



Pharma manufacturers fret over subsidy removal, seek palliative measures

By Temitope Obayendo

Pharmacists in the manufacturing sector of the Nigerian economy have expressed concerns over the

potential aftermath of the removal of petroleum subsidy on local production of pharmaceutical

products. They predict that the move will have negative impacts on both manufacturers and

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L-R: Pharm. Okey Akpa (PhD); Pharm. (Prof.) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; Mazi Sam Ajagu; Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi, Alpha Pharmacy MD; during the recent commissioning of the pharmaceutical cold room of Alpha Pharmacy, held at the company's head office, Ikeja, Lagos.

Pharmanews honours award winners, Ezeofor, Ajilaran

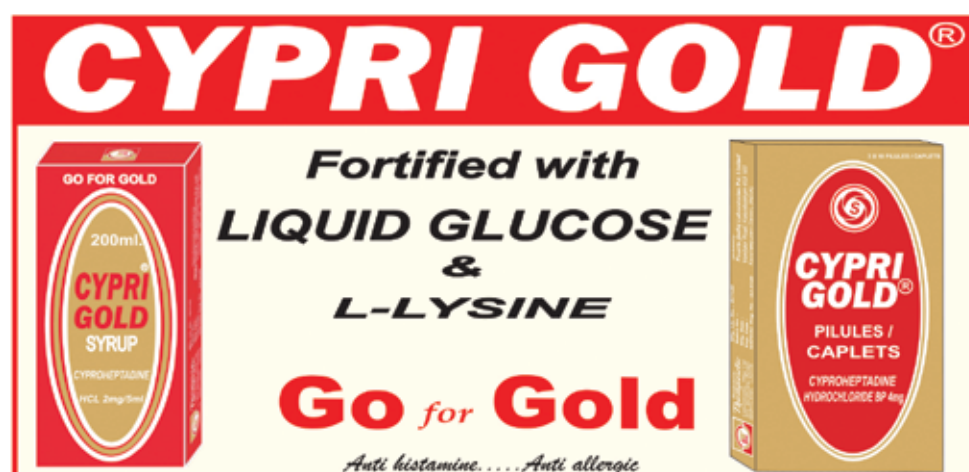
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Nigeria, our biggest market outside UK – Vitabiotics VP

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How God made Alpha Pharmacy leading supplier of rare drugs - Onyechi

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PHARM. (MRS) OMOKHAFE ASHORE

Pharm. (Mrs) Omokhafa Mary Ashore is the director, Clean Medicines Initiative (CMI) and current national treasurer, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN). An indigene of Ojah Village, Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State, she was born in the city of Ibadan, on 1 August 1967.

Ashore studied Pharmacy at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, graduating in 1990. She had her internship at Eko Hospitals Plc., Lagos, between 1991 and 1992, where she honed her patient care skills, developed a deep understanding of medication management and fostered meaningful connections with patients. She did her NYSC programme at the Staff Clinic of the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos, from 1992 to 1993.

Over the next 30 years, Ashore has dedicated herself to improving the health and well-being of countless individuals. She has worked diligently in various pharmacy settings, including hospitals, clinics and community practice.

Throughout her career, she has actively participated in professional organisations and continued her education through the Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Programme (MCPD), seminars, annual national conferences and certificate online courses. Her exceptional contribution to the field of Pharmacy has earned her accolades, including a merit award for distinguished community pharmacists for outstanding service and leadership. She has also served as a mentor to aspiring pharmacists, sharing her wisdom and experiences to inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Ashore has served the pharmacy profession in various capacities and at different levels. These include: treasurer, Great Ife Pharmacy Alumni Association (GIPAA) (2018 to date); general secretary, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Ogun State (2016-2019); PRO, Association of Lady Pharmacists of Nigeria (ALPs) Ogun State (2014-2018); financial secretary, (2009-2012), assistant secretary (2012-2015), treasurer (2015-2018), Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) Ogun State; national financial secretary, ACPN (2018-2020); and national treasurer, ACPN (2020-2023), among many others.

Ashore is a recipient of the PSN-Ogun State merit award. She also received a Distinguished Community Pharmacist Award (DCPharm), from the national ACPN.

Pharm. (Mrs) Ashore is the chief executive officer, Mokhaf Pharmacy. She is married to Hon. (Engr.) Lewis Omokogbe Ashore and the marriage is blessed with children and grandchildren.



Inspiration

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can somehow become great. - **Mark Twain**

Let your creative and imaginative mind run freely; it will take you to places you never dreamed of and provide breakthroughs that others once thought were impossible. - **Idowu Koyenikan**

Put your energy into things that actually grow you. Too many people freely give their energy to negative thoughts, people, and situations. - **Germany Kent**

The more connected we are to our emotions and thoughts, the more prepared we are to experience growth and personal development. - **Brett Blumenthal**

Change happens when you extend your reach.

Your comfort zone is your enemy. As long as you play it safe, you will never become all that you are destined to be.

- **Germany Kent**

Do what you feel in your heart to be right for you'll be criticised anyway. - **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Set a goal so big that you can't achieve it until you grow into the person who can. - **Zig Ziglar**

Absorb what is useful, discard what is not, add what is uniquely your own. — **Bruce Lee**

One can choose to go back toward safety or forward toward growth. Growth must be chosen again and again; fear must be overcome again and again. — **Abraham Maslow**

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. — **Will Durant**

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It came as no surprise that majority of Nigerians received, with trepidation, news of the removal of petroleum subsidy by the government of President Bola Tinubu. At his inauguration as the 16th democratic president of Nigeria on 29 May 2023, the president emphatically declared that the days of fuel subsidy were gone. While explaining that the removal process had actually begun under the previous administration and must be decisively implemented by his government, Tinubu assured that the gesture would ensure proper channelling of funds for the development of other critical sectors of the economy.

However, while many agree that the subsidy removal, in itself, is long overdue – considering that it has become a cesspool for siphoning trillions of naira that are never accounted for – there are valid concerns over the implications on the cost of living and doing business in the country. These concerns must be taken seriously and addressed by the government.

Indeed, from the moment the announcement was made by the president, the aftershock began to be felt in the transportation sector, with a sudden rise in the pump price of petrol, from N184 per litre to N500 per litre. Expectedly, this immediately resulted in a 100 per cent increase in fares across the country and by extension, the cost of commodities.

As analysts have predicted, however, this is just a tip of the iceberg, as more price hikes are expected in the costs of production

Subsidy removal: Cushioning the fallout on pharma industry

and essential services across the country. This is particularly disturbing, considering that Nigerians have barely recovered from the untold hardship inflicted on them by the ill-fated naira redesign policy.

The worries and apprehensions take an even more alarming dimension when the potential impacts of the subsidy removal on the health sector and the pharmaceutical industry are considered. Already, stakeholders have forecasted that the decision portends very difficult times ahead. With expected increase in the cost of manufacturing, most patients will be unable to get quality medicines at affordable rates. Indeed, unless government takes decisive steps to alleviate the huge economic toll, many patients will experience deterioration in their conditions, largely due to their inability to cope with the rising costs of drugs.

Affirming these concerns, the CEO of Bloom Public Health, Professor Chimezie Anyakora, an advocate of self-sufficiency in Nigeria's local pharma manufacturing, recently warned that the shock created by the subsidy removal can trigger many problems for the pharma industry, in particular, and the health sector, in general. He observed that the rising costs of production, which

are inescapable consequences of subsidy removal, could force many pharma manufacturing companies out of business, thereby creating a gap in the supply chain. This, the government must avoid at all costs.

The Executive Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Group of the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN), Pharm. Frank Muonemeh also agreed that subsidy removal would affect Nigeria's clamour for medicine security in many ways. He observed that over 80 percent of pharmaceutical manufacturing activities in Nigeria depend on energy provided by the oil and gas sector and as such, increase in the cost of gas, diesel and premium motor spirit will negatively affect the cost of operations, as well as the purchasing power of citizens.

