation on the above topic two editions before now, just before the Christmas break last year and we shall be delving into the topic fully right from now. Humans are very complex beings and I do not see the world getting to a stage where it would no longer require more sophisticated or innovative tools to understand human behaviour. Of course, for regular readers of this column, it should be clear to us that one very unique and effective way to understand humans is through their handwriting because every handwriting is peculiar to the writer.

It is a reality that the child of today eventually becomes the leader of tomorrow; but the question is, how well have we understood the child of today? Many parents had assumed that they knew their wards in depth but to their chagrin, this proved not to be the case at the most critical moments and occasions.

A lot of parents have argued and denied the realities of what was told to them by the caretakers of their children about the true state of their kids behaviourally. Such information could have come from their classroom teacher, school principal, counsellor, and so on. The question still remains, though: do you know your child the “write” way?

One very important benefit of graphology or handwriting analysis (Personality assessment of an individual through the handwriting) is in education - specifically child education. A lot can be discovered early and escalated, just by looking at the handwriting of the child, be it potential trouble spots or areas of strength.

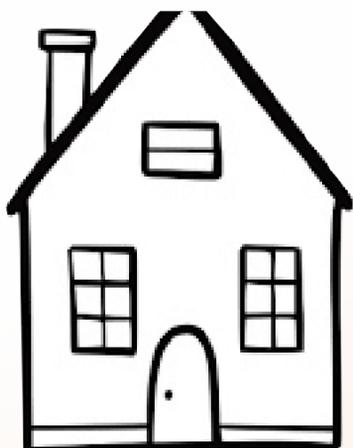
Imagine that an average classroom teacher or a parent could understand the personality traits of a child so well that she could distinguish the slow learner from the one who has aggressive tendencies; or to know that child who is rather introverted and preferring to keep to herself. Wouldn't this be a phenomenal tool in the hands of parents and educationists in helping children in their care become the very best they can be in years to come?

One major tool in graphology which has been found to be of tremendous benefit in understanding a child is the doodle. Asking a child to draw specific items or images can give a lot of insight into the child's personality in less than a minute, if handled by a skilled graphologist.

In this edition, we are going to be looking at a number of drawings, which project something deeper about the child's behaviour and can serve as a very useful diagnostic psychoanalytical tool in unravelling the behavior of any similar child.

Again do not forget that graphology can reveal the emotional state, physicality, social skills, intelligence, drives and motivation, as well as fears and defences of people. And even though doodles aren't exactly writing pieces, the fundamental principles in personality assessment can be applied to the doodles in order to gain insight into the behaviour of the doodler.

Andrea McNichol is one of the renowned graphologists who has done extensive research into this aspect of graphology. A few of them are as follows:



House doodle

To a lay person or anyone without a skill in graphology, any diagram of a house drawn by a child can pass for a homework well done or at least, attempted. However,

there are a few things a graphologist looks out for in a drawing like this which can give a lot of insight into the core personality of the child who drew it. Is the child troubled? Are there areas of concern? Are there red flags? Etc

According to Andrea McNichol, people who doodle houses frequently yearn for a strong emotional centre, a home. Those who put embellishments and designs on the house, such as curtains or pathways, communicate their readiness to invest in the home life.

However, if the doodler creates houses without doors or windows, beware. This is a sign of a troubled child and that should not be left that way. Further escalations need to be made to help this child before something very unpleasant happens in future.

In the next edition, we shall look at other doodles and their meanings or interpretation, graphologically



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One of the most dreaded diseases wreaking havoc on humanity, with a high mortality rate, is cancer. It is a disease in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably and destroy body tissue. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer is the leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020, or nearly one in six deaths.

The American Cancer Institute (ACI) explains that cancer can start almost anywhere in the human body, which is made up of trillions of cells. Normally, human cells grow and multiply (through a process called cell division) to form new cells as the body needs them. When cells grow old or become damaged, they die, and new cells take their place. Sometimes this orderly process breaks down, and abnormal or damaged cells grow and multiply when they should not. These cells may form tumours, which are lumps of tissue.

Tumours can be cancerous or not cancerous (benign). Cancerous tumours spread into, or invade, nearby tissues and can travel to distant places in the body to form new

tumours (a process called metastasis). Cancerous tumours may also be called malignant tumours. Many cancers form solid tumours, but cancers of the blood, such as leukaemia, generally do not.

The ACI further posited that benign tumours do not spread into, or invade nearby tissues. When removed, benign tumours usually do not grow back; whereas cancerous tumours sometimes do. Benign tumours can sometimes be quite large, however, and some can cause serious symptoms or be life-threatening, such as benign tumours in the brain.

The common forms of cancer in men are lung cancer, prostate cancer, colorectal cancer, stomach and liver cancer. In women, the common forms of cancer are breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, cervical and thyroid cancer. According to WHO, the most common forms of cancer recorded in 2020 were breast cancer (2.26 million cases); lung cancer (2.21 million cases); colon and rectum cancer (1.93 million cases); prostate cancer (1.41 million cases); skin cancer (non-melanoma) (1.20 million cases); and stomach cancer (1.09 million cases).

WHO statistics also revealed that

the most common causes of cancer death in 2020 were lung cancer (1.80 million deaths); colon and rectum cancer (916,000 deaths); cancer of the liver (830,000 deaths); stomach cancer (769,000 deaths); and breast cancer (685,000 deaths). "Each year, approximately 400,000 children develop cancer", WHO added.

Meanwhile, the statistics of cancer in Sahara Africa have been worrisome. For instance, according to the 2018 report from the Nigeria National Cancer Control Plan (NCCP) - an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria - cancer is responsible for 72,000 deaths in Nigeria every year, with an estimated 102,000 new cases of cancer annually. The document also revealed that breast and cervical cancers are the two most common types of cancer responsible for approximately 50.3 per cent of all cancer cases in Nigeria.

The mortality incidence ratio of cancer for Nigeria, when compared to other nations, according to the NCCP is equally disturbing. For instance, while in America, 19 per cent of all breast cancer cases result in death, in Nigeria the figure is 51 per cent.

Fatiregun O. A., et al in their study titled "A 10-Year Mortality Pattern Among Cancer Patients in Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, Lagos", which was published in 2020, showed that a total number of 6,592 deaths were recorded over ten years, out of which 1,133 cases were cancer-related deaths.

This number, according to the study puts the percentage of cancer-related deaths at 17.2 per cent. Male patients accounted for 54.0 per cent, and female patients totalled 46.0 per cent. Breast cancer accounted

for the highest mortality, followed by prostate cancer. The highest number of deaths was recorded in 2010 at 821, followed by 2011 at 799, 2015 at 780, and the least in 2017 at 513. There is also a significant general increase in odds of mortality with an increase in decades of life.

The researchers stated that about one in five deaths, over the last ten years, from the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, was related to a cancer diagnosis. They added that even though a yearly decline in the number of cancer deaths was noticed, probably due to increased awareness and governmental intervention, the percentage still remained high.

**Types of cancer**

According to experts, there are more than 100 types of cancer, depending on the nature and where it forms. According to the American Cancer institute, types of cancer are usually named for the organs or tissues where the cancers are formed. For example, lung cancer starts in the lung, and brain cancer starts in the brain. Cancers may also be described by the type of cell that formed them, such as an epithelial cell or a squamous cell. The institute however identified some types of cancers, which include the following:

**Carcinoma**

Carcinomas are formed by epithelial cells, which are the cells that cover the inside and outside surfaces of the body. They are the most common type of cancer. There are many types of epithelial cells, which often have a column-like shape when viewed under a microscope.

**Sarcoma**

*continued on page 13*



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## DESTINY BECKONS

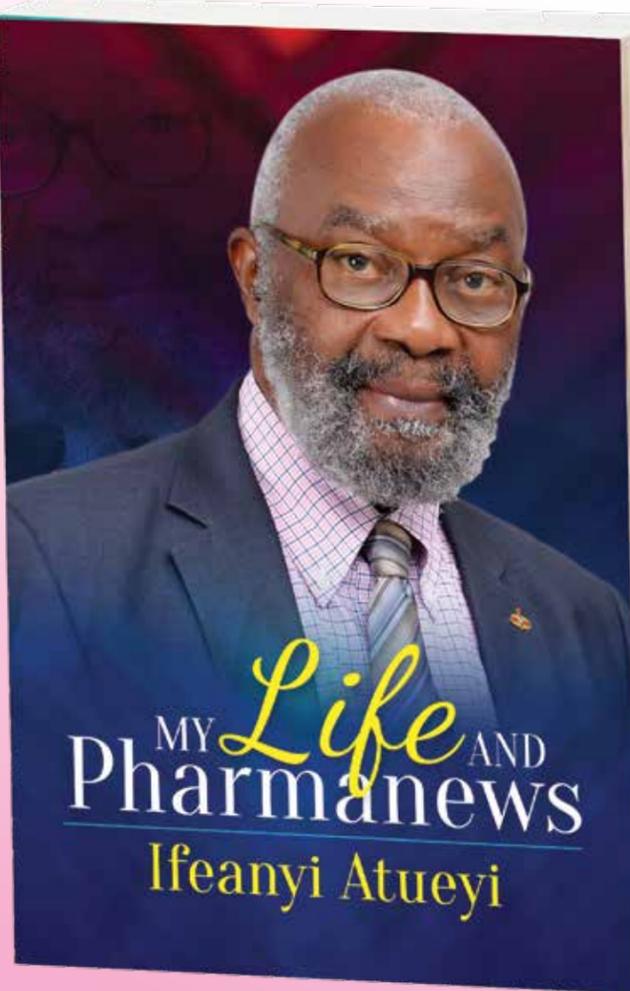
(Excerpts from **MY LIFE AND PHARMANEWS** by Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi)

Having sufficiently given details of my background, as much as expediency allows, I must now proceed in my narration to the actual circumstances that heralded and necessitated the birth of **Pharmanews**. I mentioned in the preceding chapter that, shortly after the civil war, I tried to rehabilitate myself by securing a job at Toki Pharmacy in Lagos. I worked at the company's headquarters at Ajele Street, Campos Square, Lagos Island.

In all, however, my stay at Toki was relatively brief. This had nothing to do with the working conditions - which were quite good; rather, it was that, just as it was in the years preceding the time that I eventually obtained the B.Pharm, I began to have that same feeling of unease that communicated a singular message to me - that I wasn't where I was meant to be.

At this time, something

happened that might have changed the direction of my destiny. I received the information that the University of Ife wanted the four of us who had B.Pharm



(second upper division) to join the academic staff. Ajibola Olaniyi and Femi Sowemimo, who had not been affected by the war, had already accepted the offer.

It is necessary that I point out here that while my stay at Toki was indeed brief, my impact in the company was unprecedented

Bona Obiorah and I had just emerged from the civil war. Bona accepted the offer but I continued thinking about it. Something kept telling me that I had already fulfilled my ambition in the academia by getting the B.Pharm. I had no desire for a PhD or becoming a lecturer. Yet, I wasn't exactly sure of what I was supposed to be doing. I was not even asking God in prayer. But it was obvious to me that there was something about me that I did not yet know. Therefore, I did not show interest in the academic career.

### Legacy of Honesty

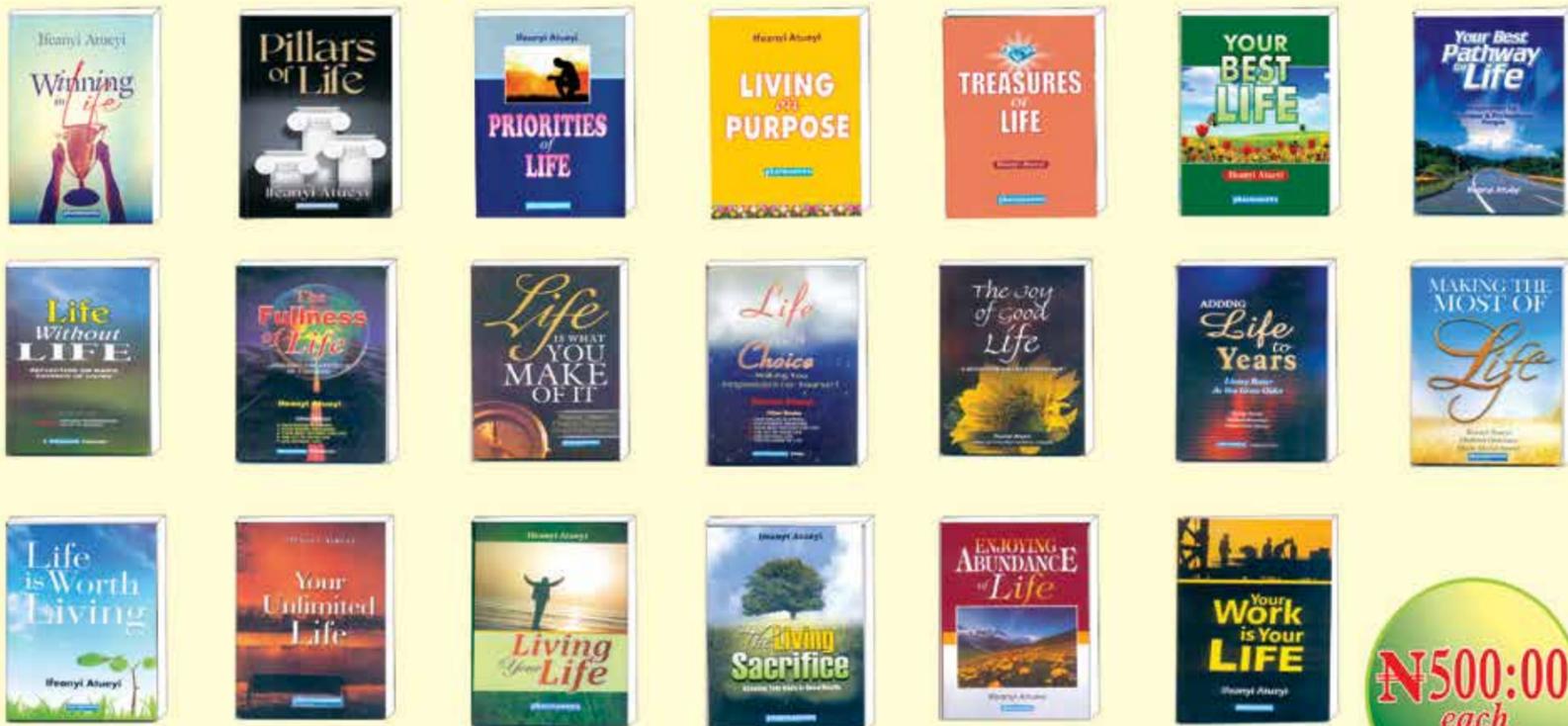
and enduring. In other words, as it was in all the other companies where I worked before starting **Pharmanews**, I made sure not to allow the recurrent dissatisfaction within me to affect my commitment to my job or the good relationship I had with my employers. Chief Akoni and I remained friends, long after I had left his company.

Interestingly, I didn't know how much positive impression I had made on Chief Akoni, until we met at a social function and he excitedly introduced me to other colleagues as the only person who did not steal from his company. Words cannot describe how pleasantly surprised I was by that commendation. I never knew he very closely observed me while I was with him. In fact, so happy was Chief Akoni about my character and integrity that he continued to give the same commendation about me at all other events, where we had a chance to meet.

On my part, the discovery that a life of honesty and industry could produce such a tremendous effect on an employer spurred me to resolve to replicate same qualities in all the places I would ever work. And, as the reader will subsequently discover, this resolution not only eventually opened doors for me but also significantly influenced the philosophy on which **Pharmanews** was built.

Continues next edition

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## Modern approaches to cancer treatment

continued from page 11

Sarcomas are another type of cancers that form in the bone and soft tissues, including muscle, fat, blood vessels, lymph vessels, and fibrous tissue (such as tendons and ligaments). Osteosarcoma is the most common form of these.

### Leukaemia

Leukaemias are cancers that begin in the blood-forming tissue of the bone marrow. These cancers do not form solid tumours. Instead, large numbers of abnormal white blood cells (leukaemia cells and leukemic blast cells) build up in the blood and bone marrow, crowding out normal blood cells. The low level of normal blood cells can make it harder for the body to get oxygen to its tissues, control bleeding, or fight infections.

There are four common types of leukaemia, which are grouped based on how quickly the disease gets worse; hence there is **acute leukaemia** and there is **chronic leukaemia**. Acute leukaemia progresses quickly and aggressively, and usually requires immediate treatment. Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia on the other hand is a type of cancer in which the bone marrow makes too many lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell).

The other two types of leukaemia are based on the type of blood cell the cancer starts in; hence there is **lymphoblastic leukaemia** and there is also **myeloid leukaemia**. According to the UK National Health Service, lymphoblastic leukaemia is a type of cancer that affects white blood cells. It progresses quickly and aggressively and also requires immediate treatment. The disease, NHS said can affect both adults and children, adding that around 790 people are diagnosed with the condition each year in the UK.

Myeloid leukaemia on the other hand is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. It is the most common type of acute leukaemia in adults. This type of cancer usually gets worse quickly if it is not treated

### Lymphoma

Lymphoma is another type of cancer that begins in lymphocytes (T cells or B cells). These are disease-fighting white blood cells that are part of the immune system. In lymphoma, abnormal lymphocytes build up in lymph nodes and lymph vessels, as well as in other organs of the body.