We agree with these analysts that unless government provides palliatives such as low interest rates, many manufacturers may be forced to close shop – a development that could lead to loss of employment and lack of competitiveness in the local manufacturing sector. This worry becomes more germane in view of the fact that, prior to this period, availability of forex for the purchase of pharma raw materials has been a major issue,

which has crippled the business of many local industry players, in addition to multiple taxation and other import duties on pharma products.

The government must also be wary of the possibility of counterfeiters of medical products exploiting the gap in supply of essential medicines to flood the Nigerian pharma market with fake and substandard drugs. This will be to the detriment of the average Nigerian.

With healthcare being one of the sectors that the president said will be boosted with funds accruing from the subsidy removal, it is imperative for the Federal Government to strike a deal with major stakeholders in the manufacturing industry to ensure the provision of forex at a very reasonable rate, for easy purchase of pharma raw materials and equipment. We also urge the government to heed the call of manufacturers, by re-examining some of its taxations, in order to relieve them of irrelevant tariffs and import duties on machines and other manufacturing equipment. This will go a long way in averting high costs of drugs and subsequent inaccessibility to patients.

We also call on the government to be sincere in its resolve to dialogue with the labour unions on mutually-beneficial ways through which the subsidy removal can bring about economic growth and development such that every sector, especially the health sector, can witness unprecedented positive impacts.

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CONTRAINDICATIONS: Ranferon[®]-12 is contraindicated in patients known to be hypersensitive to any of the ingredients, anaemias not caused by iron deficiency.

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Fulfilling your vision

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

In the first week of January, 1979, I took my letter of resignation to the Departmental Manager of my company. He was not surprised that I was resigning because our working relationship had become frosty. But he was shocked to know what I was planning to do. He asked me, "Are you going to Glaxo?" I replied no. "Pfizer"? I said no. "Then, where are you going?" I simply replied that I would start publishing a pharmaceutical newspaper. He laughed mockingly, as if I was a crazy man.

After the jeering laughter, he asked me how I planned to take care of my wife and young kids. I replied that I would make money from the newspaper to take care of my family. He laughed the more and told me, "Ifeanyi, I know you well. You can't make money from that paper. You will even be begging people to take the copies free of charge. You must think seriously about your future. Have you discussed with your wife?"

As soon as I left him, he invited the National Sales Manager to discuss the "foolish" decision I was taking, instead of getting a marketing position in another pharmaceutical company. The next time I met him was at the PSN conference in Umuahia in November 2017 (38 years after). He was officially invited to the conference as a traditional ruler. On arrival, he met me and my wife at the entrance of the venue and we heartily embraced each other and took nice photographs.

I gave the above narration to show you what you can experience when God gives you a vision of what He has planned for you to do. Your vision is your personal calling; it is not for any other person. When my boss was mocking me, I pitied him because of his ignorance. He did not know what God had already revealed to me about my future. I allowed him to express his mind and then left him with my letter of resignation. He was not the right person I could have shared my vision with. He did not know that God had already given me the idea of what He would want me to do for Him.

When God gives you a vision,

you are not expected to share it with everybody. Joseph did it with his brothers and parents and created some problems for himself. There are vision-killers who can destroy your future. May God direct you to those who will support and encourage you to fulfil God's plan for your life.

I realised this very early and tactfully kept away from certain colleagues. Of course, God led me to Prince Julius Adelus-Adeluyi (Juli, as he is popularly called) who was very excited and we looked critically at the dummy I presented to him for comments. I had the idea of the name "Pharma News" but Juli suggested one word, "Pharmanews". On house colour, we considered some colours and arrived at process blue.

One great thing that happened in the last quarter of 1978 when some ideas were flowing into my mind was that I

wrote them in a notebook with hard cover. I did not allow any idea to evaporate. That was on Wednesday, 27 December, 1978.

At that time, I was not reading the Bible and did not know that even God instructed us to write down the vision He gives us. It was when I became an active Christian that I saw it in Habakkuk 2:2-3 (KJV), which says, "And the LORD answered me, and said, **Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.**"

Implementing God's vision requires focusing on the assignment. Luke 9:62NKJV says, **"No one, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** You have to carry it out as instructed. When God gave the instruction for building His temple in Jerusalem He gave details of dimensions and materials. When Noah was to build an ark He gave very clear instructions. When God through Prophet Samuel gave King Saul instructions on how to vanquish Amalek, Saul did it his own way and that led to the end of his kingship of Israel.



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Adopt the strategy of a champion

By George O. Emetuche

A Champion is someone who gets up when he can't - Jack Dempsey

My first book is titled "The Selling Champion". It took a process that I would say is divine to settle for that title. The book is endorsed by Brian Tracy and Dr Leo Stan Ekeh, OFR; and the foreword is by Mazi Sam I. Ohuabunwa, OFR, FPSN. The book came out strong because it wanted to live the name, "champion". There's something in the word "champion" because it is not an easy task to be a champion.

Every champion has a tactic

Every champion has a winning tactic. This winning method is personal to the champion. The champion's strategy is known to the champion alone.

Mohammad Ali was known for running around the ring during every fight. He did this to disorganise his opponent. This tactic worked well for him because his opponent would lose energy chasing him around the ring.

Mike Tyson reigned as the world heavyweight boxing champion in his day because he made his opponents believe he was invincible. The disadvantages he got as being short and easily tired because of his structure, he gained in power punching, perfect technique and his bravery.

Every champion has a technique. Lionel Messi trains alone for hours after collective training with his teammates. Training with his teammates is the standard but training alone afterwards is the distinguishing factor that made him a champion. This outstanding preparation strategy makes Messi relevant in every match.

Diego Maradona, the former captain of the Argentine national team had a way he dribbled his opponents. The skill was God's gift to him. He would dribble his opponents with great dexterity that rare opportunities would open for his team to score goals. His opponent would often put more than one man on him - making it possible for Maradona's teammates to have unhindered access to deal with the opponents' goalkeeper.

Rashidi Yekini, former Nigerian striker, was a footballer to remember. He made 58 appearances for Nigeria, scoring 37 goals as Nigerian international. Rashidi scored Nigeria's first ever World Cup goal in 1994. He was also African Footballer of the year in 1993. His strength was his ball shooting ability. His hard shots were a nightmare to opponents. Anytime he held the ball, the opponents' goal keeper shivered. His goal scoring ability during his years in Super Eagles was near to none. Scoring goals made him a champion.

I wake up in the early hours of the day to read or write books, create articles or prepare training programmes. I give my creative work between five and seven hours every day. I usually apportion this period in bits to organise myself better. This strategy has equipped me in my career.

Nothing beats preparation on the path to success. As a salesman, what is your strength? Being

brilliant on the job should be your strong point.

Make your strategy unique

As expressed, every champion has a strategy that is unique to him or her. You must identify a strategy that will make you to be outstanding. This is how to excel in your career. The elements that will make you to stand out as a champion are your preparation and uncommon performances. As a sales professional, you performance must speak for you if you want to be exceptional. Champions are exceptional. They don't do regular things.

When you do regular things, you achieve normal results. When you do remarkable things, you accomplish exceptional results. Outstanding results from champions are achieved through

hard work, positive attitude, tenacity, and consistency in what they do.

Champions don't give up easily

Champions don't give up easily because they want to maintain their leading position. In fact, the attribute of determination of the champion is one of the main attitudes that made him a champion in the first place. Albert Einstein said "It's not that I'm so smart, it is just that I stay with problems longer." The Champion identifies the challenge and confronts it.

There are champions in every field and as a professional you can't wish yourself less. The way of thinking of a champion is different. The champion sees only the crown ahead and goes for it - irrespective of the hurdles that will stand on his way. His attitude is firm, his strategy is clear to him, and he follows it with passion.