There are two main types of lymphoma. The first is **Hodgkin lymphoma**. People with Hodgkin lymphoma have abnormal lymphocytes that are called Reed-Sternberg cells. These cells usually form from B cells. The second one is **non-Hodgkin lymphoma** which is a large group of cancers that start in the lymphocytes. The cancers can grow quickly or slowly and can form from B cells or T cells.

### Multiple myeloma

Multiple myeloma is cancer that begins in plasma cells, another type of immune cell. The abnormal plasma cells, called myeloma cells, build up in the bone marrow and form tumours in bones all through the body. Multiple myeloma is also called plasma cell myeloma and Kahler disease.

### Melanoma

Melanoma is cancer that begins in cells that become melanocytes, which are specialised cells that make melanin (the pigment that gives skin its colour). Most melanomas form on the skin, but melanomas can also form in other pigmented tissues, such



as the eye.

### Brain and spinal cord tumours

There are different types of brain and spinal cord tumours. These tumours are named based on the type of cell in which they are formed and where the tumour first formed in

the central nervous system. Brain tumours can be benign or malignant

The American Cancer Institute noted that brain tumours rarely spread to other parts of the body, but most of them can spread through the brain tissue. Even so-called benign brain tumours can, as they grow,

press on and destroy normal brain tissue, which can lead to serious or sometimes even life-threatening damage.

For this reason, doctors usually speak of brain tumours, rather than brain cancers. The ACI stated further that brain and spinal cord tumours tend to be different in adults and children. They often form in different areas, develop from different cell types, and may have a different outlooks and treatments.

### Other types of tumours

**Germ cell tumours:** Germ cell tumours are a type of tumour that begins in the cells that give rise to sperm or eggs. These tumours can occur almost anywhere in the body and can be either benign or malignant.

**Neuroendocrine tumours:** These form from cells that release hormones into the blood in response to a signal from the nervous system. These tumours, which may make higher-than-normal amounts of

continued on page 15

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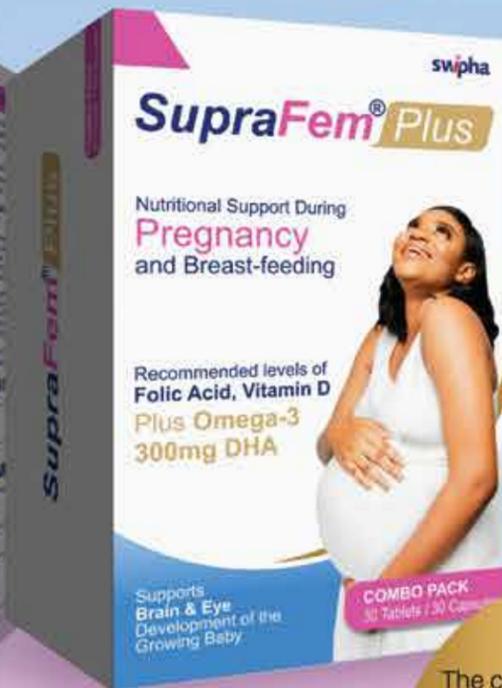
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## Modern approaches to cancer treatment

continued from page 13

hormones, can cause many different symptoms. Neuroendocrine tumours may be benign or malignant.

**Carcinoid tumors:** Carcinoid tumours are a type of neuroendocrine tumour. They are slow-growing tumours that are usually found in the gastrointestinal system (most often in the rectum and small intestine). Carcinoid tumours may spread to the liver or other sites in the body, and they may secrete substances such as serotonin or prostaglandins, causing carcinoid syndrome.

### How cancers increase in size

According to Cancer Research UK, cancer cells stay inside the body tissue from which they have developed. The cancer cells grow and divide to create more cells and will eventually form a tumour. A tumour may contain millions of cancer cells. All body tissues have a layer, also known as a membrane, that keeps the cells of that tissue inside. This is the basement membrane. Cancer cells can break through this membrane; when this happens, it is called invasive cancer.

As the tumour gets bigger, its centre gets further away from the blood vessels in the area where it is growing. So the centre of the tumour gets less and less oxygen and nutrients. Like healthy cells, cancer cells cannot live without oxygen and nutrients. So they send out signals called angiogenic factors. These encourage new blood vessels to grow into the tumour. This is called angiogenesis.

Without blood supply, a tumour cannot grow much bigger than a pin



head. Once a cancer can stimulate blood vessel growth, it can grow bigger. It stimulates hundreds of new small blood vessels (capillaries). As the tumour grows and takes up more space, it begins to press on the normal body tissue nearby. The tumour growth will then force itself through the normal tissue.

### Cancer vs genes

According to the ACI, cancer is a genetic disease. This means that it is caused by changes to genes that control the way cells function, especially how they grow and divide. Incidentally, genetic changes that cause cancer can happen as result of errors that occur as cells divide, because of damage to DNA caused by harmful substances in the environment, such as the chemicals in tobacco smoke and ultraviolet

rays from the sun. It can also happen because they were inherited from our parents.

The body normally eliminates cells with damaged DNA before they turn cancerous. But the body's ability to do so goes down as we age. This is part of the reason why there is a higher risk of cancer later in life. Each person's cancer has a unique combination of genetic changes. As the cancer continues to grow, additional changes will occur. Even within the same tumour, different cells may have different genetic changes.

### Signs and symptoms of cancer

The American Cancer Society says the signs and symptoms of cancer depend on where the cancer is, how big it is, and how much it affects nearby organs or tissues. If a cancer has spread (metastasised),

signs or symptoms may appear in different parts of the body.

A cancer may also cause symptoms like fever, extreme tiredness (fatigue), or weight loss. This may be because cancer cells use up much of the body's energy supply. Or the cancer could release substances that change the way the body makes energy. Cancer can also cause the immune system to react in ways that produce these signs and symptoms.

Other symptoms may be eating problems such as not feeling hungry, trouble swallowing, belly pain, or nausea and vomiting; swelling or lumps anywhere in the body; thickening or lump in the breast or other part of the body; pain, especially new or with no known reason, that does not go away or gets worse; skin changes such as a lump that bleeds or turns scaly; a sore that does not heal; yellowish colour to the skin or eyes (jaundice); cough or hoarseness that does not go away; unusual bleeding or bruising for no known reason; or a change in how your stools look.

At times, there may be bladder changes, such as pain when passing urine, blood in the urine or needing to pass urine more or less often; fever or night sweats; headaches; vision or hearing problems; mouth changes such as sores, bleeding, pain, or numbness; among others. The Society however advises patients to see a doctor for any major changes in the way their body works or feeling, especially if it lasts for a long time or gets worse.

According to Meredith Goodwin, an associate professor of Family Medicine, California Northstate University, who is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Family

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# NAFDAC vaccine lab to be ready in six months, says DG

continued from page 1



**Prof. Moji Adeyeye**  
NAFDAC Director General

of local vaccines and medicines must be a priority for any reasonable nation.

According to her, the pandemic has shown that “if you don’t have your own, you have to depend on others”, adding that “NAFDAC is the only agency in sub-Saharan Africa that has its own in-house biologics and vaccine laboratory. We have a lot going for us as a country. We just have to get our acts together and start producing.

While revealing that the COFAX facilities targeted supplying vaccine to only 20 per cent of Nigeria’s population in their vaccine distribution to low-income countries during COVID-19, Adeyeye said: “We didn’t even get to that level because of the low prevalence. But you can imagine if we had very high prevalence. And you never know what is around the corner. Whether it’s a pandemic or an epidemic, we need to manufacture our own vaccines.”

She further revealed that the agency had been taking some significant steps towards the achievement of the vaccine production milestone. According to her, NAFDAC had been going through a lot of transformation, from laboratory to registration to job evaluation and research. She also said that staff of the agency had gone on two rounds of training in South Korea, with the support of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Adeyeye equally averred that, sequel to the recognition given to Nigeria in February 2022 as one of the six countries that can manufacture vaccines, the Federal Government has entered into a Public Private Partnership arrangement with Biovaccines Nigeria Limited (BVNL). She added that one or two other private companies had also indicated serious interests to manufacture vaccines in Nigeria.

The NAFDAC DG however noted that to prevent any

anomalies in the production chain when vaccine production eventually commences in the country, manufacturers must know their chain, stressing that this will enhance easy detection of middlemen who might want to creep into the chain surreptitiously.

“You must know your distributors, the wholesalers, retailers. It is when you know your chain that you can guarantee the quality. It will be easier to follow through and it will be easier to identify anybody that is trying to infiltrate that chain or infiltrate your trade”, she warned.

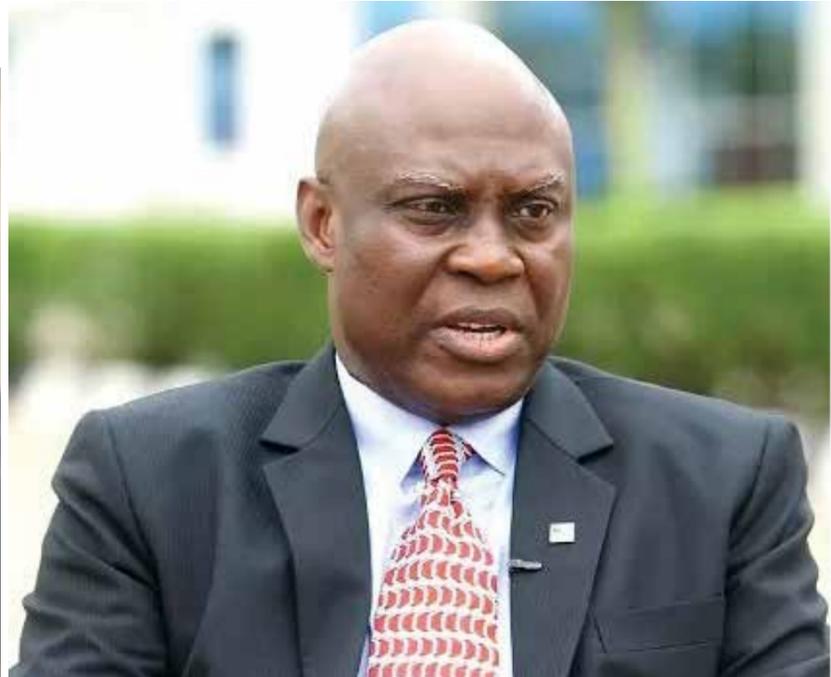
Adeyeye also mentioned other efforts of NAFDAC in standardising local medicine manufacturing in the country, such as the ML3 which was achieved four years ago. She disclosed that the agency is approaching ML4 approval from the World Health Organisation, noting that this will help to launch locally made medicines into the global pharmaceutical market.

She further revealed that, while it took Ghana 13 years to get ML3, it took Nigeria only four years to attain the prestigious status, adding that achieving ML4 will significantly help the country’s manufacturing industry to grow.

In her words: “It will also help importers that are migrating from importation of pharmaceutical products to local manufacturing. It will help in terms of trade.

“We are going to strengthen our operations and be more effective. We are going to get ML4. We are going to get marked for World Listed Authority, apart from ML4.”

Also speaking at the meeting, Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN) Dr Fidelis Ayebae, assured NAFDAC of the group’s unalloyed support in the agency’s efforts to attain the WHO Maturity Level 4 status



**Dr Fidelis Ayebae**  
Chairman, PMG-MAN

and launch Nigeria into the league of vaccines and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) producers in the world.

Ayebae, who is also the Chief Executive Officer, Fidson Healthcare Plc, vowed to mobilise other chief executive officers of pharmaceutical companies in the country towards collaborating with NAFDAC to make its oversight responsibility over the industry more effective and help the industry to grow.

He added that PMG-MAN would form a technical committee with NAFDAC that would work with the agency to ensure that the industry attains greater heights.

“Let me assure you that if there is one body in foods and drugs and other related chemicals which are under your purview that wants you to succeed more than anything else, it is PMG-MAN,” he said.

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## Modern approaches to cancer treatment

continued from page 15

Physicians, sometimes, it is possible to find cancer before one begins to have symptoms. She therefore recommends cancer-related check-ups and certain tests for people even though they have no symptoms, saying this will help to find certain cancers early.

### Diagnosing cancer

If someone is experiencing cancer symptoms, further diagnostic testing is needed. This is because, sometimes, other conditions mimic cancer. Also oncologists have said the first step in cancer diagnosing is collection of personal and family health history, which should be followed by performing a physical examination. "Doctor may order additional diagnostics such as laboratory or imaging scans and other tests, as there is no standalone test to detect cancer", the ACS said.

However, some of the screening that the doctor may recommend will include:

**Physical exam:** The doctor may feel certain areas of the body for lumps that may indicate cancer. During a physical exam, the doctor may look for abnormalities, such as changes in skin colour or enlargement of an organ that may indicate the presence of cancer.

**Laboratory tests:** Laboratory tests, such as urine and blood tests, may help the doctor to identify abnormalities that can be caused by cancer. For instance, in people with leukaemia, a common blood test called complete blood count may reveal an unusual number or type of white blood cells. In the laboratory, doctors look at cell samples under the microscope. According to the ACS, while normal cells look uniform, with similar sizes and orderly organisation, cancer cells look less orderly, with varying sizes and without apparent organisation.

**Biopsy:** During a biopsy, the doctor collects a sample of cells for testing in the laboratory. There are several ways of collecting a sample. Which biopsy procedure is right for a patient depends on their type of cancer and its location. In most situations, a biopsy is the only way to definitively diagnose cancer.

**Imaging tests:** Imaging tests allow the doctor to examine the bones and internal organs in a non-invasive way. Imaging tests used in diagnosing cancer may include a computerised tomography (CT) scan, bone scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET) scan, ultrasound and X-ray, among others.

### Diagnostic imaging tests

According to the ACS, a variety of imaging options are available to help detect cancer based on its location in the body. They include:

**Barium swallow or barium enema:** A barium swallow may be used to detect cancerous changes to the throat or oesophagus. During this procedure, a solution containing barium is ingested orally, and X-rays are taken. Similarly, a barium enema may be given in order to view the colon and rectum.

**Bone scan:** To help detect cancer that has spread to the bone, a small amount of radioactive dye may be injected intravenously before nuclear imaging is used to examine the bone on a cellular level for cancerous changes.

**Computed tomography (CT) scan:** This is one of the most commonly used imaging tests in the detection of cancer. CT scans provide



precise images to help detect cancer and determine its exact location.

**DEXA (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry) scan:** This scan provides a measurement of bone mineral density to help doctors determine the patient's overall bone health and function.

**Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI):** This test uses radiofrequency waves to create images of internal organs. MRIs help the care team to detect cancerous tissue, and they are used frequently in cancer diagnosis.

**Mammography:** this is used to detect breast cancer. Mammograms utilise a low-dose X-ray to produce images of the breast tissue, allowing the doctor to visualise any abnormalities.

**Nuclear medicine imaging:** A small amount of radioactive dye is administered orally, intravenously or by inhalation, and a camera is used to take detailed images of internal structures. This type of imaging helps detect cancers of the brain, breast, bladder, kidney, thyroid, liver, lung and bone.

**Ultrasound:** Frequently used to help detect cancer, ultrasounds use high-frequency sound waves to produce images of the internal organs. These tests allow doctor to view the inside of the body in real time, capturing organ movement and function.

**X-ray:** This imaging test is used on multiple areas of the body in order to help detect, stage and treat cancer. X-rays use high-energy electromagnetic radiation to produce images.

### Diagnostic procedures

Some tests are used to help detect cancer by analysing a tissue or blood sample; they include:

**Anoscopy:** To check for abnormalities of the rectum or to take a biopsy, an anoscopy may be performed. A tool called an anoscope is used to view the rectum and anus to help detect cancer.

**Biopsy:** Doctor may remove a tissue or fluid sample to test it for cancerous cells. Biopsies are the only way to know for sure if a patient has cancer.

**Bronchoscopy:** To help detect cancers of the lung or oesophagus, a thin instrument with a lighted camera is inserted through the nose or mouth to look for abnormal areas and/or collect a biopsy.

**Colonoscopy:** Cancer of the colon and/or rectum is often detected through a colonoscopy. During the test, the doctor will insert a thin, lighted tube called a colonoscope into the patient's colon, and any suspicious growths will be removed and analysed.

**Lumbar puncture:** Also known as a spinal tap, this procedure is used to collect a sample of the cerebrospinal fluid in order to help detect cancers of the brain, spine or leukaemia.

**Pap test:** this is a screening test used to detect cervical cancer. The Pap test allows doctor to collect a sample of cervical cells to be examined microscopically in a laboratory.

It is pertinent to state that a thorough and accurate cancer diagnosis, according to oncologists, is the first step in developing an individualised cancer treatment plan.

### Treatment of cancer

When cancer is diagnosed, the doctor will recommend certain kinds of treatment. The best cancer treatment however depends on the kind of cancer one has and how far the cancer has spread in the body. While recommending a treatment, doctor will also keep in mind the age of the patients and any other health problems the patient may have.