Champions define their paths.



They determine the destination of the journey before setting out. You must take charge of your activities because you are prepared for the best. You are called to fill-in a gap. You are called to occupy a unique space and only you can occupy the space. Arise and answer the call of champions!

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Managing election stress disorder

political power a “do-or-die” affair, in which party supporters engage their opponents in bloody altercations, leading to deaths and serious injuries. It is important that psychologists are

involved more in the counselling of political aspirants so that the level of desperation they bring into the electoral process is reduced to its lowest ebb. No politician whose real interest is to serve his people would resort to violence and irresponsible behaviour or become depressed when he loses in his bid.

This writer was actively involved in arguments and permutations that trailed the last presidential election in Nigeria, where the contest was primarily between the BATists (supporters of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu) of the All Progressives Congress and the Obidients (supporters of Peter Obi) of the Labour Party. It was a very tensed contest that witnessed a lot of mudslinging and personality attacks amongst the supporters of both contestants. In fact, at some point, the campaigns took the colouration of an ethnic war.

Though this writer was not personally disposed to the candidacy of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, he was prepared emotionally and psychologically to live with the eventuality of a BAT victory. The simple antidote

to any anticipated feeling of disappointment or depression was in liberality and a philosophical mindset. “Who knows, the man whom we dislike so much may emerge victorious and could be used by God to bring unprecedented prosperity to Nigeria,” I had muted several times.

Today, I remain my normal self; no hard feelings or regrets about the election. And because I am not God, my opinions about a particular political candidate bear no finality and have neither come back to haunt me nor give me sleepless nights.

The point here is that politicians and their supporters must learn to eschew overconfidence, desperation and the propensity to use money rather than popularity as an enabler of their political status. Money politics will always yield bitterness, frustration and depression, especially in situations where a politician spends so much money and ends up losing. Some politicians do not survive such a development. Those who are lucky to do so live with mental health issues for a very long time.

The best panacea to election stress disorder is ensuring a selfless mindset, built on the principle of service to the people and not on personal aggrandisement. Those who borrow money to run for political offices must be reminded that if they fail to win, the moneylenders will still come after them.

Election stress disorder refers to the anxiety or stress that is associated with a political election to such an extent that it tampers with a person's emotion or mental wellbeing. Though not a known medical diagnosis, its existence and the threats it poses to public health cannot be ignored. The term was first credited to psychologist, Steven Stosny, who had described the 2016 US elections as full of stress and distress. Writing in The Washington Post, he had explained how the 2016 elections took a negative toll on his patients, to the extent that it distorted their personal lives.

Generally speaking, elections have a direct impact on the emotions of not only the contestants but also on their supporters. This is largely because the dynamics of winning and losing leave very long-lasting impressions on the minds of contestants and their followers. In most political elections, the winner takes all, while the loser is left to reflect on his or her loss.

In Africa and especially Nigeria where the political terrain is replete with malpractices, elective positions, whether at the local, state or federal level, are always tied to the influence of

money, so that, it is only the affluent or those with affluent sponsors who eventually get into the corridors of power.

Those who cannot muster the financial muscle are often relegated to the dustbin of oblivion. Such persons could fall sick due to failure to actualise their political ambitions, having invested so much money in the process. For such persons, managing election stress disorder becomes very expedient because their mental and emotional states could become compromised easily.

In 2014, there were reports of a Malawian Deputy Local Government Minister, Godfrey Kamanya, who committed suicide after losing parliamentary elections. This example underscores the reality of the impact of election stress on political contestants and even their supporters in Africa, where political office is mostly seen as a means of enrichment or escape from poverty rather than an avenue for selfless service to the community, state or country.

The monetisation of the political electioneering process in Africa and other parts of the world has made the quest for

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Cellular nutrition and chronic degenerative diseases (2)

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor

Chike was a great athlete in his primary and secondary school days. He continued this impressive form in the university, as he always represented his school and won major contests.

Sadly, in his early 40s, he became a shadow of his former self. He complained of his heart beating as if it would jump out of his chest! He immediately was advised to seek medical attention.

On examination, it was discovered by x-ray that Chike's heart was significantly enlarged. Echocardiogram revealed that his ejection fraction (a measure of how strong the heart is beating) was only 16 per cent. Normal level is between 50 and 70 percent. Chike's heart was huge, filled with blood clots and beating irregularly. A very critical situation.

The cardiologist then performed a cardiac catheterisation, in which a special dye is injected into the heart and coronary arteries. His arteries were fine, but his heart had definitely suffered trauma. At the next test, a biopsy of the heart muscle showed that, as a result of suffering a viral infection of the heart (he thought he had a severe flu about three months earlier), he had actually contracted a viral myocarditis, which had caused severe damage to his heart.

Chike was placed on a blood thinner and several other medications in an attempt to strengthen his heart. He was then able to leave the hospital but still very weak and could hardly move. Option two was to have a heart transplant.

Chike decided to work with his local cardiologist and a nutritionist. They placed him on very powerful antioxidants and mineral supplements, which he continued with his other medications.

The blood clots finally cleared and the cardiologist was able to convert Chike's heart rhythm back to normal with electrical shock therapy. He was subsequently introduced to a nutritional supplement containing the nutrient coenzyme Q10.

In four months, Chike's ejection fraction was back to a normal range of 51 per cent. He felt fine and was even able to ride his bicycle and start running again!

Lots of prayers, as well as adopting a healthier diet and the use of high quality nutritional supplements especially formulated for the heart and blood vessels, made all the difference.

Diseases of the heart muscle

In the previous edition, we spoke about the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart. We will now focus on the muscle of the heart itself. The heart is not a complicated organ. It is primarily a muscle whose main job is to pump blood throughout the body.

Congestive heart failure and cardiomyopathy are diseases of the heart muscle. An electrical system triggers this muscle to beat in a coordinated and efficient manner. The heart's valves must then open and close, allowing the blood to flow efficiently through its four Chambers. It has remarkably high energy requirements which

enable it to consistently do this responsibility of pumping life-giving blood to every organ in the body.

Coenzyme Q10 is a fat soluble vitamin-like substance that is also a potent antioxidant. Trace amounts of CoQ10 are in a variety of foods, such as organ meats, beef, SOY oil, sardines, mackerel and peanuts. The body also has ability to make CoQ10 from the amino acid tyrosine, but this is a complicated process that requires at least eight vitamins and several trace minerals to complete. A deficiency in any one of these can hinder the body's natural production of CoQ10.

Several studies have established a direct correlation between the severity of heart failure and correlating depletion of CoQ10.

Deficiency of CoQ10 can be the result of a poor diet, impaired ability to synthesise CoQ10, and/or the body's excessive utilisation of same.

Recent studies and real-life examples show that CoQ10 is an enormously helpful supplement in people with life-threatening heart conditions.

Boosted with medication, this nutrient helps to supply the much needed energy which the heart needs to in turn do its work well.

As always, we recommend complementary and not alternative medicine. Once you improve, the doctor will make necessary adjustments to your medication.

Your body has inbuilt capacity to repair itself when given the proper nutrients and conditions.

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What your Doctor doesn't know about Nutritional Medicine



may be killing you - Ray D. Strand, M.D.

Google

Mrs Chima Ejimofor is the Lead Partner of Infinite Health Consult, and is available for the purchase of FLP high 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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Folakemi Odedina: Pharmacist-oncologist saving men's lives

By Ola Aboderin

"I am proud to have overcome several challenges to develop a global prostate cancer research programme...I wake up to do what I love every day, which is working with a consortium of scientists globally to understand and address prostate cancer in men of African descent."

– Prof. Folakemi Odedina



Prof. Folakemi Odedina

Prostate cancer is recognised as the most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death among men globally. Worse still, black men around the world have been found to be at a much higher risk of having and dying from the disease. Statistics actually indicate that black men are 50 per cent more likely to develop prostate cancer in their lifetime and twice as likely to die from the disease.

One of the most influential experts combatting this scourge and its associated disparities is Prof. Folakemi Titilayo Odedina. She is a globally acclaimed pharmaceutical scientist and cancer specialist, with specific focus on predictors of cancer health disparities and cost-effective behavioural interventions to improve the health of minority populations, especially black men globally.

Odedina's contributions to improving prostate health across the cancer care continuum include risk reduction, prevention, screening, timely detection, treatment and survivorship to improve economic, clinical and humanistic outcomes. She has continued to work with governments, experts and policymakers across the world to advance strategic initiatives to promote equity in cancer care.

Odedina presently serves in

multiple roles at the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Centre, Florida, USA. She is professor of Haematology/Oncology; associate director for the Centre for Health Equity and Community Engagement Research (CHCR); site director of CHCR Florida; and director of CHCR Global Health Equity Programme. She is also the research core director for the Florida Health Equity Research Institute, and the chairperson of the Research Committee for the African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC).

Odedina previously served as professor of Pharmacotherapy and Translational research at University of Florida, which is affiliated with both the College of Pharmacy and the College of Medicine. She has directed over 40 research projects, mostly using community-based participatory approach, mixed-methods approach and translational behavioural research principles. She has also been a leader in training future scientists whose backgrounds are underrepresented in biomedical research.

Revolutionary initiative

Odedina's most notable contribution to the fight against prostate cancer, so far, is perhaps her historic founding of the Prostate Cancer Transatlantic

Consortium (CaPTC) in 2005. The consortium, which is a clinical research group using genomic science and environmental etiology to explore disproportionate burden of prostate cancer among black men, was inspired by a major discovery she made earlier that year.

According to her, "I found out that the populations that are part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade came from different places in Africa, and journeyed to the Americas, Caribbean and Europe. Majority of the transatlantic slaves were taken from the Bight of Benin and Bight of Biafra – over 30 per cent. The Bight of Biafra and Benin regions are approximated to be the country Nigeria, which means that majority of the US Blacks are ancestral populations of Nigerians."

She continued, "If we really want to understand the etiology of diseases, such as prostate cancer, we need to study populations that are genetically connected to fully understand the genetic and environmental contributing factors for the disease. For example, studying Africans, including Nigerians, and US Blacks will allow us to better understand the genetic contribution, as opposed to the environmental contribution for prostate cancer. This is why I founded the Prostate Cancer Transatlantic Consortium, popularly known as CaPTC, in 2005."

"Our primary goal is to figure out why black men all over the world are affected by prostate cancer, whether there are significant differences in the burden of the disease among different black men, and what can be done to reduce the disease in black men globally."

Primarily funded by the US National Institute of Health, the National Cancer Institute and the Department of Defence, CaPTC has evolved into a global programme that includes increasing participation of people of African ancestry in clinical trials. It currently has over 50 institutions and hundreds of investigators, with consortium sites in Africa, Europe, North America and the Caribbean.

Brain drain to brain gain

Very significantly, Odedina has consistently ensured that her cancer research, education, training and outreach efforts have transformational impacts in Africa and Nigeria, in particular. In 2006, she received the Fulbright Research Scholar award to study prostate cancer in Nigeria. She worked closely with the then Minister of Health, Professor Eytayo Lambo, making huge contributions to policies on cancer control in the country. She, in fact, conducted the

first national cancer research project on cancer data reporting system in Nigeria and was one of the leading authors of the first National Cancer Control Plan (NCCP).

Also, Odedina's findings and observations during that initial work in Nigeria have made her more committed to cancer control efforts in the country. According to her, "For me, it is a call to action, and we really need to accelerate biomedical research in Nigeria, including clinical trials. We cannot continue to use therapies that were developed and tested for other populations, such as Caucasians, and expect that these therapies will work perfectly well in Nigerians. The reason I keep coming back to Nigeria is to accelerate cancer biomedical research in Nigeria."

Moreover, through AORTIC, the premier organisation for cancer research and training in Africa, Odedina works with other cancer scientists within and outside Africa to provide scientific leadership and direction for cancer research in Africa. Her committee is currently working on several goals including to develop a strong research agenda that will impact cancer outcomes in Africa. As the head of the research committee, she has mentored over 300 scientists.

Background and recognitions

Prof. Odedina was born on 21 January, 1965, in Abeokuta, Ogun State. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) (formerly known as University of Ife), Ile-Ife in 1986. In 1990, she started her PhD programme in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Florida. She completed her PhD in 1994. Thereafter, she worked as assistant professor at West Virginia University before deciding to focus her research efforts on patients.

Odedina's vast contributions to cancer and health equity research have earned her multiple awards and recognitions. In 1999, she received the "Wiederholt Prize for Best Published Paper Award for Economic, Social and Administrative Sciences (ESAS)". In 2009, the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacy and the Association of Black Health-System Pharmacists honoured her with "Leadership Award", in recognition of her leadership in health disparities.

In 2016, her effort in training underrepresented minorities was recognised through the INSIGHT Into Diversity 2016 Inspiring Women in STEM Award. Based on her work in the area of clinical trials, she was awarded the "Living Legend Award" for innovations with health/economic impact during the 1st All Africa Clinical Trial Summit in 2017.

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Selecting your spouse the “write way”

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)

Should these two get married?



onset, it would take divine intervention to get them resolved. But again, there shouldn't be troubles in marriage provided people would select spouses the “write way”.

Wouldn't it be something amazing if, from the handwriting sample of your prospective or spouse or partner,

you could decipher whether the fellow is the jealous, possessive, domineering, narcissistic, prevaricative, extroverted or introverted, hypochondriac, impulsive, aggressive, impatient, temperamental type? Or whether he or she has good sexual energy, optimism, good sense of humour etc? There are hundreds of these

traits that can be seen in the handwriting which have been proven over the years to typify various personality traits of people across the globe.

Many marriages shouldn't have hit the rocks if only either partner knew just a bit more about the other. Certain challenges would have been better managed, especially because such would have been anticipated if a handwriting analysis was conducted prior to the time of wedding preparations. This is one of the jobs of a professional handwriting analyst. He draws the attention of both parties to the red flags in their handwritings and the traits they represent. He goes ahead to counsel these prospective couples, provided they are open and teachable. Of course, if they are teachable, they are reachable.

In the next edition, we shall look at two handwriting samples belonging to our male and a female illustrations at the beginning of this write up for the purpose of



assessing how compatible we think they would be in marriage, should they decide on tying the knots.

Until then, always remember that “if you must get it right, you must do it the ‘write’ way.”



Instagram (@dipomacjob)
(07062456737 Text message)

For someone who is not a regular reader of this column, this caption may seem unfathomable. How on earth can one select his or her spouse by looking at the personality traits in their handwriting sample among other background checks that can be conducted?

Notwithstanding the skepticisms that this topic may generate, its imperative to let you know, dear reader, that this practice is commonplace in some other climes where handwriting analysis is embraced as a fundamental tool in profiling for myriads of reasons - be it recruitment, vocational guidance, criminal investigation etc.

In this edition, our focus is on relationship compatibility and the role graphology plays. In order words, how can you do a background check on your intended spouse just by running a graphological analysis on his or her handwriting before you say, “I do”. Even though I am not advocating that only graphological profiling should be conducted on anyone, I must admit that it is such a reliable and phenomenal profiling tool that the world at large needs to embrace.

To all life coaches, marriage counsellors, marriage committee members and even psychologists, you need to pay attention to this unique tool that can reveal a lot about the behavioural traits of prospective couples. This tool is not a replacement for divine guidance in the lives of people. However, the reality of many people out there is that decisions have to be made at the spur of the moment. Besides, how many people out there can honestly claim to hear the Spirit of God for themselves when urgency demands going either left or right?