According to the American Centres for Disease Control, sometimes, treatment is meant to cure the cancer, and sometimes, the goal is to stop the cancer from spreading further. Some treatments may be given to reduce the side-effects of other treatments and make a patient more comfortable, otherwise known as palliative care. While some people with cancer will have only one treatment, some people will have a combination of treatments. Cancer treatment may include:

**Hormone therapy:** Hormone therapy is a treatment that slows or stops the growth of breast and prostate cancers that use hormones to grow.

**Surgery:** When used to treat cancer, surgery is a procedure in which a surgeon removes cancer from the body.

**Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells.

**Hyperthermia:** Hyperthermia is a type of treatment in which body tissue is heated to as high as 113 °F to help damage and kill cancer cells with little or no harm to normal tissue.

**Immunotherapy:** Immunotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that helps the immune system fight cancer.

**Targeted therapy:** Targeted therapy is a type of cancer treatment that targets the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide, and spread.

**Photodynamic therapy:** Photodynamic therapy uses a drug activated by light to kill cancer and other abnormal cells.

**Radiation therapy:** Radiation therapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses high doses of radiation to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours

**Stem cell transplant:** Stem cell transplants are procedures that restore stem cells that grow into blood cells in people who have had theirs destroyed by high doses of chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

### Is Cancer preventable?

Cancer is preventable, to some extent. According to WHO, between 30-50 per cent of all cancer cases are preventable. WHO added that prevention offers the most cost-effective, long-term strategy for the control of cancer. Among others, some of the measures to prevent cancer include:

**Quit smoking:** according to WHO, tobacco smoke has more than 7000 chemicals and at least 250 are known to be harmful and at least 69 are known to cause cancer. Worldwide, tobacco use is the single greatest avoidable risk factor for cancer mortality and kills more than eight million people each year, from cancer and other diseases. Nearly 80 per cent of the 1.1 billion smokers in the world live in low- and middle-income countries. Hence, quitting smoking will help to prevent cancer.

**Regular physical activity and healthy body weight:** Overweight and obesity, according to WHO, are linked to many types of cancer, such as oesophagus cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, endometrial and kidney cancers. Conversely, regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy body weight, and a healthy diet, can help to reduce cancer risk. "Excess body mass was responsible for 3.4 per cent of cancers in 2012, including 110 000 cases of breast cancer per year", WHO said.

**Avoid alcohol use:** Alcohol use is a risk factor for many cancer types, including cancer of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colorectal and breast. "Risk of cancer increases with the amount of alcohol consumed. In 2016, alcohol-attributable cancers were estimated to be responsible for 400,000 deaths worldwide, predominantly among men", WHO said.

**Avoid exposure to radiation:** According to WHO, exposure to all types of ionising radiation increases the risk of various types of malignancy, including leukaemia and a number of solid tumours. Risks increase when the exposure occurs at a young age and also when the exposure amount is higher. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, and in particular solar radiation, is carcinogenic to humans, causing all major types of skin cancer, such as basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) and melanoma.

**Wearing sunscreen:** Skin cancer is the most common and most preventable of cancers. "The most important thing you can do is limit sun exposure and protect your head and neck, where most skin cancers appear, with a sunscreen that blocks UVA and UVB radiation," a medical doctor and professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine, Darrell Rigel said.

**Breastfeeding:** This is another potent prevention, most especially for breast cancer. According to a study published in the July 20, 2002, issue of *The Lancet*, an international weekly general medical journal, "the longer you breastfeed your baby, the greater your breast cancer risk is reduced."

**Report compiled by Ranmilowo Ojalumo with additional reports from World Health Organisation, Kriehoff-Henning E, Folkerts et al 2017, Healthline, Cancer Research UK, American Cancer Society, American Cancer Institute, The Lancet, The Prevent Cancer Foundation, Cancer Treatment Centre of America, Mayo Clinic, the American National Library of Medicine, the Federal Ministry of Health (Nigeria) and Nigeria National Cancer Control Plan.**

# Diphtheria: History and important facts

By Patrick Iwelunmor

**D**iphtheria is an acute bacterial disease, caused by toxin-producing strains of *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. The disease derives its name from the Greek "diphtheria", which means "leather hide". Hippocrates first described the disease in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE after which epidemics were described in the 6<sup>th</sup> century by Aetius.

Edwin Klebs first did the observation of the bacterium in diphtheritic membranes in 1883, while Friedrich Löffler carried out the cultivation in 1884. Diphtheria gained its official name from French physician Pierre Bretonneau (1778-1862), who called the disease diphtérie. Bretonneau also distinguished diphtheria from scarlet fever.

Prophylactic attempts against the disease were made in the early 1900s with combinations of toxin and antitoxin, leading to the development of the diphtheria toxoid in 1920. The toxoid was not widely used until 1930. It was subsequently incorporated into the tetanus toxoid and pertussis vaccine and became widely used in 1940.

Persons susceptible to diphtheria may acquire the toxigenic bacilli in the nasopharynx. The dangerous thing about the bacteria is that they produce toxins that inhibit cellular protein synthesis and are responsible for the destruction of local tissue and the formation of pseudomembrane which is characteristic of the disease.

The mechanism of damage caused by diphtheria involves the absorption of the toxins produced at the site of the membrane into the bloodstream from where they are then distributed to the tissues of the body. Major complications such as myocarditis, polyneuropathies, nephritis and thrombocytopenia are strongly linked to the toxins.

There are also non-toxin producing strains of *C. diphtheria* that can cause severe exudative pharyngitis. Other non-toxigenic strains of *C. diphtheria* are manifested in conditions such as cutaneous lesions, endocarditis, bacteremia, and septic arthritis.

Bretonneau recorded the first successful use of tracheotomy in a case of diphtheria. Having been used to treat other conditions, the procedure involves cutting an opening in the trachea and inserting a tube through the opening to allow passage of air and the evacuation of secretions. After Bretonneau's several failed attempts in the use of this procedure had resulted in the death of patients, another French physician, Armand Trousseau (1801-1867), recorded a survival rate of about 25 per cent in the tracheotomies he performed on diphtheria sufferers.

Before vaccines for the disease were developed, diphtheria had been



one of the most common causes of illness and death among children. Since the introduction of diphtheria vaccines in the 1920s and the implementation of universal childhood vaccination in the 1940s, the disease has been well managed in the United States and other countries of the world.

The successes recorded in the fight against the disease notwithstanding, diphtheria has continued to pose a public health threat, even in recent years. The World Health Organisation (WHO) had reported 10,107 cases in 2020. The figure showed a decline, compared to the number of cases recorded in previous years. However, it is believed that it was impacted

by the COVID-19 epidemic.

Symptoms of diphtheria usually appear two to five days after infection and they include a thick grey-white coating that may cover the back of your throat, nose and tongue, a high temperature (fever) and sore throat. Others are swollen glands in the neck and difficulty breathing and swallowing.

The disease can be spread through coughs and sneezes or through close contact with someone who is infected. You can also get it by sharing items such as cups, cutlery, clothing or bedding, with an infected person.

In places with very poor hygiene, cutaneous diphtheria is common. Cutaneous diphtheria causes pus-filled blisters on the legs, feet and hands, as well as large ulcers surrounded by red, sore-looking skin.

Diphtheria can be treated with antibiotics, such as Penicillin and macrolide, which are groups of empirical antibiotics used to eradicate toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* based on the guidelines of the WHO and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Treatment usually lasts two to three weeks. Any skin ulcers usually heal within two to three months but may leave a scar. Persons who have been in close contact with patients who have diphtheria may also need to take antibiotics or may be given a dose of the diphtheria vaccination.

Diphtheria vaccines are available and they help prevent an infection caused by *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* bacteria. There are four kinds of vaccines used in the United States today to help protect against diphtheria and all of them provide protection against other diseases. They are diphtheria and tetanus (DT) vaccines, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP) vaccines, tetanus and diphtheria (Td) vaccines and tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) vaccines.



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Reference:  
1. Zolpidem An Update of its Pharmacology, Therapeutic Efficacy and Tolerability in the Treatment of Insomnia Kristin J. Holm and Karen L. Goa



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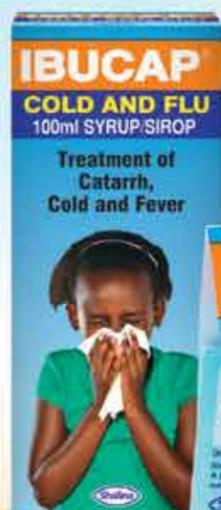
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# Swimming: Trusted therapy for stroke patients, others

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

Swimming is one of the ancient sports that is globally enjoyed and appreciated. More than that, it is an activity that comes with many health benefits, one of which is accelerated recovery for stroke patients. Experts have particularly emphasised that swimming is a good sport that physicians and other caregivers should recommend for stroke patients for better recovery.

According to the American National Stroke Association and the American National Swimming Foundation (NSPF), swimming is the most effective exercise for post-stroke patients due to its low-impact. A study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* examined two groups of stroke patients that were receiving therapy and found that water exercise was more potent in stroke recovery process.

The study, carried out by seven researchers, was titled, "Effect of Underwater Exercise on Lower-Extremity Function and Quality of Life in Post-Stroke Patients: A Pilot Controlled Clinical Trial". The researchers conducted the study at a research facility attached to a rehabilitation hospital, to ascertain whether repeated swimming (underwater exercise) enhances the therapeutic effect of conventional therapy for post-stroke patients.

About 120 consecutive post-stroke inpatients were used as case study in the research. Patients were assigned to an experimental group and a control group. Patients in the experimental group received both repeated underwater exercise (swimming) and conventional rehabilitation therapy. While



the second group received only conventional therapy.

At the end of the study, greater improvement was recorded for the patients that swam; that is, those who received both repeated underwater exercise (swimming) and conventional rehabilitation therapy. It was on this basis that the researchers recommended both conventional therapy and swimming (repeated underwater exercise) for post-stroke patients.

## Further findings

Another study, which examined stroke survivors, whose walking had been affected by some level of paralysis, found out that patients who swim (under water exercise) experienced an increase in leg strength and balance, as well as improvements in gait and overall quality of life. The findings were presented to Florida Gulf Coast University.

While speaking on the benefit of swimming to stroke patients' recovery, Dr Jackie Nagle Zera, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Exercise Science and Sports Studies, John Carroll University, Ohio, said, "People who have had a stroke will have a hard time with mobility in one side of the body. The buoyancy factor of water allows them a more comfortable place to start; it reduces the risk of falling.

"One positive benefit for cardio patients participating in water exercise (swimming) is the increase in hydrostatic pressure when the body is in water, which helps blood to flow back up to the heart more easily. This, in turn, reduces the amount of stress and strain put on the heart, allowing patients to make physical gains without risking cardiovascular complications."

Additionally, a study published in the *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*, examined how stroke patients' cardiorespiratory systems responded to exercise stress tests, both on land and water treadmills. The researchers found out that the aquatic treadmill exercise yielded better results, showing its potential for effective aerobic training in this population.

Yet another study which investigated the cardiorespiratory responses of patients with sub-acute stroke to exercise stress tests, with aquatic and land treadmills, discovered that water exercise elicited significantly better peak cardiorespiratory responses than land exercise. The result of the study, which had the title "Peak Cardiorespiratory Responses of Patients with Sub-acute Stroke During Land and Aquatic Treadmill Exercise" was also published in the *American National Library of Medicine*.

## Additional benefits

Experts have equally affirmed that swimming will not just improve stroke recovery process; it can also be a key to preventing the condition. Studies have shown that regular aerobic activity improves cardiovascular health; hence using a swim spa for daily exercise is a perfect way to stay fit. "Swimming can help keep your weight under control, lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and keep you relaxed", a swim spa director said.

But swimming is not just for those preventing or recovering from stroke; it actually has benefits for everyone. Dr Jabeen Begum, in a review, said swimming is one of the aerobic exercises that get the heart pumping. "During aerobic exercise, your blood pumps quickly throughout your body and your lungs take in more oxygen and one of the most important benefits of aerobic exercise is that it can increase your life expectancy," Begum said.

In view of these immense benefits, experts have recommended that swimming should be a part of everyone's daily routine. Caregivers for stroke recovery patients should also start taking their patients to swimming since it has been established that swimming will enhance their recovery process.

Experts have also advised those who want to start swimming to let go of their fear. Alan Fang, a professional swimmer and a resource person with wikihow, said a lot of people put off learning how to swim because they are afraid.

However, while advising amateur swimmers and those who want to learn swimming, Fang said: "Don't swim alone. Always go for swimming with one other person who is a strong swimmer, if not several other people. An area with a lifeguard is usually the best place to swim.

"Don't learn swimming in moving water. If you're learning to swim in an ocean or river, you will need to be more aware of the motion of the water. If you must learn to swim this way, try to make sure you're with someone who knows what he or she is doing.

"Use proper safety gear, until you have enough water experience and are reasonably comfortable in the water."

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## Experts harp on quality, as Kayhelt launches KVIT Plus, others

- Awards outstanding customers, staff

By Adebayo Oladejo

In line with the vision to offer the right products, at the right quality and affordable rates to consumers, Kayhelt Pharma, an indigenous pharmaceutical firm, has unveiled KVIT Plus capsules and a range of anti-hepatitis products into the Nigerian pharma market.

The unveiling ceremony, which recently took place at The Elliel Event Centre, Gold & Base, Jos, Plateau State, had eminent pharmacists, nurses, doctors, and other dignitaries in attendance.

Aside from KVIT Plus, which is a combination of multivitamin and antioxidant capsules, other products unveiled included Velso, a fixed-dose combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir, which comes in 100mg and 400mg; Sofos, which contains the active substance, sofosbuvir which is given to treat hepatitis C virus infection in adults of 18 years and older; and Wymly, a tablet containing tenofovir alafenamide for oral administration.

Others are Gentovir, a prescription medicine used to treat chronic (long-lasting) hepatitis B virus (HBV) in people 12 years of age and older; and Dasvir, daclatasvir, an inhibitor of HCV nonstructural protein, which is indicated for use with sofosbuvir, with or without ribavirin, for the treatment of patients with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotype 1 or genotype 3 infection.

In his welcome remarks at the event, the Managing Director, Kayhelt Pharma, Pharm. (Sir) Bankole Aminu Ezebuilo, explained that the launch was in line with the company's vision and mission, adding that the company had come to fill that gap that is missing in the pharma sector.

He disclosed that Kayhelt had shown tremendous growth over a concise time, adding that the company had a track record of offering top-quality products and that he had no doubt that the launched products would do well.

While unveiling the anti-hepatitis range, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, managing director, of Pharmaplus Nigeria Limited and former president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), explained that, as a past president of PSN, he understands the importance of quality drugs for the sake of humanity, adding that Ezebuilo has the love of humanity at heart.

"These products are meant to help hepatitis patients. As we all know, we have about 296 million people with hepatitis infection, out of which we have 1.5 million infections every year, and almost 900,000 deaths. So, this gentleman felt there should be a solution in order to help humanity. In partnership with Genix, he brought these products to the country," he said.

Yakasai, a Fellow of PSN, who unveiled the products with Prof. Edith Okeke, a foremost gastroenterologist, further disclosed that pharmacists are not in the profession to make money, but to serve humanity, adding that the unveiled drugs are meant to benefit humanity.

Also speaking while unveiling KVIT Plus, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, immediate past president, PSN, noted that deficiencies in some vitamins and minerals early in pregnancy can result in permanent damage to the foetus.

According to Ohuabunwa, who was assisted in the unveiling by Dr Kenneth Egwuda, consultant gynecologist and IVF specialist, ALPS Specialist and Diagnostic Centre, Jos; and Dr Charles Anyaka, consultant gynecologist and obstetrician, Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), throughout his

career at Pfizer Nigeria as a sales rep, and in the topmost executive position, he had never seen any product that was openly and boldly endorsed by experts like KVIT Plus. He added that he had a feeling that the product is uniquely different from others.

"I am proud as a pharmacist to be here tonight and to be part of this great event of launching this product which has proven to be efficacious in all aspects of its usefulness. I want to recommend the product to all as it is useful to all", he stressed.

While also speaking at the event, Dr Egwuda, said he had been involved in managing ante-natal women for a long time and one of the drugs he had found interesting was KVIT Plus, adding that it had been his first option in antenatal multivitamins for the past four to five years.

The high point of the event was the presentation of award plaques to some outstanding customers, as well as staff, which included, Pharm. Kayode Falana, Lamed Pharmacy; Jigawa Pharm Limited; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital,



Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, immediate past president, PSN; Pharm. (Sir) Bankole Aminu Ezebuilo, managing director, Kayhelt Pharma; Dr Kenneth Egwuda, consultant gynaecologist and IVF specialist, ALPS Specialist and Diagnostic Centre, Jos, and Dr Charles Anyaka, consultant gynaecologist and obstetrician, Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), at the unveiling of KVIT PLUS, at the Elliel Event Centre, Jos, Plateau State.

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# Four ways to accelerate business performance in 2023

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

Every serious-minded business leader and organisation must, by now, be working towards making 2023 a more profitable business year for their company than the previous year. Below are four areas you can focus on to guarantee maximum return on investment and better business performance.