When there is a need to choose between what is right and what is good, most often than not, people still resolve to following their intuitions or past experiences, with respect to what worked or didn't. Better still, many would remain in their comfort zone, using a method or style they can trust. And I must say that there really isn't anything wrong with this, provided the deliverables do not fail the test of effectiveness and efficiency.

However, since nearly everyone agrees that change is something constant in life it would not be out of place to find a profiling tool that can help us narrow our margin of error in selecting someone we hope to spend the rest of our lives with. This is to help us know whether we are compatible or not, among other desirable qualities to look out for. Let's face it, if there are issues with compatibility from the



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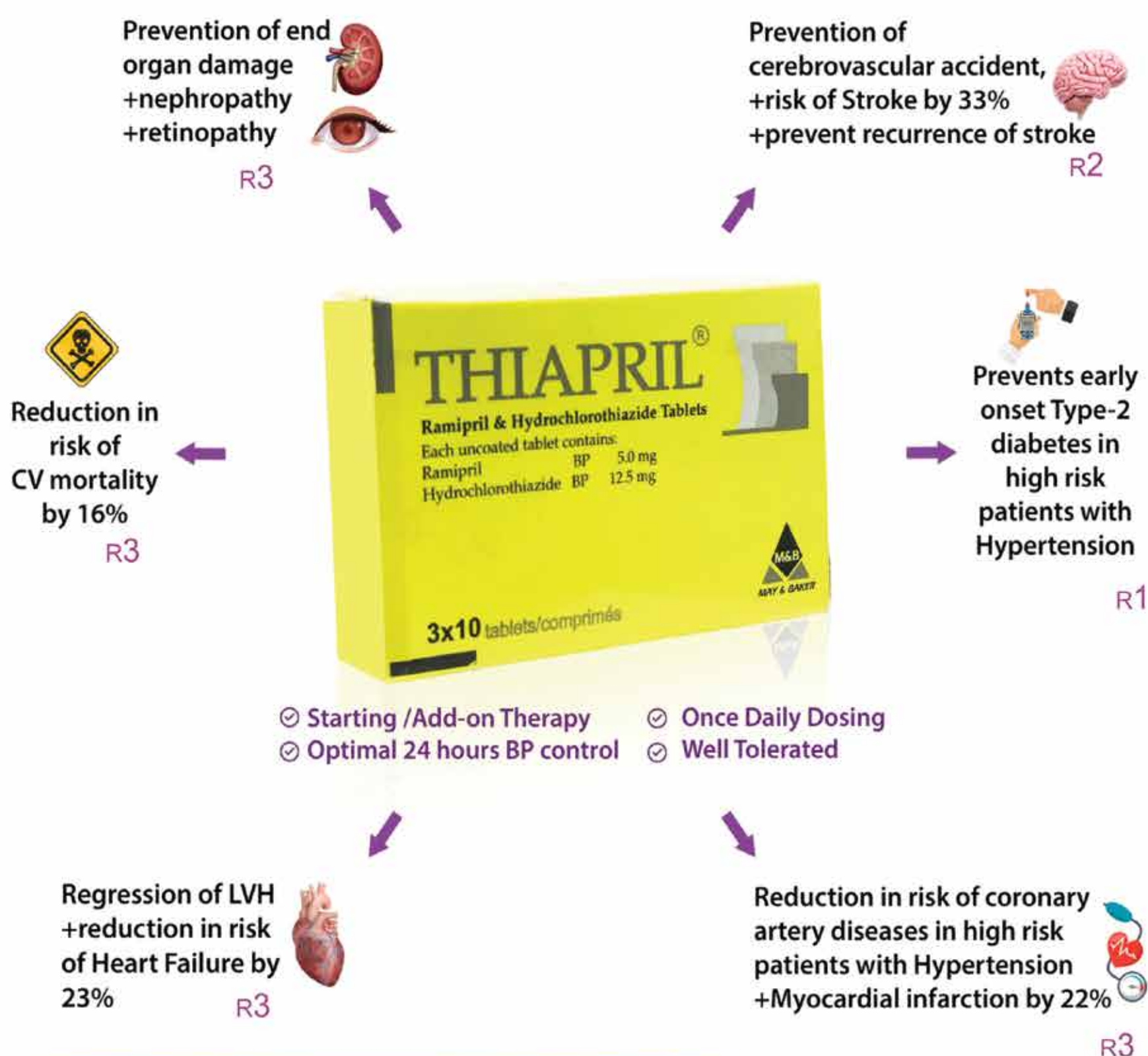
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Celebrating 44 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2023)

Modern approaches to managing hypertension

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is regarded as the leading cause of untimely death across the globe. It is a condition in which the pressure of blood against the artery walls is too high. While analysing blood flow in the body, the American National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion explains that when the heart pumps blood through the arteries, the blood puts pressure on the artery walls, this is known as blood pressure; that is, the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. The arteries carry blood from the heart to other parts of the body. Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day.

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The first number is called systolic blood pressure, which measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The second number is called diastolic blood pressure, which measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats. With this, if the measurement reads 120 systolic and 80 diastolic, one would

invariably say, "120 over 80," or write, "120/80 mmHg." A normal blood pressure level is 120/80 mmHg. High blood pressure/hypertension is therefore a blood pressure that is higher than normal, which is above 120/80.

According to the Executive Director of Nigeria Heart Foundation, Dr Kingsley Akinroye, who is also a consultant cardiologist, the ideal blood pressure is 120/80 mmHg, but in Nigeria, normal blood pressure is 140/90 mmHg. "Any figure higher than 140 mmHg for systolic blood pressure or 90 mmHg for diastolic blood pressure is regarded as hypertension," Akinroye said.

The US National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion pointed out that the higher one's blood pressure levels, the more risk one has for other health problems, such as heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Hypertension prevalence

According to the WHO, an estimated 1.28 billion adults, aged 30–79 years worldwide, have hypertension. About two-thirds of this population are living in low- and middle-income countries.

Moreover, an estimated 46 per cent of adults with hypertension are unaware that they have the disease, and this makes it a major cause of premature death worldwide.

While less than half of adults with hypertension are diagnosed and treated, approximately one in five adults with the condition have it under control. Whereas, one of the global targets of WHO for non-communicable diseases is to reduce the prevalence of hypertension by 33 per cent between 2010 and 2030.

A comprehensive study, conducted by a global network of physicians and researchers, Castleman Disease Collaborative Network, covering the period 1990–2019 found that there was little change in the overall rate of hypertension in the world within the period, but the burden had shifted from wealthy nations to low- and middle-income countries.

The study, which has been adjudged the most comprehensive review of global trends in hypertension to date, used blood pressure measurement and treatment data from over 100 million people aged 30–79 years in 184 countries, together covering 99 per cent of the global population. The researchers further discovered that Canada, Peru and Switzerland had among the lowest prevalence of hypertension in the world in 2019, while some of the highest rates were seen in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Paraguay. The study also revealed that African countries topped the countries with the

lowest hypertension treatment rate in 2019.

World Hypertension Day

In view of the deadly nature of hypertension, 17 May of every year has since been set aside as World Hypertension Day. The theme for this year's edition is "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer".

In her message to commemorate the event, the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said that, in the African region, close to 40 per cent of adults, aged 30–79 years, are hypertensive. Of these, only a quarter is on medication, while optimal blood pressure control is only attained in 11 per cent.

She noted that people with hypertension may not have any specific signs or symptoms directly attributed to the condition. "Symptoms are usually threatening of damage on specific organs in the body, including the heart, brain, eyes, and kidneys resulting from poor control," she said.

Moeti added: "This year, the theme of World Hypertension Day is aimed at drawing attention to combatting the low level of awareness of hypertension, as well as the limited availability of calibrated devices for accurate blood pressure measurement. Hypertension is easy to diagnose and there are safe and cost-effective treatments, including pharmacologic and behaviour change interventions."