## Goal-setting

The first step toward business growth is to set organisational goals and align resources to achieve these goals. One common goal-setting strategy business leaders use is setting SMART goals. They set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound goals for teams, divisions and the entire company.

However, a new approach towards setting organisational goals is setting FAST goals. Organisations like Google and IBM set Frequently-discussed, Ambitious, Specific and Transparent goals with their employees. The fact that the goals are frequently discussed helps organisations to monitor progress, learning and the resources used in actualising the goals.

Setting ambitious goals helps these organisations to be innovative, challenge the status quo and improve their culture to achieve their targets. Setting goals that are transparent helps everyone in the company to be aware of each team, unit or division's performance and create a level-playing ground and

**As a business leader, you need to be strategic with marketing and sales. Using the Pareto principle to understand where 80 per cent of your sales – in terms of products and customers – come from, will help you to focus on the best products and customers that matter to your sales metric at the end of the year.**

good competition among team members.

## Marketing and sales

Whenever I am facilitating a sales training or workshop, I often remind sales and marketing professionals that the only aspect of business that brings money to the company is marketing and sales. Others take money from the business. Therefore, very successful organisations take sales performance and improvement seriously.

As a business leader, you need to be strategic with marketing and sales. Using the Pareto principle to understand where 80 per cent of your sales – in terms of products and customers – come from, will help you to focus on the best products and customers that matter to your sales metric at the end of the year.

Having a continuous learning and development programme for your sales force throughout the year will also be helpful. Looking at new strategic products or offerings to improve sales performance

could also be helpful.

If there is one thing you want to focus more on as a business leader in this 2022, it should be your company sales growth. By the way, remember

that sales success is 20 per cent strategies and 80 per cent psychology.

## Peak performance

For your company to achieve or surpass your 2022 business goals and sales performance, you need peak performance and maximum productivity from every member of your team. Therefore, it is important to create the right enabling environment, tools and motivation for your team members to excel and for your company to succeed.

If you need to hire new talents, strengthen your Human Resources department, or create new incentives that will drive better performance across the company, take action. You should also find creative ways to retain exceptional talents in your organisation.

## Health and wellness

A healthy workforce is a productive workforce. A happy, energetic and relaxed employee is a great asset to a company, the customer and the industry. More than anything else, business



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leaders must invest in the wellbeing of their employees. With the amount of stress arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, many people in the workplace are already anxious or overwhelmed with the events of 2021. Stress management and wellness programmes for all cadres of the company will enhance personnel engagement and well-being.

At SK Institute, our business performance programme 2023 will help your business and team members set FAST goals, improve sales performance, and enhance productivity and the general well-being of your staff.

**ACTION PLAN:** Set FAST goals with your team members. Be creative in improving sales and business performance. Invest in the health and well-being of your staff.

**AFFIRMATION:** I make 2023 my best year as a business leader. I am blessed and highly favoured.

Sesan Kareem is the principal consultant SK Institute, [www.sesankareem.com.ng](http://www.sesankareem.com.ng), and founder of HubCare, [www.hubcarehealth.com](http://www.hubcarehealth.com)

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# Proper nutrition can reverse many chronic diseases – CEO, Carib Health Group

**A**n alumnus of the prestigious John Hopkins University School of Medicine, Dr Patrick Ijewere is also a pharmacist, having studied Pharmacy at Howard University in the United States. His outstanding strides in the healthcare industry have seen him champion the cause of good nutrition as both prophylactic and therapeutic to the human system. In this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, he sheds more light on the response of the human body to nutrition and lifestyle, while calling for better collaborations between medical doctors and pharmacists in Nigeria. **EXCERPTS:**

## As a medical doctor and pharmacist, which of the fields do you find more interesting?

They are both very interesting and this is tied to how one approaches both fields. You can marry them beautifully. There are tremendous areas that are untapped in both fields. Both are interesting and I juggle them in ways that I would explain shortly.

## You have devoted most of your time to working on nutrition. How does nutrition offer therapeutic benefits to the human system?

To answer this question concisely, I will have to share my story with you. There was a time I had asthma. I was diagnosed at age 11, when I was in secondary school at St. Gregory's, in Lagos. After secondary school, it got worse and my parents shipped me off to the United States for my university education.

After my training as a pharmacist and medical doctor there in the US, I met a senior colleague, while working in Florida and he said to me that if I could change my lifestyle and mindset, the asthma would go away. We were taught that asthma and other non-communicable diseases were chronic ailments but this senior colleague told me they were not. Changing one's mindset about these ailments is the number one factor that can lead to overcoming them.

Secondly, he made me realise that lifestyle is very important in the management of these ailments. When you are stressed and you don't get enough sleep, your system becomes prone to some of these ailments. Thirdly, he talked about nutrition. Then I was eating a lot of meat. Whenever I came home on a visit, I would always go to Obalende market to buy suya. Even in my church in the US, I was deputy barbecue chef. My fridge always had smoked turkey and different kinds of meat. I was told to change my nutrition by this senior colleague.

Initially, I was hesitant. But as soon as I tried changing what I ate, I noticed the difference. It has been 17 years that I have not had an asthma attack, thanks to the massive changes I made to my nutrition.

Around that time, I married a woman who trained as a nutritionist. She had been telling me things about nutrition. One day while on my way home from work, I bought a big bottle of Sprite and drank it all the way home. After a few hours, I started feeling unwell. The next morning, I was feeling horrible. It was through a local



**Dr Patrick Ijewere**

newspaper's feature on sugary drinks that I discovered I had consumed 32 cubes of sugar in that bottle of Sprite. That was my wake-up call to the importance of nutrition.

It is sad that most medical schools around the world don't teach nutrition. Our doctors are totally oblivious to the impact of nutrition on health and wellbeing. In our practice, we focus a lot on nutrition.

## How does nutrition impact those suffering from non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cancer?

While working for an HMO here in Nigeria, I was privileged to travel to many communities. During one of my journeys to Emene, near Enugu, I gave a talk in a hospital run by reverend sisters. After my talk, the then COO of the hospital requested that I come back because of the rising health issues amongst the sisters. In their late thirties, forties and fifties, most of these sisters were having diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure.

For the three days that I had to come back, I made sure I ate together with them, just to observe their activities and nutrition. Their typical breakfast was bread, butter, margarine and egg. Their lunch was semovita and rice. Dinner time was spaghetti, noodles or rice. Their foods were mostly made from wheat, which

is an inflammatory food. They were consuming foods that were highly inflammatory to the body. No wonder they had all those problems - obesity, arthritis, diabetes and high blood pressure.

In my own case, once I changed my nutrition, my body began to heal itself. God has designed this body with a system to heal itself. We are the ones who are disturbing our bodies with the incorrect things. It is like a car. If you put the wrong oil in a car, there will be problems after a while.

## What are those foods that the body requires to stay healthy, as opposed to junks?

You can break them down into micro and macronutrients. When God made man here on earth, He placed him in the Garden of Eden, where there were lots of fruits and vegetables. If you stay close to nature, you will live long. Your body will take you far.

The further you drift away from nature nutritionally, the sooner Mother Nature says, "Return to sender." The more processed food you consume, the further away you are from nature. And that is when you begin to have problems.

We have handled the case of a 34-year-old with severe heart disease and blocked vessels, to the extent that cardiologists had said there was nothing they could do for him. He was sent to us for nutritional intervention. Within six months, we opened up those

blocked vessels.

## This means that even diabetes is not a death sentence?

Most of us are born without disease. So, if at age 40 you discover you are diabetic, it means something has happened along the way that caused this disease to show up.

We need to redefine this thing called disease. Disease is simply the body's way of saying that what you have been doing is not consistent with wellness. God created us to be at ease but we are always deviating from what we are supposed to be consuming, thereby bringing diseases upon ourselves.

When you sleep at night, your heart and kidneys do their work, even without your consciousness. God has designed a perfect system for us. Instead of living in the Garden of Eden, man brings sicknesses upon himself when he begins to think he is smarter than God.

According to Hippocrates, all diseases are curable, except for the patient who is impatient. My hospital has handled a diabetes case that was successfully reversed after a couple of months. Today, as we speak, the patient has stopped taking her drugs and is only observing strict nutrition. And this applies to many non-communicable diseases.

To stay healthy and well, one must observe the five pillars of wellness - nutrition, lifestyle, mindset, environment and spirituality. When any of these is compromised, then the human health is threatened.

## Would you say Nigerians are adhering to good food and nutrition standards, based on your engagements with patients?

Our nutrition is getting worse and worse. As a young child, I was privileged to meet my great grandmother who was approximately 110 years. Every morning, as soon as she woke from sleep, she would sweep the compound, go to the farm to fetch firewood, take her bath, eat, pack her basket and head to the market.

When she came back, she would play Ludo or ayo game with the children. She ate fresh, healthy and chemical-free foods. She never had high blood pressure or diabetes.

Generationally, we have become worse in our nutrition. Today, we are glorifying highly processed foods, whether imported or local brands. All those noodles and sugar drinks are poison. If you want to be healthy and live long, you have to consume less of those things.

The other areas of lifestyle that are important include exercise - which could include sweeping, washing clothes and other

*continued on page 38*

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# Our vision is to build capacity, ensure sustainability – MD, Sygen Pharma

**Sygen Pharmaceutical is a new entrant into the Nigerian pharmaceutical space. Established in 2019, after a successful acquisition of the assets and brands of Nigerian-German Chemicals Plc, the company is promising a world-class outlook in terms of personnel and product offering. In this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, the CEO, Mr Charles Ogunwuyi, a multi-sectoral experienced economist, shares his views and ideas on how Sygen hopes to make a difference in the Nigerian pharma landscape. EXCERPTS:**



**Mr Charles Ogunwuyi**

**As the CEO of Sygen Pharma, can you tell us more about the company?**

The company was established in March 2019 with the primary purpose of helping to build Nigeria's capability in the pharmaceutical space. This is because there is a gap, not only in Nigeria but also in Africa. We decided not to come in like others who only import; we came with a social, purpose-driven perspective.

With this in mind, we decided to go for an acquisition when the right opportunity came. In December of 2019, we acquired the assets and brands of Nigerian-German Chemicals Plc. Though NGC is still operating, Sygen Pharmaceutical is a different entity entirely.

Our company has nine US-based medical doctors of Nigerian descent as investors. Dr Ladi Bada is our chairman and we have three medical professionals and a pharmacist on the board. Our advisory board is made up of medical doctors, including a specialist from LUTH and two US-based doctors. This shows that we are coming from a slightly different perspective, compared to the typical Nigerian pharmaceutical company.

Our goal is to try and raise the bar in building a world-class pharmaceutical company. We would use our example to inspire others to do the same because the more people we inspire, the more capability we are building.

**In a nutshell, kindly state the vision driving the operations of Sygen in Nigeria.**

Our vision is to help build the capability of the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria; it is to add to the capability. The capability that Nigeria has today is heavily import-driven, due to regulations, the economy, and the overall industry. We could have stuck to the status-quo but we know that for the growth of the nation and the industry to happen, we had to do things differently. We cannot continue to depend on the US, the UK, China, or India. We have to drive self-sustenance.

**As you are not a health professional, how did you get into this industry?**

I had the vision and what I tried to do was to track people that I knew had a similar passion for Nigeria. I lived abroad for a while and began my career in the US, where I worked at Ford Motors. I returned to Nigeria 19 years ago and worked with a variety of organisations, including Diageo, Etisalat, and Access Bank.

While working in these places, I didn't find fulfilment because of the lack of passion. My real passion was healthcare and that led to the establishment of Science for Generations – Sygen Pharmaceutical.

How I got into the healthcare industry is actually very interesting. I studied Economics at Obafemi

Awolowo University (OAU), Ife, but I grew up working at Pfizer every summer. A group of friends and I used to travel to the US every year for summer holidays, so frequently that my father argued it was becoming like a pilgrimage. To curb us, he spoke to the rest of the fathers and made sure we began working for at least half of the summer. I didn't know it then but working in that space became the foundation of my interest in healthcare. I also married a medical doctor; so this must have inspired me as well.

**How do you hope to make a strong statement in the highly competitive Nigerian pharma market?**

I think our mission is really to make an impact in the community where we live, and that impact is by making sure we contribute to people living healthy lives. Living healthy lives will allow people to thrive, which is gravely important for our economy. If the population is too sick to work, then the economy is usually one of the most affected.

As I said earlier, Sygen is also focused on building capability. There is an increasing brain drain in Nigeria, especially in the healthcare sector, but that doesn't mean Nigeria has been left neglected. I believe the resolve and dedication of people like those in Sygen Pharmaceutical will greatly benefit the nation and the world in general. It will also work to motivate those who have left to come back, just like I did.

Sygen is here to bridge the gaps we see in terms of capability and sustainability. We are building a company that will last generations, leveraging the expertise, talents, and investors needed to make our dreams come true.

**Does Sygen specialise in any niche, in terms of its product offering?**

In a way, our niche is on certain prioritised areas such as pain, mother and child care, pulmonary, anti-hypertensive, and diabetic spaces. We are also moving gradually into the anti-infective area. We have one or two antifungals and we hope to expand in that area, as well as into supplements.

We hope to ensure that people are thriving and that we are preventing them from diseases. Our product portfolio includes well-known medicines, including Daga, Abidec, Glanil, NGC Expectorant, NGC Children, Broncholyte, Valgin, Tabalon, Metronidazole, and Colipan.

**Most Nigerian pharmaceutical companies depend on contract manufacturing. What do you think is militating against such companies' plans to set up their own factories?**

The two major issues are funding and the lack of incentives. If a lot of companies get incentives, such as tax, interest rate, and duty standpoints, they would do much better. In fact, there is no better time to offer these incentives than now. To help organisations like ours thrive,

there should be availability of loans from local lenders and the CBN.

In our case, the CBN and the Bank of Industry helped us in acquiring the assets and brands of Nigerian-German Chemicals Plc. So far, of all our 15 products, only Abidec is manufactured outside Nigeria; the rest are manufactured locally.

Once we upgrade our facilities here in Nigeria, we will commence the local manufacturing of Abidec. The same applies to our antibiotics, for which we are planning to build a special manufacturing plant here in Nigeria.

**Most Nigerian pharma manufacturing companies depend on India and China for raw materials. How do you think stakeholders can rethink this dependence and seek home-grown solutions?**

To reiterate, the problem has to do with incentives. There is no real gain in local raw materials, unless it is done large-scale; the real profit comes from the final product. Until we have a concerted effort by the government to try and look at capability gaps within the drug manufacturing value chain, things will remain the way they are.

We must look at the whole value chain holistically, starting with the APIs and drug discovery. The most transformational one for Nigeria and Africa is the APIs. We need some incentives in this area.

Another important step will be greater collaboration between organisations in the value chain, as this will help develop our local manufacturing industry. At Sygen, we are hopeful to inspire the next generation of scientists, not just pharmacists.

**What are your sincere projections for the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry in 2023?**

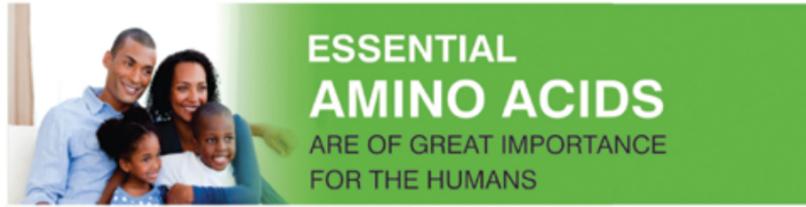
Growth-wise, the industry has done well even in the last year, despite the challenging atmosphere. I think the industry will not shrink, even if the Nigerian economy does, because people will continue to buy drugs. Those manufacturing locally will face more challenges, compared to their counterparts who only import.

Moreover, those of us who are a part of the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) will face challenges because of the rising costs of running a business and maintaining machinery in Nigeria today. Nevertheless, despite any obstacle, Sygen is here to stay because we are committed to ensuring healthier lives for our communities.

**Can you share a word with Nigerian pharmaceutical companies that are grappling with high operational costs coupled with unabating inflationary trends?**

As an organisation in the healthcare sector, you have to believe that you can do well by doing good. You have to find an intersection between profit and purpose. At Sygen, we are doing this by squeezing out the inefficiencies in our own system. We are new and are learning from those who came before us and those who came after.

Nigerians should look forward to seeing a differentiated company in Sygen Pharmaceutical, in terms of our motivation.



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# Why PSN should honour pharmacists excelling in other fields – Akhimien

Patrick Iwelunmor

**M**r Siyan Victor Akhimien is a multi-talented pharmacist who has traversed different career terrains, aside from running a community pharmacy. An accomplished pianist, painter, martial artist and life coach, he believes the pharmacy leadership in Nigeria should honour pharmacists who are making the profession proud with outstanding achievements in other fields. In this exclusive chat with **Pharmanews**, he shares the story of his versatility and how he has managed to succeed, despite the odds. Exerpts:



Pharm. Siyan Victor Akhimien

## Background

I am Pharmacist Siyan Victor Akhimien, aka Vicamen. I have a seventh degree black belt in karate. I studied Pharmacy as a first degree at the University of Benin, with special interest in Clinical Pharmacy. I did my master's degree at the Lagos State University. I also did some top management courses at the Lagos Business School.

I am a very wide reader across different subjects like marketing and sales, business development, fitness, self-defence and music.

## Roots of versatility

I grew up in the ghettos of Ajegunle, where we were managing ourselves. We were seven children, living in two rooms.

I had a very humble beginning. My father rode a Volkswagen Beetle and worked with the Ibrus. Growing up was not easy but we were able to cope. Incidentally, my father also trained the former PSN President, Pharm. (Sir) Anthony Akhimien.

The versatility which I am known for today actually started from those little beginnings. I joined the choir while in Primary 3 and joined taekwondo training in secondary. Those things built my interest in believing in myself.

When my father lost his job towards the end of my secondary school days, my mother started petty trading while all of us

started looking inwards for survival. It was under my mother that I learnt how to sew cloth. I am a fashionista today.

Due to the difficulties we faced as a result of my father's loss of job, I resorted to the creative use of my talents to make ends meet. I took my fine art seriously and eventually became a good painter, making portraits for people and getting paid.

My father did not like the idea but I found a way to hide and do the painting. He believed that art would distract me but unknown to him, the comprehension abilities of children are not always the same. Some learn faster through writing, while others prefer drawing. I was so good at Fine Arts that I had A1 in WAEC final exams.

## Life in the university

While in the university, I joined the Anglican Church and became a choirmaster. I built the choir from a seven-member choir to a 180-member one.

I did portraits for people and got paid, while also working as a cartoonist for various media organisations, including *The Sun*, *Prime People* and *Vintage People*. I also did some cartoon jobs for Sir

**Due to the difficulties we faced as a result of my father's loss of job, I resorted to the creative use of my talents to make ends meet. I took my fine art seriously and eventually became a good painter, making portraits for people and getting paid.**

Ifeanyi Atueyi in two of his books.

At the University of Benin, the then dean of the pharmacy faculty, Professor Hugbo, called me to his office and warned me not to fail any course, knowing that I was almost everywhere on campus, doing karate, painting, playing keyboard and drawing cartoons. He marvelled that I could combine all these things with my academics.

When the results were released, he was one of the most shocked persons when he discovered that I came out in flying colours. He was so happy about it that he gave me a special recommendation letter, popularly known as "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN". I still have that letter to date.

## Career exploits

I strongly believe that the more unique your field of interest is, the better it is for you. During my NYSC, I worked with Nigeria Airways and lived in their quarters. But life in that place was very boring for me.

I later got a job as a pianist at Omega Bank. My job was to play piano in the banking hall to entertain customers. I also played piano for other churches like TREM.

After my service year, I got a job at Mopson Pharmaceuticals, as sales representative. I also worked at Fidson Pharmaceuticals, where my talent was recognised as I always played the piano during the company's morning devotion. I was later transferred to Maiduguri where I opened a new market for them.

From Fidson, I also worked in a couple of pharmaceutical companies, before I joined Globacom. When I met Dr Mike Adenuga, he was happy to see me because of the diversity of my skills, as indicated in my CV.

I always tell young people that their CVs should not just be about educational qualifications alone. It should include skills and capabilities. The more interesting your CV is, the more

employers want to talk with you. Most employers are looking for skills and leadership ability.

I was in Globacom for seven years. Within those seven years, I became acting director, Sales. From Globacom, I went to Airtel, where I became head, Corporate Sales. I was elevated to Regional Business head. After Airtel, I joined Next Generation Business Solutions, where I am now. I am partnering with them to see how we can bring business solutions to Nigeria.

I also have my own business, Vicamen Group. The group consists of a pharmacy, a sales force consult, a telecoms consult, a fitness centre, and an acting academy (Vicamen Foundation), where I partner with others to help talents grow and Vicamen Academy, where I teach martial arts. I have received support from many organisations, like Alpha Pharmacy.

## Playing the mentor role

I was recently invited to deliver a talk to students of a secondary school as part of the school management's yearly programme for their students. As a pharmacist, they would have been expecting me to focus on how to be a pharmacist but when I came on stage, I taught them how to be a pharmacist, how to be an artist, how to be a musician and how to be a sportsman. I also taught them how to be an entrepreneur. They were so happy with my presentations.

While many of them responded to my question on what they wanted to be, by mentioning careers like acting, dancing and sports, their headmaster interjected by telling them to mention better careers. It was at that juncture that I changed that impression that some careers are not good enough.

There is no bad or less important career. What matters most is what one can make out of any career through hard work and dedication and, most importantly, through the tutelage of a good master. Great masters are not found in the classroom but on the field.

## Charge to PSN

Ambassadors of pharmaceutical practice in other fields should be honoured by the PSN. I am the only pharmacist in Nigeria that is a grandmaster in martial arts. Professor Usifoh was my lecturer in University of Benin. I believe that the PSN should recognise pharmacists like us who are doing well in other fields. I believe that honouring us will encourage a lot of pharmacists like me who are hiding to come out.

I expect that, by now, pharmaceutical companies should engage me for consultancy in sales and telecoms because of my vast knowledge in those areas. Sales is 20 per cent knowledge and 80 per cent attitude. Attitude is not taught in the classroom. If the PSN can recognise what I do, it will open the way for a new breed of pharmacists.

One of the guys that played at my concert is a pharmacist. He was shocked to discover that I am also a pharmacist. Funke Akindele is a lawyer who is doing great things in the movie industry and is now a gubernatorial candidate. We should encourage our own. The shortcut to leadership is pharmacists who are grounded in all ramifications.

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# Cassava, mother of all crops

By Pharm. Ngozika Okoye MSc, MPH, FPCPharm  
(Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency)  
Email: ngozikaokoye@yahoo.com



*Manihot esculenta*

The cassava plant, *Manihot esculenta*, was introduced into West Africa from South America, by the Portuguese explorers in the 17th century. The cassava leaves and shiny bark so much resembled those of the native silk cotton tree, hence the name was appropriated to the new plant.

Nigeria is the world's largest producer of cassava. Other names for the crop are: ege (Yoruba), jikpu (Igbo), rogo (Hausa), tapioca (English), Brazilian arrowroot, cassava, kassava, kassave, mandioca, manioc, manioca, maniok, maniokki, tapioca plant, and yuca.

#### Constituents

Cassava contains protein, fat, carbohydrate, sugars, fibre, minerals (like calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, zinc, iron, phosphorus) vitamins (like vitamin C, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pyridoxine) and water. Cassava contains the cyanogenic glycosides, linamarin and lotaustralin, which produce the toxic hydrogen cyanide.

#### Preparations

Cassava may be boiled, baked, fried, grated, fermented, mashed or ground. It may be available as root tubers, dry powder (flour), starch, flakes, chips, paste or noodles. Popular meals which the igbo have derived from the cassava include garri also called "cassava flakes" (yellow and white), kpo-kpo garri, utara akpu (fufu), abacha (bobozu in Bini language), mbalaka/mpataka, etc.

#### Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

Though research is still ongoing to find scientific evidence to support these claims, cassava is used for tiredness, dehydration in people with diarrhoea, sepsis, and to induce labour. The flavonoids and fibre in cassava can protect against the development of metabolic syndrome and its associated complications.

Information has it that cassava may promote wound healing because of high content of Vitamin C. It is said to support healthy weight maintenance because of fibre and resistant starch which promotes satiety and healthy gut bacteria.

When used as skin exfoliator or mask, cassava peel helps to smoothen and brighten skin complexion and remove scars and spots. Cassava helps hair to grow faster and control hair fall. The high carbohydrate content is said to be responsible for its ability to increase libido, improve fertility and enhance sexual pleasure by improving blood flow to the genitals.

Cassava can help in lowering blood pressure because of its high content of potassium; it also helps

in overcoming headaches and preventing cancer due to the B17 content.

The fibres, which are not soluble in water, help in the absorption of toxins that enter the intestines, and can help alleviate constipation and move things along the digestive tract.

#### Adverse effects

Due to the presence of natural toxins, cassava can cause cyanide poisoning. The potential side effects include general weakness, confusion, excessive sleepiness, headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, bizarre behaviour, shortness of breath, dizziness, seizures and nerve damage. It can also trigger weight gain and cardiac disorder due to its higher calorific value

It may also lower iodine level, cause birth abnormality to pregnant women and increase the risk of thyroid disease. \* Processing cassava through grating, pressing, fermenting, frying and cooking removes the hydrocyanic acid.

#### Economic uses and potentials:

In 2021, the average cassava export price amounted to \$755 per

ton, while the average import price amounted to \$405 per ton. A ton of cassava tubers was N22,000-N28,000 in 2017 and N75,000-N80,000 in 2021. A 50kg bag of white garri (made from cassava) costs about N17,000. Average prices per ton in 2023 are: cassava starch, N350,500; cassava flour, N340,000; cassava chips, N65,000.

Cassava has gradually become a major source of ethanol production. It is used as human food, animal food, as well as in the food, pharmaceutical, chemical and cosmetics industries for the production of noodles, sugar, acids, coatings, emulsifiers and plastics, among others. Potentials abound in the cultivation, processing, sales and distribution of cassava and its products.

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# Pharma industry needs more direct investments - Falabi

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The General Manager, Aquatix Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. Gbenga Falabi has called on the Nigerian government to encourage more direct investments in the pharmaceutical industry and other sectors of the Nigerian economy as against portfolio investment, saying such a move will help to boost the nation's economy.

Falabi, who is the general secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), further explained that driving direct investments into the country goes beyond merely making speeches or promises, stating that there must be sincere and purposive efforts that will make it happen.

The Aquatix helmsman spoke with *Pharmanews* during the company's national conference for sales representatives, recently held at its newly acquired factory in Ikeja Lagos. Aquatix acquired the factory from May & Baker, which had also recently completed its ultra-modern manufacturing factory in Ota, Ogun State, from where it now manufactures its various range of products.

Falabi, who earlier noted that Aquatix had acquired the factory with a solid plan to set up its manufacturing plant, said that the plant will consist of a beta-lactam section and many others.

"Aquatix is a new arrival of local



GM Aquatix Pharmaceutical Ltd, Pharm. Gbenga Falabi (middle), flanked by his team of managers, during the company's national sales representatives conference, in Lagos, recently.

pharmaceutical companies in the block. We will be joining PMGMAN. A section of the company will focus on beta lactam and other sections will follow," he said.

Falabi also revealed that Aquatix Pharmaceuticals Nigeria Limited is the Nigeria's version of the Aquatix formation in India.

According to him, "The investor made commitment to the Nigeria economy by buying a section of May

& Baker manufacturing plant in Ikeja, which will also enable May & Baker to now focus on their massive ultra-modern manufacturing plant at Ota."

Aquatix currently has a number of products being imported but according to Falabi, some of the products will now be manufactured in Nigeria. He added that work will start fully in the factory immediately after the nation's general election, slated for February and March, 2023.

Falabi said: "Once we fully set up the beta lactam factory, we will start manufacturing immediately. What we are doing now is a startup meeting. Hopefully the factory will be going live this year.

"Immediately after the election, the engineers will start work with their measurements and design. We will also start the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control's (NAFDAC) process for Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) inspections; and we believe with the current leadership of NAFDAC, we are in safe hands because they have upped their game. The DG of the agency is doing a fantastic job."

The PSN secretary further stated that although many products are already in the nation's pharmaceutical market, it is a good thing for more quality products to be introduced, as competition is an indispensable catalyst of industry growth.

"Competition grows the industry," he said. "If there is no competition, there will be monopoly which will bring stagnation. Whereas, competition grows the industry because each one will strive to do more at every point in time and for us at Aquatix, there are strategic decisions and commitments, one of which is to grow the Nigerian economy.

"Secondly, we believe that with a population of over 200 million, one can't be wrong to invest in pharmaceuticals in Nigeria.

"Capacity wise, the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry has moved from 30 per cent to 45 per cent; so the pharmaceutical industry is growing. The problem of accessing the dollar however is making trading difficult; but once we have been able to manage the setup, the only thing that will remain will be the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) and spare parts, which are being imported. This is why we are appealing to the Federal Government to see the pharma sector as a very important sector and so designate it for special consideration on access to forex; this will help the nation to achieve drug security.

"The Aquatix investment is the type of direct foreign investment that Nigeria needs at this time, as against the portfolio investment where the investor will just put their money in the stock market and can take it anytime. Government should encourage this type of investment in every sector and I must say that it will take more than news or presidential address to get this type of investment."

## Medical Practice

# Proper nutrition can reverse many chronic diseases – CEO, Carib Health Group

continued from page 30

physical activities. Our mindset is also important – how we deal with stress; and our spirituality. Science has been able to show that anger, bitterness and unforgiving spirit attract sickness. These things weaken the immune system. The environment also plays a huge role. Your quality of sleep also plays a role.

Nutritionally, we are worse off than our grandparents and our great grandparents. And this is why our life expectancy is very low, at 52. Early missionaries wrote books that showed that those who ate fresh foods were less prone to these diseases. The chronic diseases we are having these days are manifesting in early deaths, abnormal dentition and shape of mouth, in our lack of bone density and in sight problems, like cataracts which make us use glasses at early ages.

**In what ways does poverty impact lifestyle and the escalation of diseases in Nigeria?**

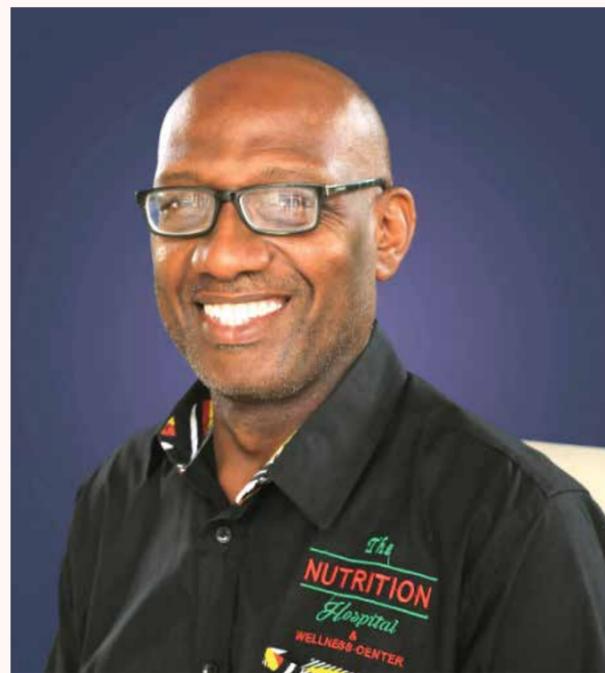
Looking at poverty from the perspective of lack of money is limited; let us also expand it to the lack of knowledge. Limited finances can lead to malnutrition and the diseases associated with it.

However, we have to also look at malnutrition from two perspectives, namely under-

nutrition and over-nutrition. While undernutrition (due to poverty) can cause diseases, over-nutrition (due to affluence) can also cause diseases. The poor, in trying to envy the rich also eat what they are not supposed to eat. So, under-nutrition and over-nutrition can cause diseases. This happens when the cells are starved of important nutrients.

**Pharmacists in Nigeria seem to play a second fiddle to their counterparts in the medical profession. What is your take on this?**

In an orchestra, you have first violin and second violin. You also have first rhythm and second rhythm. Together, they create that delightful awesome music. In my practice, the doctor, the pharmacist, the nutritionist, the psychologist and the nurse are involved in the decision-making process. We should let go of this arrogance and get to work



Dr Patrick Ijewere

together.

Doctors and pharmacists have their different trainings and roles in the health arena. The nurse, the physiotherapist and the nutritionist all have their roles to play. In the US, we have what is called the multi-disciplinary approach to healthcare. There is no first or second fiddle; everyone is as important as the other in their own areas of strength.

In fact, pharmacists are the evolution of our ancestors who were herbalists. Together, we can make that melodious piece of music.

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# Turbo-charging your career beyond 2023

The wheel of 2023 is already running and we are in the second month. It is still appropriate to continue to look into making the most of our career.

Last time, we had these highlights:

- You should be in the driver's seat as far as managing and running your career is concerned.
- Though growing your career requires patience, it doesn't mean passive 'waiting' and "doing nothing"
- You need to develop a career development plan
- There are three elements of a basic career development plan: The current state/situation, the ideal future and the journey plan

We also listed strategies and tactics you can employ. Let's examine some of these in detail:

**Know yourself.** You probably already know the abilities, skills, capabilities and competences required for success now and in the next eight to ten years. You need a frank analysis and assessment of what you possess now and how you measure, compared to what you need on your way and when you get there. A good framework is SWOT analysis with respect to yourself and the requirement of the target role(s) in the pharma industry. Do this regularly, especially after each of your milestones and not later than one year, to uncover the gaps and double down on your areas of weakness.

**Keep a record of your achievements.** As you progress through your career and start meeting your goals, it would be a useful idea to keep a record of all your achievements. Keeping a record of your achievements can be a handy way to stay focused on your goals as you have a clear idea of what goals have been achieved and which ones are next. This will be useful to you, if and when you present to your boss as they will clearly see what you have achieved and will likely be impressed by your commitment and determination. Although the record of your achievements should be comprehensive, it doesn't necessarily need to be complex. Something as simple as an excel spreadsheet will be more than enough to keep track.