Moeti further stated that hypertension is an important risk factor for cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) mostly heart attack, stroke,

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DESTINY BECKONS (4)

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

Mr Mbagwu pleaded with me to join the company, saying that he needed someone like me to bring stability. He wanted me to come in as the company's marketing manager. The earnest plea of Mr Mbagwu, coupled with the appealing conditions of service the company offered, as well as the fact that I needed a way out of NCS, propelled me to accept the job offer. I, however, gave him one condition. Placing a copy of the PSN journal, which I had taken along with me, on his desk, I told him that I would only accept his offer of employment, if it would not hinder me from continuing to edit the publication.

My interviewer was naturally surprised by my proposal. He asked me if I was being paid for the work and I answered in the negative. This made him even more surprised. After pondering for a while, he said, "I can see that you are very much committed to PSN and the journal." To which I replied, "Yes. I promised to handle the

journal and I don't want to let the Society down."

He apparently concluded that someone who could be so

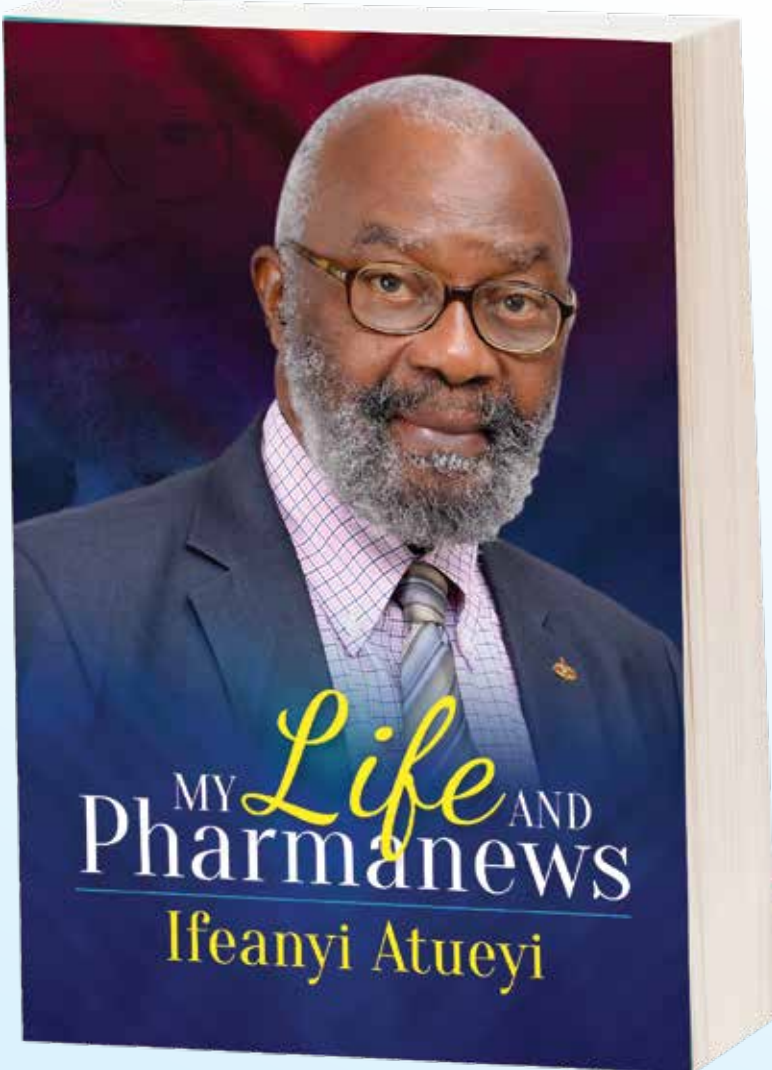
Adeniji, Nnaemeka Ifeanchio, Dr Fola Awosika, Benibo, Apooso, Ogundipe and Mrs Adejobi. Bade Adeniji has remained my

very good friend to date.

On the part of the company, I must say that, in addition to the good remuneration, I was sponsored to attend many training programmes of the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) to brush up my knowledge on sales and marketing, accounting and general management. Again, RM (as Mr Mbagwu was popularly called) did not fail in his promise to allow me ample time to serve the PSN. In fact, within just a year, in 1976, after my engagement, I asked for permission to travel to Liberia for the inauguration of the West African Pharmaceutical Federation (WAPF), he simply replied, "I know that you are committed to the PSN. You should go." I also travelled for the FIP Congress held in The Hague, Netherlands, in September, 1977.

With the way things were going at Briscoe, it would appear as if I had found a place that I could stay for a long time. In reality, however, this seemingly pleasant state was the proverbial "calm before the storm" – for, in the third year of my service at the company, the "contractions" that would lead to the birth of **Pharmanews** began in a rather unexpected manner.

Continues next edition



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

Modern approaches to managing hypertension

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and heart failure which account for a significant burden of premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The Nigerian situation

Just like many other African countries, the prevalence of hypertension in Nigeria is alarming. A 2022 WHO report revealed that 76.2 million Nigerians are living with hypertension, which poses the highest cardiovascular disease burden.

Commenting on this, Akinroye, who is also a consultant cardiologist, said the prevalence of hypertension in Nigeria is estimated to be between 30 and 40 percent of the over 200 million population of the country, which is in the range of 60 to 80 million Nigerians. He specifically stated that about one in every three adults in Nigeria suffers from hypertension, while only one-third of the figure, which is about 26.7 million Nigerians, are on treatment.

Apparently worried by the disturbing figure, May & Baker Nigeria Plc, on 17 May, 2023, organised a walk, as well as free screening on hypertension for residents in some parts of Lagos. The event, tagged "Walk For Life" was organised by the company to commemorate 2023 World Hypertension Day.

While speaking with **Pharmanews** at the event, the Managing Director of the company, Pharm. Patrick Ajah, described hypertension as a silent killer that has claimed the lives of many Nigerians. Ajah disclosed that many Nigerians are walking around, not knowing their health status, adding that the "Walk For Life" event was to create awareness on the need for Nigerians to check their blood pressure on a regular basis.

"We are using this medium to educate Nigerians on the need to check their blood pressure regularly, as it helps to identify hypertension on time and to treat it on time as well," he stated.

He tasked Nigerians to eat healthily, with plenty of fruits and vegetables. "Nigerians should keep themselves at a healthy weight as being overweight can increase the risk for high blood pressure. Be physically active, as it helps to keep you at a healthy weight. Do not smoke, as smoking raises blood pressure and puts one at a higher risk for heart attack and stroke. Limit alcohol consumption because alcohol can raise your blood pressure. Then get enough sleep, which helps to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy," Ajah stressed.

Causes of hypertension

High blood pressure usually develops over time. It can also happen because of unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as lack of regular physical activity. Certain health conditions, such as diabetes and obesity can also increase the risk of developing high blood pressure. High blood pressure can also happen during pregnancy.

Although medical practitioners have said the exact causes of high blood pressure are



not known, the American National Health Service (NHS) revealed that several things may play a role among which are kidney disease, diabetes, long-term kidney infections, sleep apnoea – where the walls of the throat relax and

aldosterone (hyperaldosteronism), and pheochromocytoma – lupus (a condition in which the immune system attacks parts of the body, such as the skin, joints and organs), and scleroderma – a condition that causes thickened skin, and

narrow during sleep, interrupting normal breathing – as well as glomerulonephritis, which is damage to the tiny filters inside the kidneys,

Others include narrowing of the arteries supplying the kidneys, hormone problems – such as an underactive thyroid, an overactive thyroid, Cushing's syndrome, acromegaly, increased levels of the hormone

sometimes problems with organs and blood vessels.