**Build and invest in your personal career capacity and competence.** Nobody owes you your career, and not many people are overly concerned about your progress – except maybe your mentor or your immediate family. Even then, you are the most impacted, and should take responsibility for making it a reality.

First, focus on **mastery**. This is described as comprehensive knowledge or skill in a particular subject or activity, achieved by seeking a better version of yourself and aspiring to be as good, or better than the best in the field or role. It requires adopting a continuous self-development and improvement philosophy.

Mastery, according to Robert Greene, can be thought of as the unique way each of us can fully

actualise our potential for greatness and enjoy a fulfilling life. It means everyday learning, attending relevant courses (free and paid for, online and offline),

**As you progress through your career and start meeting your goals, it would be a useful idea to keep a record of all your achievements. Keeping a record of your achievements can be a handy way to stay focused on your goals as you have a clear idea of what goals have been achieved and which ones are next.**

getting necessary degrees and certification, etc.

Second, look at your inventory of skills and abilities from perspective of economics—supply and demand: What are your skills? How valuable are those skills to employers? How rare are those skills in the workforce? Focus on skills that are both valuable, rare and in high demand. For the pharma industry, these understanding drugs and how they work, body systems, knowledge of big-segment and emerging diseases, pharmaceutical product knowledge, drug systems, pharmaceutical marketing/branding, personal selling skills, relationship marketing, etc. These, by the way, are just the hard skills. Soft skills, such as communication and leadership, are in high demand too but increasingly in short supply.

This cannot be left for your company to do for you. Be prepared to invest in yourself.

**Get your motivation from inside.** In the long run, external motivation won't be enough to keep you going. You are the best person, from the inside of you, that can provide the necessary motivation for the achievement of your objectives. You get help from your focus on mastery, your intermediate objectives and the final prize. This way, you will not be distracted by your environment, your boss, your company and its policies, inadequate resources, or other inconveniences.

**Create a visible personal brand of value.** Though it may make you uncomfortable if you are hearing it for the first time, I have something you need to bear in mind: you are not employed for things you will benefit from the company but for your contribution towards value creation for the company. So, a critical way to grow and keep growing is to be seen to create value for the firm, continuously and continually. Make suggestions, take initiatives, and support your boss and other executives to achieve their mandate, even if it may be outside your expected role.

You can also do any of these:

- Set and surpass higher-than-expected productivity targets.
- Push new products harder than the rest.
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**Tunde Oyeniran, B Pharm.** MBA, a Sales/Marketing Strategist, Selling/Sales Management Trainer and Personal Sales Coach is the Lead Consultant, Ekini White Tulip Consulting Limited, Lagos; and President, The Society for Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing of Nigeria. We deliver Training, Recruitment and Field Force Management Solutions. Feedback Channels: 080-2960-6103 (SMS/WhatsApp) /ekiniwhitetuliptraining@gmail.com or check out <https://fb.me/EkiniWhiteTulipConsulting>

- MSRs.
  - Find new ways to make existing sales/marketing processes more efficient.
  - Become the go-to person for something - product knowledge, recruitment of KOL, online/social media marketing, or industry/competitor news and information.
  - Generate ideas every time on how the corporate plans, direction, and policies will work well or better
  - Volunteer for assignments outside your typical responsibilities.
- Each of these examples offers a way for you to differentiate yourself

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# How management of alternative therapies advances pharmacists' roles - Ikeme

By Temitope Obayendo



Dr Anthony C. Ikeme

**D**r Anthony C. Ikeme is the immediate past president, Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA). He is also the founder, Clinriad Nigeria Ltd. An international resource person and member of the board of the Association for Good Clinical Practices in Nigeria (AGCPN), Ikeme has served in leadership capacities for various AGCPN transformational initiatives, including being chair of AGCPN-NAFDAC Clinical Trial Capacity Building Workshop Taskforce (2010), co-chair of the AGCPN-NAFDAC Clinical Trial Technical Working Group (CTWG), and the programme coordinator of the All-Africa Clinical Trial Summit.

In this exclusive interview with **TEMITOPE OBAYENDO**, Ikeme challenges pharmacists, especially those in community practice, to leverage the opportunities in natural medicines and nutritional supplements to expand the scope of their professional services to patients. He also outlines the achievements and setbacks of his tenure at NAPPSA. Excerpts below:

## Congratulations on your successful tenure as president of NAPPSA. I will start by asking why you vied for the post.

Thank you for that question. My interest in the presidency of NAPPSA evolved from my observations while in the service of the association. I was introduced to NAPPSA by Dr Echezue Ogu, one Sunday evening, at a social event in Wilmington, Delaware, exactly four days to the 2007 Inaugural NAPPSA Conference in Houston. He spoke so glowingly of the NAPPSA vision that I knew I had to attend and see this new association for myself, and I am very glad I did. I was so impressed with what I saw that I embraced everything NAPPSA and threw myself into the service of the association.

In the course of my service, I served as the programme chair, secretary of the NAPPSA Implementation Committee, secretary of Abuja Healthcare Summit Planning Committee, member of the NAPPSA Board, member of the NAPPSA Foundation Board and others. Over the course of my involvement in these endeavours, I kept feeling that NAPPSA could be more. I saw growth and transformational opportunities in all aspects of NAPPSA activities. Where

many saw a mere professional association, I saw a platform that can be deployed for transformational initiatives.

So, here we were, a talented and highly accomplished group of professionals, living in one of the greatest democracies in the world, where there is a reasonable expectation that rule of law will be respected, where competence and talent is rewarded. What is stopping us from being the best we can be? What is stopping us from deploying our collective energy and talent to change our world? Nothing! Our only limits are the ones we impose on ourselves.

I saw clearly in my head how NAPPSA could serve as the catalyst, the trigger point for the transformation of the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector, Nigeria and Africa as a whole. But it was difficult to convey this understanding in my head and the passion in my heart to someone else who did not see what I saw. That was when I made the decision that it was best to practically demonstrate what I believed by serving in the capacity of NAPPSA president.

**During your campaign for the presidency and during your inauguration, you listed some objectives you intended to focus**

**on during your tenure. What would you consider as your major achievements during your presidency?**

Another great question. Because of how my decision to aspire to NAPPSA presidency evolved, I came prepared with a clear vision and purpose. If there was one singular thing that formed the organisational principle for the success of my tenure, then it was the establishment of the NAPPSA 10-Year Growth Strategy Plan. Everything else flowed from it

You see, a fundamental thought that repeatedly rang in my mind throughout my years of service in NAPPSA, is the saying that if you fail to plan, then you have planned to fail. I was determined that our collective learnings and history over the many years of NAPPSA existence should be used as a basis to re-imagine the future of the association in a way that sharpens our focus and builds on our areas of strength. This was why I proposed a strategy plan.

I was very encouraged that all cadres of NAPPSA leadership at the time (including all the NAPPSA founding members, all past presidents, executive committee and NAPPSA Board members), as well as the entire NAPPSA membership embraced the vision. It was the successful establishment of that plan and the success in its early implementation that made many to consider my tenure as the beginning of what they call **NAPPSA 2.0**.

So what is the NAPPSA 10-Year Strategy Plan? Simply put, it is a deliberate and measurable process for driving and tracking NAPPSA's growth in all facets of her business for the 10-year period: 2020-2030. The 10-year plan brings the future into the present, so that we can do something about it now. It helps us to simplify decisions, get everyone on the same page and ensure that our activities are aligned to our priorities. The roadmap it creates ensures that we increase our organisational footprint and maximise our impact as a professional organisation here in the USA, back home in Nigeria and around the world.

First focus in the implementation of the plan was finding the financial resources. And so, I partnered with my good friend and partner in generating ideas for NAPPSA progress, Emmanuel Ezirim who is the chair of NAPPSA B2B and the current president-elect. We hit the road on B-2-B Roadshows across the country, leading to the acceleration of growth in the membership of our B2B Network and a steep increase in the B2B revenues to NAPPSA.

The progress we made with both the B-2-B and the 5K Run fundraiser gave us confidence to launch the NAPPSA Endowment Fund, which today is well on its way to the first \$1M dollar mark. We also successfully established the NAPPSA official journal, *American Journal of Pharmacotherapy and Pharmaceutical Sciences* (AJPPS). We are now poised to commence efforts to acquire the NAPPSA House, which will host our NAPPSA Research Institute.

Overall, our 10-Year Strategy Plan is inclusive, ensures

commitment to quality, provides incentives for consistent delivery, allows for NAPPSA's sustainability, has milestones along the way to measure the impact of our progress, and has an inbuilt dynamism to allow for continual improvements as we make progress.

Outside of the strategy plan, other notable accomplishments worth mentioning include the launch of our Young Professional Campus Outreach, to reach out to Nigerian pharmacy and pharmaceutical science students in the USA, to provide early career guidance that would inform their curriculum and internship choices as they plan their future. We launched the Young Professional Hangout Series to provide a platform for addressing real life issues and teaching those soft life skills that underpin life success and advancement to leadership positions. We established the NAPPSA Pharmaceutical Science Focus Group, designed to create programmes and projects that appeal to pharmaceutical scientists.

On the main issue that defined my tenure, the COVID-19 pandemic, NAPPSA took a front row seat. We participated in the discussion and dissemination of scientific clarity about COVID-19 through press statements, letters to Congress, government agencies, and via collaborative inter-organisational initiatives. We also stepped up to support the Nigerian healthcare community through our donation of COVID-19 diagnostics and PPE to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). We successfully established NAPPSA 5K Walk/Run for both fundraising and to draw attention to healthy living.

While other organisations cancelled their annual conferences in 2020, we innovated. We hosted NAPPSA's first ever technology-driven virtual scientific conference. We established the NAPPSA-ANPA-NANNNA Interprofessional Healthcare Webinar Series. We established the NAPPSA official news magazine: *NAPPSA Digest*.

It was indeed a very productive two years that have opened new doors and new possibilities for our great organisation. I am committed to continuing to contribute to build on all areas of our progress.

**Nutrition and natural medicines are key aspects of healthcare gaining ground in most climes across the globe. In your own opinion, how can pharmacists leverage these areas to expand their services?**

The starting point in evaluating the pharmacist's role in every situation is to remind ourselves of their fundamental responsibility, namely to ensure the safe and appropriate use of medicines and to contribute to public health in general. Discussion about integrating nutrition and natural medicines into the pharmacists' scope of practice and as a legitimate extension of their established roles in pharmaceutical care should be viewed through that lens.

This conversation is not

*continued on page 48*

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# Combating cervical cancer in Nigerian women and girls

By Temitope Obayendo

**T**itilayo Akande, a 45-year-old mother of three, was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2015. Despite having come with no initial symptoms, the tumour had begun to grow. Fortunately, however, it had not spread to other organs when it was diagnosed and the treatment commenced. Though scared of the treatment, Akande determined to go through, and successfully survived it.

Cervical cancer develops in a woman's cervix - the entrance to the uterus from the vagina. Experts affirm that almost all cervical cancer cases (99 per cent) are linked to infection with high-risk human papillomaviruses (HPV), an extremely common virus transmitted through sexual contact. Although most infections with HPV resolve spontaneously and cause no symptoms, persistent infection can cause cervical cancer in women.

According to the World Health Organisation, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women globally, with an estimated 604,000 new cases and 342,000 deaths in 2020. About 90 per cent of the new cases and deaths worldwide in 2020 occurred in low- and middle-income countries.

It has also been established that women living with HIV are six times more likely to develop cervical cancer, compared to women without HIV.

## Unforgettable experience

For Akande, who is now a survivor, she was not living with HIV, and surprisingly she had seemed well all along, until she started bleeding within her menstrual cycle and also experiencing fatigue and other ailments. This led her in search of a gynaecologist. Thankfully, it was diagnosed that her cancer was still in stage two, and therefore treatable.

She shared her story thus: "Three months before my retirement, I started bleeding between menstrual cycles. I attributed it to being stressed, since I was getting ready to wrap up a 20-year career. At the time, I had not seen a gynaecologist in three years. Why? Well, my gynaecologist had retired, and I didn't look for a new one. I didn't feel the dire need to find one since I felt fine. I had no symptoms whatsoever. I had been married for 10 years and I was in a monogamous relationship. However, the progressive bleeding, fatigue, and bloating pushed me to go see a doctor.

"I went to a new gynaecologist, who took a biopsy, which came back inconclusive. She told me she needed to refer me to a gynaecologic oncologist. When I went to the oncologist, he took another biopsy and those results revealed I had cervical cancer, stage IIB.

"My doctor decided to treat me with a combination of radiation, chemotherapy, and brachytherapy (internal radiation). The journey was tough. At times I wanted to give up, but my husband and family kept me going. I consider myself one of the lucky ones because after treatments, my tumour disappeared and there weren't any visible cancerous cells. After nine months, I was cancer-free."

## Burden of cervical cancer in Nigeria

Nigerian researchers have identified cervical cancer as the second most common cancer (after breast cancer) among Nigeria's female population, with 12,000 cases diagnosed annually and 8000 annual



deaths. This translates to 33 new cases and 22 deaths from the disease daily.

In an interview with Professor Oliver C. Ezechi, director of research and consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), he asserted that over 36 million Nigerian women above age 15 are at risk of coming down with cervical cancer. He further noted that increase in vaccination of young girls, screening of women and awareness creation about the disease will go a long way in stemming the spread.

## Early detection vital in combating cervical cancer

In stemming morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer, medical experts including Prof. Ezechi; Prof. Juliet Iwelunmor of the College for Public Health and Social Justice, Saint Louis University Missouri USA; Professor Joseph D. Tucker, of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; and Dr Ucheoma Nwaozuru, Wake Forest University School Medicine, recently flagged off a cervical cancer prevention project in Nigeria, tagged ACCESS-HPV.

Ezechi averred that cervical cancer is one of the most preventable and successfully treatable forms of cancer, if detected early and managed effectively.

"Like many cancers, the earlier cervical cancer is detected, the higher the chances of survival," he said.

## Addressing challenge of access to HPV vaccination

The consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, however, attributed the high prevalence of the disease in Nigeria and the resultant number of deaths among women to poor access to effective and adequate treatment services.

"The inequity in access to service has been attributed to compelling healthcare priorities, insufficient financial resources, weak health systems, and limited numbers of trained service providers", he observed.

To bridge the gap in vaccination for HPV, which is only available in private facilities, Ezechi said his team's research project, "Actions for Collaborative Community Engaged Strategies for HPV (ACCESS-HPV)" aims to support the Nigerian national cancer prevention and control programme, towards achieving its drive to join other nations of the world to eliminate cervical cancer by 2030.

In explaining the research methodology, Prof. Iwelunmor explained that the team will explore the bond between mothers and daughters to drive home the message of the importance of HPV vaccination, to improve the uptake

of the vaccine.

She added: "We will develop new vaccination campaigns for young girls and HPV self-collection campaigns for mothers, using crowdsourcing open calls and participatory learning communities.

"We will also determine the effectiveness of a final campaign on the uptake of HPV vaccination among girls (ages nine to 14) and HPV self-collection among mothers (ages 30 to 49) using a stepped wedge randomised control trials."

## Need for multi-sectoral approach

Pharmanews interaction with other stakeholders shows that there is need for multi-sectoral approach to change women and girls' dispositions towards the uptake of HPV vaccine and screening. While some cited religion as a barrier, others noted the need to enlighten teachers and school management on the importance of HPV vaccination for girls and cervical cancer screening for women.

Mrs Mutiat Adepoju, a pharmacist with the Lagos State Primary Healthcare Board, and an executive of a Muslim organisation, NASFAT, expressed Islam's view on HPV vaccination, saying it is acceptable, provided it is for saving lives.

"Islam holds that anything that prolongs your life and prevents death is good. So, cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine are good steps in preventing mortality from cervical cancer in our women and girls. Islam is not against girls receiving the HPV vaccine," she affirmed.

For women, she identified regular screening as the best option, because there may not be any sign at the onset.

For the Vice-Principal, Reagan Memorial Baptist Girls Secondary School, Yaba, Mrs Ruth Okey, there is need for increased advocacy on HPV vaccination for girls, as most women and girls are oblivious of it.

She said, "I'm aware of other cancers, but only got to know about this when Rotary Club members came to our school to seek our indulgence on the HPV vaccination for girls against cervical cancer.

"We have been trying to enlighten parents on the importance of the vaccine and why they should allow their girls take it. We have already sent consent forms to parents to fill for their daughters. When we get enough consent forms, then we will invite Rotary Club members for the exercise."

A student of Reagan Memorial Baptist Girls School, Sharon Iwuamadi, also revealed that she had been ignorant about the disease and the required vaccination, until a group of scientists invited some of the girls for enlightenment. She, however, added that even though she is better informed now, she cannot take the vaccine without her parents' consent.

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# Shalina lauds young talents, as winners emerge in Ibucap, Shaltoux contests

By Adebayo Oladejo

Shalina Healthcare Nigeria Limited, which manufactures Ibucap, Shaltoux Lozenges, and other leading brands in the pharma market, has commended Nigerian youths for being creative, enthusiastic and exceptional, despite the challenges facing the country, adding that talent discovery is one of the key elements to secure the future of the country.

Speaking at the prize presentation programme for the winners of the online music contest, the Shaltoux Lozenges "My Voice, My Identity" (Season 2), recently held at the corporate head office of the company, the Chief Commercial Officer, Pharma Business West Africa, Arun Raj, noted that the contest was the company's way of giving back to the society.

According to him, the company is proud of the product and also proud to connect the product with its consumers in a creative way.

"We are very grateful for the opportunity to give hope to the young ones through the contest," he said.

Also speaking, Sandeep Sahu, head, brand marketing of the company, said the company is positioned to "provide quality medicine that is affordable and available all over Africa", adding that it is in over 15 countries in Africa and has over 350 products in 12 therapeutic categories, one of which is Shaltoux Lozenges.

In his own speech, Suresh Karuppiasamy, head of Consumer Business West Africa, said the Shaltoux online contest was initiated to communicate with people and get feedback on the effectiveness of Shaltoux, adding that Shalina is only fulfilled when everybody in Africa gets access to affordable and quality care through its numerous products.

"We put this programme together to know what people feel about Shaltoux



L-R: Mr Ashish Pateker, marketing manager, Shalina Healthcare Limited, Consumer Business, India; Mr Vivek Jain, head, Consumer Global Marketing, Dubai; Pharm Emeka Adimoha, head, Regulatory; Mr Suresh Karuppiasamy, head, consumer business, West Africa; Magdaline Mangohol Anthony, 3rd prize winner; Zadok Aghalengbe, brand ambassador, Shaltoux; Terver Freeman Terzungweh, the overall winner; Mr Arun Raj, chief commercial officer, West Africa, and Mrs Busayo Idowu, brand manager, Shaltoux, at the Shaltoux My Voice My Identity Online Music Contest prize presentation in Lagos recently.

which is a natural throat reliever, and we will continue to engage and empower the youths through our numerous programmes and we urge them to take advantage of it," he said.

Speaking on the concept behind the online vocal challenge, the company's consumer brand manager, Oluwabusayo Idowu said, "My Voice, My Identity" is an online contest with the hashtag #FreeMyVoice Challenge, adding that contestants sing or rap to a rhythm created by Zadok Terzang, the brand ambassador of Shaltoux.

Also speaking Terzang, a Nigerian entertainer, music producer, songwriter, and first runner-up in the Nigerian Idol Season 7, commended the company

for the opportunity given to youths to showcase their talents through the challenge.

His words, "I want to commend Shalina for this contest and I am happy to be part of the success story of the programme as it has touched the lives of many youths positively. Some people are brand ambassadors for products they don't use but for me, Shaltoux is a different case."

The winners were: Terver Freeman Terzungweh, a 22-year-old undergraduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, who received N1 million; while Confidence Egonu, with the stage name 'Dcapable Twins, and Magdaline Mangohol Anthony

received N500,000 and N300,000 respectively as the first and second runners-up.

The top ten finalists were also given cash prizes, making the total cash prize for the competition N2.8 million.

In another development, a 23-year-old student of the University of Ibadan, Moses Oladimeji Olaosebikan with the stage name, @directr\_m has emerged as the winner of the Ibucap "Super Me" Challenge, an initiative of Shalina Healthcare Nigeria. He won a grand prize of one million naira.

Other winners of the competition include @tabrenation and @ejiyk, the first and second runners-up, winning cash prizes of 500,000 naira and 200,000 naira respectively.

According to Chiuba Nwaosu, brand manager, Analgesics and Antimalarial Portfolio, Shalina Healthcare "Ibucap "Super Me" challenge, is an online contest which had participants making their own videos in different professions.

Speaking on how the winners emerged, Nwaosu said, "There were 250 contestants in all and both the online followers and a team of selected judges did the voting. In the four weeks exercise, ten winners emerged weekly, winning prizes of 20,000 naira each, resulting in a total of forty winners. These 40 were later screened into ten and out of these, three contestants eventually emerged as overall winners.

Presenting the prizes, Ibucap brand ambassador, a Nigerian dancer and choreographer, Kafayat Shafau, popularly known as Kaffy, expressed her satisfaction with the process and appreciated the company saying; "Shalina is not just genuine to its cause in making quality healthcare products available and affordable, but also provides opportunities for an average Nigerian to be successful."

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## THE JOURNEY OF AGILE ORGANISATION

### Characteristics of great leaders who leave genuine legacy

By Prof. 'Lere Baale, FPSN, FPCPharm, FNAPharm, FNIM

There are essentially five characteristics of great leaders interested in leaving a genuine legacy. The first of these is being **flexible**. Not everything goes as planned. Competitors change tactics, governments force new regulations on business, strikes stop the flow of products, and, occasionally, natural disasters occur. And, at times like these, leaders have to be able to change course; that is, first make sure their businesses will survive, and then find a new way to reach their goals.

The second characteristic is being able to **communicate**. Some leaders are great orators, but speaking well isn't all that's required of a leader. As we all know, there are many people who talk a great game but deliver nothing. Leaders who communicate well are those who not only share their thoughts with employees, but also let their strength and personal character show through in their communication. They empower those who work for them by defining the company's goal and showing how to get there.

A third characteristic of great leaders--or, perhaps, group of characteristics--is having **courage, tenacity, and patience**. Having the **courage** to stand alone, the **tenacity** to not succumb to pressure, and the **patience** to keep fighting until you win the day; and sometimes being able to do all three at the same time is something you will have to develop, if you want to be a true and successful leader.

The fourth necessary characteristic is the combination of **humility and presence**. Acting aloof, or above your employees, does not make a leader. Leaders have to be able to talk and listen to their employees at all levels of the company. At the same time, they must have the respect of their employees; the kind of respect that's earned by being honest, having integrity, and being tough but fair.

The fifth and final characteristic of a successful leader is being **responsible**. A business owner has to realise that, as the saying goes, "A skunk stinks from the head down," and a business does too. This means when there is blame to be accepted, the owner must be the first one to accept it. But it also means that when accolades are appropriate, they should be spread out among the employees. And when this happens, a leader is born.

#### Benefits of leadership that leaves genuine legacy

Being a leader enables you to be effective and efficient in determining your organisation's destination and creating a team that focuses on getting it there.

Being a leader means defining and exhibiting moral and ethical courage and setting an example for everyone in the organisation.

Being a leader helps you teach leadership skills to your

employees, who will then help do the "heavy lifting" of moving the organisation from where it is today to where it needs to be in the future.

Being a leader enables you to recruit, hire, and promote employees who demonstrate leadership abilities.

Being a leader forces you to analyse your own strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of the company, and enables you to develop a good sense of reality.

Being a leader helps you dictate appropriate employee conduct while, at the same time, preventing employees from being too tough, ruthless, or mean to other members of the staff.

Being a leader helps you emphasise the value of the company's customers, how they are treated, and the importance of their returning.

#### Realities of leadership that leaves a genuine legacy

Your organisation can meet the goals you establish, only if you lead the way by motivating and encouraging your employees to become a coordinated team focused on the destination.

When you are leading your organisation into a "new frontier," because neither you nor your employees have been there before, mistakes, miscues, and inexperience add to the challenge, and your leadership is key to meeting that challenge.

You have to understand and be good enough at leadership to teach it to your employees, both by example and by coaching. The more leaders you can develop, the stronger the business will be, and the less you will have to worry about how the business is operating.

In exhibiting leadership, there are essentially three things you must accomplish, if you hope to make the organisation a success. These three things don't represent every facet of leadership, but they do form the foundation on which leadership is built and are an integral part of leadership at every level.

The first of these is **achieving the objective**. This is not something you, or anyone, can do alone, which means you will have to work with others to accomplish it.

The second is **building and maintaining the team**. Saying you need a team to accomplish something is one thing, but developing one, and consistently encouraging and motivating it, is something else, and something you must do.

The third and final thing you have to do is **develop individuals** within the company. In order to accomplish this, you must lead by example. Teach employees what leadership means so they can teach their direct subordinates. Establish an environment for success by eliminating excuses.

Recognise when jobs are well done. Have the courage to make the tough calls, and encourage empowerment within certain parameters, among others.

Leadership may mean different things to different people, but in a business, leadership must always start with the owner, who has to define exactly what leadership means to him or her, and

then decide what success means to the business. However, being a leader also means articulating that vision to everyone else in the company, convincing them of its importance, and encouraging and motivating them to work together to achieve it. And while doing so may come more naturally to some than to others, it's never easy. In fact, as Vince Lombardi, the legendary Green Bay Packers coach, once said, "Contrary to the opinion of many people, leaders are not born. Leaders are made, and they are made by effort and hard work."

If you want to give your business organisation or nation a good start towards success, it has to start with leadership, and leadership has to start with you.

Ask yourself same question: When you've passed away,

what will they say? Concerning character, will they say that you understood why integrity is more important than image? Concerning choices, will they say that you weighed every short-term pleasure against any long-term pain? Concerning conduct, will they say that you didn't allow aloofness to get in the way of accountability to yourself, others and God? And concerning consequences, will they say that your life was more about significance than success? If so, then you can be assured that you'll be leaving behind a legitimate leadership legacy.

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## Kwara PSN awards grants to six pharmacists -Emerges 2022 Professional Body of the Year

By Adebayo Oladejo

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Kwara State Chapter, has recently awarded N400,000 in grants to six pharmacists, as beneficiaries of its Educational Grant Scheme. The scheme was instituted to empower pharmacists in the state who are currently enrolled in masters, doctoral and fellowship programmes.

In a press release made available to *Pharmanews* by the association's Secretary, Pharm. Munirat Kikelomo Bello, recipients of the third edition of the grant scheme were presented with their cheques during the recent PSN monthly meeting, held at the secretariat.

Speaking at the event, the Chairman, PSN Kwara State, Pharm. Juwon Otelaja, noted that the scheme was established to encourage pharmacists in the state to build their capacities and take up more professional challenges.

Otelaja added that the successful candidates for the latest edition had been selected after a thorough screening process by a committee headed by Dr (Mrs) Rashidat Ayanniyi, a past dean of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Ilorin, and other seasoned academics and Fellows of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (WAPCP).

While presenting the cheques to the beneficiaries, Otelaja emphasised that adequate funding is necessary for continuous growth and stability of the healthcare sector.

"In this third edition of the scheme, four candidates at WAPCP received N75,000, while two masters' students received N50,000," he said.

Also speaking with *Pharmanews*, Dr Ayanniyi, chairman of the Screening Committee, said that the selection process was open and transparent, adding that the six recipients were the best among those who were considered.

According to her, the idea of supporting pharmacists in the state in the form of scholarship grants was important and innovative, noting that it will go a long way in encouraging members to do well in their practice. She revealed that the primary aim is to enhance their professional growth and development by improving their professional competence.

One of the beneficiaries of the grants, Pharm. Busayomi Abolarin, responding on behalf other beneficiaries, said that the gesture was well appreciated, adding that it would spur them work harder to achieve the desired results, as well as continuing to contribute meaningfully to the development of pharmacy practice in the state and Nigeria as a whole.

In a related development, the Kwara Chapter of PSN was recently named Best Professional Body of the Year 2022, beating professional bodies like the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), to the second and third positions, respectively.

The award, which was presented by The Informant247, a leading online media platform in



Pharm. Juwon Otelaja, chairman Kwara State PSN, (middle) in a group photograph with the beneficiaries of the scheme and the executives.

Kwara State, saw PSN Kwara State emerge victorious in a keenly contested online poll.

Kwara State Commissioner for Business and Innovations, Hon. Ibrahim Akaje, presented the award to the Chairman, PSN Kwara State, Pharm. Adejuwon Otelaja, at The Informant247 Media Banquet/Award, held at Maryam Hotel, Ilorin, Kwara State.

Otelaja, while receiving the award, said the association would continue to add value and provide necessary support within the health sector, adding that the award is a morale booster for PSN leadership in Kwara State Chapter, as it shows that people are paying attention to their good works.

According to him, "We didn't

pay attention at the initial stage, but we decided to take it seriously after doing background checks about The Informant247. We are glad to clinch this award. The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria in Kwara State will continue to go the extra mile to sanitise the sector and provide the necessary assistance in healthcare."

## Diaspora

### How management of alternative therapies advance pharmacists roles - Ikeme

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new. It has been an ongoing conversation for many years, and I urge pharmacists to open their eyes to the opportunity it presents. Pharmacists have always clamoured for greater recognition for their indispensable contribution to public health in community settings where they are often the only accessible healthcare professional to the local population. That recognition comes with pharmacists taking up every opportunity to demonstrate value to the patients they see. Assuming responsibility for managing their alternative medicines use is a clear demonstration of value.

From my viewpoint, the key practice responsibilities that can be adopted by community pharmacists in relation to natural medicine, include: acknowledging and documenting patients use of these alternative medicines and supplements; being knowledgeable about the evidence-base of nutritional supplements and natural medicines consumed by their patients; ensuring appropriate and safe use of these supplements

and medicines; reporting adverse reactions associated with their use; provide patient education; and being active in interprofessional communications surrounding use of supplements and natural medicines.

Given the widespread global utilisation of nutritional supplements and natural medicines, it is unarguably an international public health issue that deserves pharmacists' involvement in its management.

Besides, Good Pharmacy Practice dictates that pharmacists should take steps to update their knowledge and skills about complementary and alternative therapies. Nutritional supplements and natural medicines fall into this category of pharmaceutical products. Pharmacists should, therefore, lead in educating their patients on the safe use and implications of alternative supplements and medicines, and especially point out any risk that maybe associated with their use.

**What is your view on the employment of non-**

**pharmacists as attendants in community pharmacies in Nigeria?**

I personally think it is very necessary. Community pharmacists face a challenge striking a balance between their professional responsibilities to their patients and the non-pharmacists' tasks necessary for the operational success of the pharmacy business. Tasks like managing the till, managing inventory, interacting with customers and answering non-pharmacist questions are necessary for the smooth operation of a community pharmacy, but do not require the education and training of a pharmacist.

For the pharmacy profession to continue to grow, pharmacists need to use non-pharmacist attendant as extenders. As these attendants begin to take on more of the non-pharmacists duties, pharmacists are able to increase the time spent with patients. This model is already used successfully in the USA and should be embraced by Nigerian community pharmacists as well.

## Why pharmacy programme should have separate academic calendar – OOU PANS President

By Adebayo Oladejo

**I**n this exclusive interview with *Pharmanews*, President of the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria Students (PANS), Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Ayo Olusegun Adekunle, bares his mind on the challenges that unified academic calendars pose to pharmacy education in Nigeria. The Ondo State-born scholar also speaks on his foray into Pharmacy, PANS politics, as well as the achievements and aspirations of the incoming administration. Excerpts:

### How did you decide for Pharmacy as a course of study?

During my O-Level, my dream course was Medicine initially because that was what I filled in for in JAMB. However, after I was denied admission by UNILORIN then, I decided to change the pendulum by deciding with my parents to study Pharmacy, because they also wanted me to do a medicine-related course. I wasn't moved by passion to study Pharmacy; the goal was just to go to school and get educated, and I found myself here. But ever since I started Pharmacy, I have been very grateful to God for making me choose the course.

### What are the challenges associated with studying Pharmacy in this country compared to other parts of the world?

There are many challenges associated with studying Pharmacy in this country, compared to other countries. One major area of concern is the complex academic calendar. I believe Pharmacy is a professional course that should be taught in a professional way but the case here in Nigeria is different. You see pharmacy schools operating same calendar with other non-professional courses. This leads to a hasty conclusion of the curriculum and making students sit for an examination in few weeks.

This really traumatises pharmacy students because there is a lot to cover but the rush, caused by a non-independent calendar, makes students unable to cope with the stress that comes with it, compared to our foreign counterparts.

### What achievements have you recorded and what challenges have you encountered so far?

There have been quite a number of achievements that I have made during the course of my administration. The first is the capital project. I was able to provide learning aids that we had lacked for some time in the faculty. We got the public address system, a projector screen and a new set of ceiling fans to improve the ventilation of our lecture rooms.

Secondly, we organised industrial visitation to Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries; as well as participations in professional development programmes, online webinars, essay competition and lots more. So far, all of these have been achieved, despite the little time we had, as a result of the ASUU strike.

### It should be tough combining studies with active involvement in other activities. How have you been coping?

There is a proverb that says "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." The pressure on me as a visionary leader, coupled with my academics, has been very difficult. There are times that I will need to skip lectures to source for funds, alongside some of my executives. Coming back from there, I will have to read overnight to cover up for the lapses. And there is also the planning and execution of our events and all.

But God has been helping me with my tenacity; I have been able to balance leadership with academics ever since I was in 100 Level. So it's now a part and parcel of me.

### If you had the opportunity of changing some things about pharmacy education in OOU, what would they be?

The first thing I would do is to ensure the faculty creates more time to enable students to read and to get involved in other extra-curricular activities. I believe this is necessary for the total development and well-being of my colleagues.

### There were speculations that high-handedness, anxiety, and fear were fuelling mass failures in pharmacy schools. How true is

### this speculation, and what is your reaction to it?

Well, I agree with this, because hardly can you see any pharmacy student that won't be anxious or scared because of the workload and complex curriculum. This is one of the reasons why you see some pharmacy students underperforming. It's not because they don't read but the volume of materials to cover is too much within a limited time. I see this as a critical issue that the PCN should give priority to.