Also, some medications can cause or worsen hypertension. These include contraceptive pills, steroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (such as ibuprofen, aspirin, and naproxen), some pharmacy cough and cold remedies, some herbal remedies (particularly those containing liquorice), some recreational drugs (such as cocaine and amphetamines), some selective serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor (SSNRI) antidepressants (such as venlafaxine). The American NHS however said in cases of medication-caused hypertension, the blood pressure may return to normal once one stops taking the medicine.

Other causes identified by the WHO include overweight or obesity, lack of physical activity, too much salt in the diet, too much alcohol consumption (more than one to two drinks per day), stress,

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old age, genetics, as well as a family history of high blood pressure. However, lifestyle changes like eating a healthier diet, quitting tobacco, and being more active can help lower blood pressure, though some people may still need to take medicines.

Phones and hypertension

While the prevalence of hypertension has continued to soar, a new research has suggested that mobile phone usage may be connected to blood pressure levels. The study, which was accessed by **Pharmanews**, says the more time a person spends on the phone, the higher the risk of having hypertension. Experts have, however, noted that while the findings are interesting more study is needed.

The new research, published in early May 2023, in the European Heart Journal, *Digital Health*, says there is a link between mobile phone usage and hypertension. The study used data from 212,046 people who were part of the UK Biobank, a commonly used data set in European-focused research.

The researchers looked at the follow-up data from participants and found a correlation between higher mobile phone usage and new cases of high blood pressure. They also looked at factors such as genetic risk for high blood pressure. Participants were asked questions about their mobile



phone usage and how much time they spent on the phone making or receiving calls. At the end, the researchers found out that more time on the phone every week was linked to an increased risk of high blood pressure. People spending the most time on the phone or over six hours a week had about a 25 per cent increased risk of high blood pressure.

Symptoms of hypertension

The United States Centre for Disease Control has rightly noted that people with high blood pressure may not feel the symptoms. This is because it usually has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people do not know they have it. Hence, the only way to know is to go for a check-up.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of America,

added that one usually does not have symptoms from high blood pressure until it has caused serious health problems.

While most people with hypertension do not feel any symptoms, very high blood pressure can cause headaches, blurred vision, chest pain, and other symptoms.

According to the WHO, those who have hypertension may begin to have some signs such as People with very high blood pressure (usually 180/120 or higher) can experience symptoms such as severe headaches, chest pain, dizziness, difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision or other vision changes, anxiety, confusion, buzzing in the ears, nosebleeds, abnormal heart rhythm.

The WHO warns that anyone who is experiencing any of the symptoms should seek medical care. "The only way to detect hypertension is to have a health professional measure blood pressure. Having blood pressure measured is quick and painless. Although individuals can measure their own blood pressure using automated devices, an evaluation

by a health professional is important for the assessment of risk and associated conditions", the WHO said.

Diagnosis for hypertension

To diagnose hypertension, you should report to the healthcare provider for examination who will also ask questions about medical history and any symptoms. The health provider will also listen to your heart using a stethoscope. The blood pressure is checked, using a cuff, usually placed around the arm. It is important that the cuff fits. If it is too big or too small, blood pressure readings can vary. The cuff is inflated using a small hand pump or a machine.

The first time the blood pressure is checked, it should be measured in both arms to see if there is a difference. After that, the arm with the higher reading should be used. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

A diagnosis of high blood pressure is usually based on the average of two or more readings taken on separate occasions. Blood pressure is grouped according to how high it is. This is called staging, which helps to guide treatment.

Stage 1 hypertension: The top number is between 130 and 139 mm Hg or the bottom number is between 80 and 89 mm Hg.

Stage 2 hypertension: The top number is 140 mm Hg or higher or the bottom number is 90 mm Hg or higher.

Sometimes the bottom blood pressure reading is normal (less than 80 mm Hg) but the top

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Pharma manufacturers fret over subsidy removal, seek palliative measures

continued from page 1

consumers, as cost of production will skyrocket, while consumers grapple with limited resources to purchase products.

They have also called for the removal of unnecessary tariffs and duties on pharmaceutical raw materials and equipment for local manufacturers, arguing that except this is done, attaining national medicines security will continue to be a mirage.

The industry players further urge the federal government to create a special window for the pharma industry, whereby local manufacturers can receive foreign exchange at special government rates. They noted that access to forex is especially critical for the purchase of raw materials for local manufacturing, saying inadequate access will inevitably lead to drug scarcity.

Recall that at the inaugural speech of the newly elected President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on 29 May, he announced the immediate discontinuation of the controversial fuel subsidy regime, noting that the humungous funds that regularly gone into it would subsequently be used to accelerate development of public services and infrastructure.

According to Mr President, "Subsidy can no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake of drying resources. We shall, instead, re-channel the funds into better investment in public infrastructure, education, health care and jobs that will materially improve the lives of millions."

Speaking in an exclusive interview with **Pharmanews**, National Chairman of the Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP), Pharm. Ken Onuegbu, emphasised the need for the new administration of Tinubu to formulate and implement policies that will ensure that all government institutions patronise made-in-Nigeria pharma products.

Reacting to the hike in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit, known as petrol from N184 to over N500 per litre, Onuegbu, who is also co-founder/CEO of Tricare Pharmaceuticals, an indigenous pharma manufacturing company, called on the government to urgently seek means of cushioning the harsh effects of subsidy removal on manufacturers and workers. He observed that the rising cost of raw materials and transportation will make the prices of drugs unaffordable to the masses, which will in turn bring about low purchases.

"Although local manufacturers don't have immediate impacts of the fuel subsidy removal on the availability of raw materials, the rising cost of transportation and other services will definitely increase the cost of production and worsen the already high cost of essential drugs.

"The sharp rise in the cost of production will lead to increase in the prices of goods. And with low purchasing power from the consumers, this may lead to losses on the part of manufacturers."

As part of palliative measures that the government can adopt for drug manufacturers in view of the fallout of the subsidy removal, Onuegbu recommended the removal of burdensome tariffs and creation of an economic zone to attract the incentives that will boost local

production, among others.

According to him, "The government should consider removal of unnecessary tariffs and duties on pharma machines and raw materials; creation of a special window for pharma industry, whereby we can receive forex at government rates; coming out with a government policy for all government health institutions to patronise made-in-Nigeria pharma products; and the creation of an economic zone to attract good incentives to boost local production.

"Also, President Tinubu must make it a priority to create an enabling economic environment for local production to thrive, while ensuring that the currency is stabilised through sound micro and macro-economic policies.

"I still want to emphasise the importance of forex availability, which will enhance the importation of essential raw materials for local manufacturers, as well as improvement of public infrastructures - roads, power, and security in the country."

On whether the newly commissioned Dangote refinery, described as the largest in West Africa, can help Nigeria achieve medicine security, the NAIP chairman responded in the negative, saying there had been other refineries in the country before the Dangote refinery, yet, Nigeria keeps struggling with medicines availability.



Pharm. Olakunle Ekundayo



Pharm. Ken Onuegbu
NAIP, National Chairman

"I doubt if the operation of Dangote refinery can bring about medicines security. With the presence of Kaduna, Warri, PH, refineries, have we achieved medicine security? Achieving medicine security goes beyond an individual establishing a refinery.

"We need very strong government involvement and support. We need the commitment of all the major stakeholders. And we need the guaranteed commitment of Dangote refinery in the quest to achieve medicine security," he stated.

Also reacting to the subsidy removal announcement, the Group Managing Director and CEO, Drugfield Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Pharm. Olakunle Ekundayo, said the move will inflate the cost of living, as well as cost of production, adding that this will inevitably affect prices of commodities, including medicines.

Ekundayo disclosed that cushioning the impacts of the subsidy removal for local manufacturers

will involve availability of foreign exchange at very reasonable rates. He added that such a gesture will ensure that locally produced drugs can favourably compete with imported ones.