### ASUU recently ended a prolonged strike action. Do you think the strike was a good decision?

The strike had its good and bad sides. The good side is the fight to bring a new face to the Nigerian educational system, which is on a verge of collapse; while the bad side is the negative impact that it has on the students in terms of extension of stay, mental health and the like. In my own opinion, the government



Ayo Olusegun Adekunle

should proffer a lasting solution to this national embarrassment called ASUU strike.

### Where do you see PANS-OOU, by the time you will be leaving office?

I see PANS-OOU as one of the leading associations that will compete on a global scale. The involvement of great minds amongst the students here will take PANS-OOU to the apogee of greatness.

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# Confidentiality in healthcare

By Stephen Daniel Davou B. Pharm. (Jos), MBA-IHM(FRK)  
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The quotes, "Health is wealth"<sup>1</sup> and "a healthy nation is a wealthy nation"<sup>2</sup> have become universal that many users do not know that their origins were the American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nduka, respectively. These two great statements I can describe to be Siamese twins, as a look at the health indices and economic values of nations<sup>3</sup> have solidified the assertion. "Health" is defined as a state of wellness of an individual.<sup>4&5</sup> An individual is comprised of the body and the mind, and any or both of these components could become faulty, and would need care to restore it to a good state.

Goal 3 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) desires health and well-being for all<sup>6</sup>. Based on this desire - and even before it - healthy citizens are encouraged to maintain their states of health, while sick citizens need healthcare. Indeed, responsible governments see healthcare as a right of their citizens. Government at all levels - local, state, and federal - provide healthcare to citizens with the Primary Healthcare Centres, Secondary Health Facilities, or Tertiary Healthcare Centres. Private individuals and organisations, including religious bodies and other non-governmental organisations, also provide humanitarian social service at different levels.

Healthcare has been defined as the preservation of mental and physical health by preventing or treating illness through services offered by the health profession.<sup>4&5</sup> In other words, healthcare is offered by professionals and the care could be in either preventive or curative, or both.

## Approaches to healthcare

There are many approaches to healthcare, summarised as traditional and orthodox. In either of the approaches, there is always a provider and a recipient (client or beneficiary). Other parties that have emerged in healthcare include the regulator, patient relations, third-party-payer (for people on insurance), and patient groups.

In modern orthodox healthcare provision, no single professional can claim sole responsibility for successes or failures. Services are offered by teams, and a team of healthcare providers could be made of technicians, doctors, medical laboratory scientists, journalists, medical records officers, drivers, sanitary officers, pharmacists, dieticians, medical imaging scientists, security personnel, and so on. The number and types of professionals in any team depend on many factors, such as category of health facility, types of services offered in the facility, specialisation(s) of the team, etc.

Some organisations have moved on to integrate traditional and orthodox medical practices. Typical examples of integrated healthcare providers are Alexandria Hospital (a government-owned health facility) and Radcliffe Hospital (a private health facility), all in Singapore. Some other examples of integrations in healthcare are informal referrals from the Jos University Teaching Hospital (a government-owned tertiary healthcare facility and orthodox practitioner) on the Jos Plateau to Dantoros House (a private healthcare facility and traditional bone-setter) in Vom Plateau state. Reverend Dachung, a traditional bone-setter sent his clients to get drugs, especially analgesics, bandages, antibiotics, antioxidants and haematinics from Dachny Pharmacy and store. There are many more examples of integrations of the traditional and orthodox healthcare practices in nearly all communities.

## Necessity of information-sharing

For effective healthcare delivery, information is shared at least between the provider and the recipient - and in some cases with any or some of the other parties. This information needs to be treated with every sense of respect and care, in order to protect the privacy of the client and for confidence to be built amongst parties, especially the recipient and the provider. Any leakage or passage of information to the wrong party could jeopardise the process of healthcare, and might invite legal action, or even heads to roll, as witnessed during the outbreak of COVID-19 on the Plateau.

Many tools are employed in management and/or provision of healthcare.<sup>7-10</sup> The list of tools is endless, as every organisation or community has different tools for same or different forms of healthcare. The tools employed in the provision of healthcare range from simple devices as pens, files/folders, papers and books, to stethoscopes and sphygmomanometers, to cars and lorries, helicopters/airplanes/jets, computers, CT scan machines, x-ray machines, MRI machines, drugs and other medical consumables, as well as to nonphysical tools as counselling, confidentiality, teaching, teamwork, etc.,. For the purpose of this work, kindly permit me to propose that the tools can simply be grouped as palpable and impalpable tools.

## Place of confidentiality

Confidentiality is as an impalpable tool, and has been defined as the state of being kept secret or private.<sup>4&5</sup> This can raise many other questions in healthcare delivery, as another quote says, "There is no secret between two persons."

One may ask, should there be secrets in healthcare? Celine Dion brought another concept, "If walls could talk."<sup>11</sup> Looking at all the

listed quotes and concepts it becomes difficult to pin-point who and where confidence is broken in healthcare, due to leakage of information.

Information collected for the purpose of use in healthcare needs to be a secret between the giver and the user(s) of the information. Some of the pieces of information in healthcare are not given, and may even be unknown to the client/patient; but the information generated/discovered in the course of providing

healthcare services must be held in confidence. For instance, evidences of pregnancies, rapes, HIV status, etc. of clients MUST be held in confidence.

## Vital considerations

It must be noted that confidentiality in healthcare is complex, as receivers of information may have collected such information for the use of another or other persons in the "team"; hence the information must be revealed or disclosed, or shared with others. For instance, a folder may need to be marked "reacts to sulphonamides" for all other members in a healthcare team to know that the client being attended to should in no way be administered any sulphonamide-containing medication.

It is common knowledge that some clients infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) got stigmatised when their statuses were disclosed to persons that had little or no knowledge of the disease. Some of such patients get depressed and their health status deteriorates, even when the HIV disease has not developed into the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

The duty to maintain confidentiality of patient information is not explicit; instead, it is implied by the nature of the relationship.<sup>12</sup> For example, a receptionist or medical records officer collects information from a client for use of many others in the team, who may or may not meet with the recipient later in the course of service provision. Also, a pharmacist may need to share the information of a client with other pharmacies to enable him or her get medications for his or her client from any of the pharmacies. However, irrespective of who gets access to a client's information, there must be confidentiality.

We need to also note that the client/recipient of healthcare has a right to access his or her information, when the need arises. This beneficiary of the information that needs to be treated with every confidence also has the right to disclose/share the information to whoever he or she wants. In this scenario it becomes difficult to employ confidentiality in healthcare.

Where then is the place of "freedom of expression," as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution?<sup>13&14</sup> This question can be a subject of another discussion.

## Conclusion

There are diverse ways in which information can/must be shared in healthcare. However, whatever the reason for sharing information, confidentiality is a watchword to protect the client(s). The simple nature of information sharing through the internet has made sharing and leakage of information simple; hence the concept of confidentiality in healthcare can be revisited to accommodate the invention of Internet.

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## Eliminate industrial TFAs, reduce sodium, NAFDAC charges manufacturers

continued from back page

NAFDAC Director General, Prof. Moji Adeyeye, noted that deaths from coronary heart diseases in Nigeria reached 53,836 or 2.82 per cent of total deaths, and is responsible for the greatest proportion of the total mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs). She added that nearly 70 per cent of deaths that occur globally every year are due to NCDs, while cardiovascular diseases account for half of the deaths from NCDs.

With TFAs and sodium levels implicated in the surge of cardiovascular diseases locally and globally, Adeyeye averred that it is incumbent on local producers of foods and beverages to comply with the agency's regulation, as it is in alignment with World Health Organisation (WHO)'s recommendations. According to WHO, total saturated fats, trans fat and cholesterol intakes should be less than 10 per cent and 1 per cent of total energy intake, which translates to less than 20 gram per day and 2.2 gram per day, respectively.

Adeyeye, who made the disclosure at a stakeholders' meeting on lipid and cardiovascular health, organised by the Nigerian Heart Foundation (NHF), emphasised that the regulation is also one of the health targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3, 4).

According to the NAFDAC boss, who was represented at the symposium by her Special Assistant, Dr Gbenga Fajemirokun, "Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death globally, and efforts at controlling this scourge has led to the development of several regulations, amongst which are the Fats and Oils Regulation; Pre-packaged Food (Labelling) Regulations; Food Fortification with Vitamin A Regulation, and Nutrition and Health Claims Regulations. Efforts at collaboration among stakeholders, which is one of the latest forums, was predicated on the elimination of industrially produced TFAs and reduction of sodium in Nigeria for supply chain.

"Sodium reduction and elimination of industrially produced TFAs will contribute to the creation of an enabling food environment, which promotes healthy diets and help achieve the global nutrition and diet-related NCD target endorsed by the World Health Assembly (WHA) and committed to at the second International Conference on Nutrition and the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2-25)."

She added: "The role of NAFDAC is in regulating and controlling the manufacture, importation, exportation, advertisement, distribution, sale and use of foods, drugs and other regulated products in a way that positively impacts on cardiovascular health.

"Food manufacturers may come to the assistance of consumers wishing to avoid the health threats from saturated and trans fats by reducing the saturated and trans fats in some of their standards," she said.

Adeyeye also advised the consuming public to modify their eating habit, by cutting out saturated fat, increasing omega-3 fatty acids and monosaturated fats, and eating more fruits and vegetables, saying this can make a big difference in their health and well-being.

"Replacing both saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats may be the most effective global strategy in preventing cardiovascular disease," she said.

Adeyeye further stated that substituting saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats lowers blood



L-R: Former CMD, LUTH, Prof. Akin Osibogun; Director, NCD, FMOH, Dr Alayo Sopekan; Chair, NAS Sectional Committee on Medical Sciences, Dr Sonny Folorunso Kuku and Executive Director, Nigerian Heart Foundation, Dr Kingsley K. Akinroye, at the symposium.

cholesterol and pressure, prevents blood clots and protects against irregular heartbeats.

Also speaking at the event, Dr Femi Mobolaji-Lawal, chairman, Executive Council, NHF, reiterated

the views of the NAFDAC DG, saying what people eat have a direct link with their heart health. He said this explains the reason behind NHF's front-of-pack label, which encourages transparency, adding

that it is essential for stakeholders to follow regulations and good production practice.

Mobolaji-Lawal urged consumers to embrace heart-healthy oils and fats in replacement of saturated and trans fats, while also enjoining regulators and government to invest in monitoring and surveillance mechanisms, while improving laboratory capacity and scaling up to meet regional, national, and international standards.

Speaking on the position of NHF on lipid and cardiovascular health in 2023, the Executive Director of the Foundation, Dr Kingsley K. Akinroye, reiterated its recommendation for a limit of no more than 1 per cent of the total trans-fat content of cooking oils and of the total content in all other foods, stating that the report has been submitted to the Minister of Health.

He further disclosed the Foundation's standard in enlisting products in its Heart Mark Food Labelling Programme, noting that any food that will carry NHF's heart health logo must have 0 per cent of total trans-fat content of cooking oils.

According to him "trans-fat is created when an unsaturated fat is processed or hydrogenated. It raises LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol) levels. Saturated fat generally comes from animal sources like meat, poultry, and dairy foods. Plant sources are coconut oils, palm oil and palm kernel oil."

## Lab scientists harp on early diagnosis to curb disease burden

continued from back page

According to him, in most cases, when diagnostic service is not given proper consideration, doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other healthcare professionals cannot achieve good outcomes.

Etuk-Udoh also pointed out the need to encourage the public to go for regular medical checkups. According to him, "Early diagnosis ensures that diseases are treatable and well controlled. But when you discover a disease when it has already damaged body organs, then the prognosis at that point is poor.

"For instance, when a patient presents late, even the least medical condition around won't

be easily treated, and that's why I am here to talk to my colleagues in the healthcare family who are pharmacists so that they can encourage people to check themselves out early enough as they are the closest to the people.

"Routine medical investigation is key. Such that diseases are picked out early and addressed quickly so the individual can have a good quality of life rather than allow complications."

Also speaking, Damilola Makinlolo from Assurance Diagnostic Service Limited, explained that a medical laboratory or clinical laboratory is a laboratory where tests are carried out on specimens from the body, which include fluids, tissues and byproducts, to obtain information about the health of a patient to help in diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases.

She further noted that medical laboratory scientists perform complex tests on patient samples,

using sophisticated equipment like microscopes, haematology analysers, spectrometers, Elisa, and others, adding that medical laboratory sectors include chemical pathology, haematology, medical microbiology, immunology or endocrinology, and histopathology.

While emphasising the importance of diagnosis, Makinlolo said: "Without a diagnosis, Medicine is blind; without a diagnosis, the capacity and opportunity we have to deal with diseases will be difficult because we will be misrepresenting facts and the patients will not be getting the right kind of attention."

In her speech, Pharm. (Mrs) Vivian Ibeh, zonal coordinator, Ikeja Zone of ACPN, disclosed that the lectures by the experts were apt, adding that laboratory diagnosis is very important as pharmacists, especially those at the community level need to start developing interest in it.

"As pharmacists, we need to keep ourselves abreast of the development in the world of healthcare. We also need to catch up with the rest of the professionals in the healthcare sector; hence the reason for the lectures.

"Ikeja is the capital of Lagos State; so the zone is the most systemic and most strategic zone of the Lagos ACPN seeks to blaze a leadership trail for community pharmacy practice. When it comes to drug information and drug language, the patient-care role of a pharmacist is unique and cannot be replaced by any allied healthcare practitioner," she stated.

One of the highlights of the event was the celebration of some outstanding members of ACPN Ikeja Zone, for their commitment and dedication to the association and as well as their contribution to the upliftment of the practice. Letters of commendation were read to their hearing and given to them.



Mr Maurice Etuk-Udoh, managing director, Healthtronics Medicare, delivering his lecture at the first monthly meeting of ACPN, Ikeja Zone.



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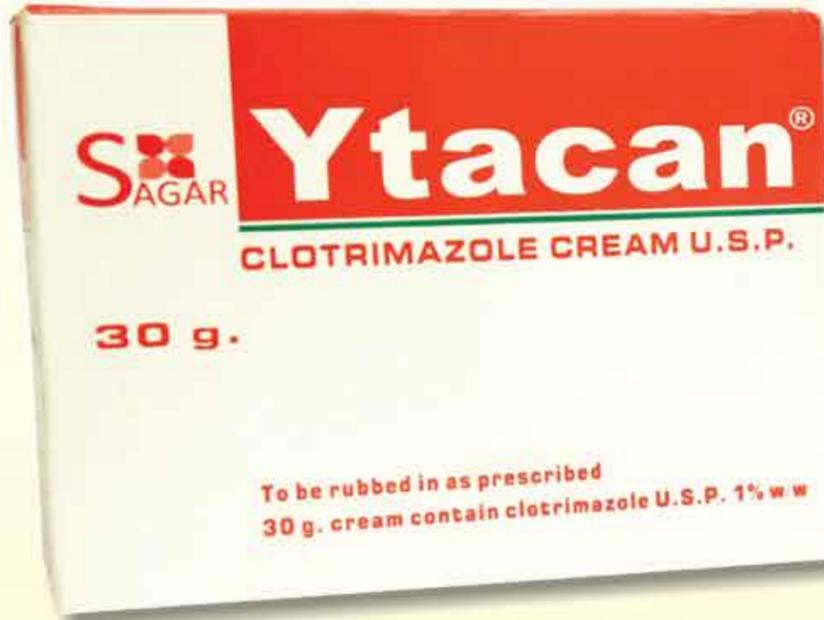
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# Lab scientists harp on early diagnosis to curb disease burden

**- As ACPN Ikeja organises business seminar**

By Adebayo Oladejo

Medical laboratory experts have emphasised the need for prompt presentation and diagnosis to curb rising rate of chronic diseases. They also called proper diagnosis before administering drugs on patients to avoid wrong medication.

The experts, who were on invitation to the first monthly meeting of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Ikeja Zone, held at the ACPN National Secretariat, Ikeja, Lagos, also enjoined health practitioners to commit to best practices in service delivery.

Speaking at the event, Mr Maurice Etuk-Udoh, managing director, Healthronics Medicare, noted that diagnostic service is at the forefront of any medical care, adding that before a medication is administered for an illness, the first consideration should be laboratory and diagnostic service to unravel the reason for the health challenge.

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L-R: Chairman of the occasion, Dr Olu Awosika; Distinguished Professor Cecilia Igwilo and co-Chairman of the occasion, Dr Dere Awosika during Prof. Igwilo's retirement and 70th birthday celebration, held at the University of Lagos, on 23 January, 2023.

# Eliminate industrial TFAs, reduce sodium, NAFDAC charges manufacturers

**- Says compliance mandatory for curbing cardiovascular disease burden**

By Temitope Obayendo

For the high mortality rate of cardiovascular diseases in Nigeria to be reduced to the barest minimum, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has mandated all manufacturers of foods and beverages in the country to comply with its regulation on the elimination

of industrially produced trans fatty acids (TFAs) and reduction of sodium from foods and beverages produced in the country. The agency says this will ultimately help in reducing the incidences of stroke, heart attack, and other heart diseases.

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