"For the new government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, what local pharma manufacturers like us are requesting is access to forex, at moderate rates, to enhance easy purchase of raw materials at the international market. Although we have been struggling with this prior to this time, but with the subsidy removal, it will become worse, which may create drugs scarcity, if government doesn't rise to the occasion immediately," he stated.

Concerning the commissioning of Dangote refinery and attainment of national medicine security, the Drugfield CEO averred that the country still has a long way to go to actualise the goal, saying medicine security cannot be achieved without a vibrant local pharma manufacturing policy and system.

PMG-MAN elects new management committee

By Patrick Iwelunmor

In pursuit of its cardinal objective of galvanising the pharmaceutical manufacturing landscape for optimal performance through strategic management, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Group of the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN) has elected a new management committee.

The event took place on 2 June 2023 at the Annual General Assembly of the association, held at its secretariat in Lagos and attended by distinguished pharmacists, as well as chief executives of pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria. The special guest of honour was Registrar of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) Pharm. Ahmed Ibrahim Babashehu, who also acted as the adopted returning officer.

The election of the new management committee effectively brings the tenure of the Chairman, Dr Fidelis Ayeboe, the CEO/MD of Fidson Healthcare Plc who served the group for four years, to an eventful and meritorious end. The new

management committee board to run the affairs of the group for the next two years is led by Mr Oluwatosin Jolayemi, MD/CEO of Daily-Need Industries Ltd.

According to a press release made available to **Pharmanews**, other members of the management committee are Pharm. Patrick Ajah, managing director of May & Baker Plc, 1st vice-chairman; Mrs Uzoma Ezeoke, executive director at Emzor Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd, 2nd vice-chairman; and Pharm. Biola Adebayo, deputy managing director, Fidson Healthcare Plc, treasurer.

Others are Pharm. Dubem Okoye, representing Juhel Pharm Industries, as publicity secretary; Jacob Kurian of Jawal International Ltd, asst. financial secretary; and Mr Tosin Ishola of Bentos Pharmaceuticals, financial secretary.

The ex-officio members are Mr Aakash Kothari of Sagar Vitaceutical Ltd, Mrs Blessing Aigbothua of Cardinal Drugs, Prince Agoade Damilola Jnr of Orfema Pharma, Prince Ugwu Nnaemeka of Nemel



Mr Oluwatosin Jolayemi
MD/CEO of Daily-Need Industries Ltd.

Pharma and Pharm. (Col.) Stella Ibeh of NADMACO.

Others are Pharm. Sola Akande of Drugfield Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Pharm. Abass Sambo of SwissPharma (Nig) Ltd. and Dr Fidelis Ayeboe of Fidson Healthcare, immediate past chairman.

Meanwhile, Pharm. Frank Muonemeh retained his position as the executive secretary of the group.

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Modern approaches to managing hypertension

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number is high. This is called isolated systolic hypertension. It is a common type of high blood pressure in people older than 65.

Special tests for hypertension

If a patient is diagnosed with high blood pressure, a healthcare provider may recommend tests to check for a cause. Such special tests will include:

Ambulatory monitoring:

This is a longer blood pressure monitoring test carried out to check blood pressure at regular times over six or 24 hours. However, the major challenge is that the devices used for the test are scarce in almost all medical centres.

Lab tests: Blood and urine tests are done to check for conditions that can cause or worsen high blood pressure. For example, tests are done to check your cholesterol and blood sugar levels. You may also have lab tests to check your kidney, liver, and thyroid function.

Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG): This is a quick and painless test that measures the heart's electrical activity. It can tell how fast or how slow the heart is beating. During an ECG, sensors called electrodes are attached to the chest and sometimes to the arms or legs. Wires connect the sensors to a machine, which prints or displays results.

Echocardiogram: This non-invasive exam uses sound waves to create detailed images of the beating heart. It shows how blood moves through the heart and heart valves.

Treatment for hypertension

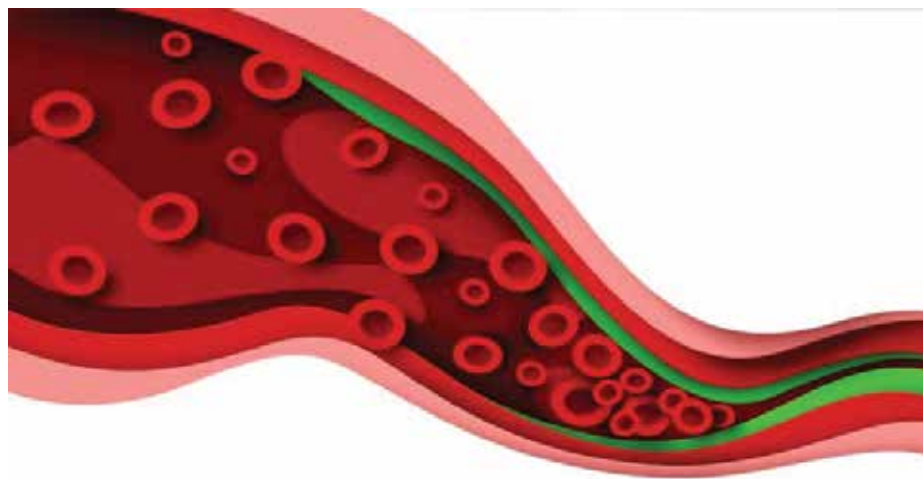
Lifestyle changes can help lower high blood pressure. Such changes may include eating a healthy, low-salt diet, losing weight, being physically active, and quitting tobacco.

Also, if a patient has high blood pressure, doctors may recommend one or more medicines. The recommended blood pressure goal may depend on what other health conditions the patient has. The WHO however specifically states that the blood pressure goal is less than 130/80 if a patient has cardiovascular disease (heart disease or stroke), diabetes (high blood sugar), chronic kidney disease, or high risk for cardiovascular disease. However, for most people, the goal is to have a blood pressure less than 140/90.

Medicines for hypertension

Several types of medicine can be used to help control hypertension and many people need to take a combination of different medicines. Those under 55 years of age, or those under any age with type 2 diabetes will usually be offered an ACE inhibitor or an angiotensin-2 receptor blocker (ARB). Again, for those 55 or older, or those who are any age and of African or Caribbean origin, and who do not have type 2 diabetes, they will usually be offered a calcium channel blocker.

A patient may also need to take blood pressure medicine for the rest of their life. But the doctor might be able to reduce or stop the treatment if the patient's blood pressure stays under control for several years.



Medicines used to treat high blood pressure can have side effects, but most people do not get any. If you do get side effects, do not stop taking your medicine. Talk to your doctor, who may advise changing your medicine.

- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors:** ACE inhibitors reduce blood pressure by relaxing your blood vessels. Common examples are enalapril, lisinopril, perindopril, and ramipril. The most common side effect is a persistent dry cough. Other possible side effects include headaches, dizziness, and a rash.
- **Angiotensin-2 receptor blockers (ARBs):** ARBs work in a similar way to ACE inhibitors. They are often recommended if ACE inhibitors cause troublesome side effects. Common examples are candesartan, irbesartan, losartan, valsartan and olmesartan. Possible side effects include dizziness, headaches, and cold or flu-like symptoms. It is however recommended that due to the risk of serious complications, including stroke, patients should not take Aliskiren with ACE inhibitors or ARBs.
- **Calcium channel blockers:** Calcium channel blockers reduce blood pressure by widening your blood vessels. Common examples are amlodipine, felodipine, and nifedipine. Other medicines, such as diltiazem and verapamil, are also available. Possible side effects include headaches, swollen ankles, and constipation. Drinking grapefruit juice while taking some calcium channel blockers can increase your risk of side effects.
- **Diuretics:** Sometimes known as water pills, diuretics work by flushing excess water and salt from the body through your pee. They are often used if calcium channel blockers cause troublesome side effects, or if you have signs of heart failure. Common examples are indapamide and bendroflumethiazide. Possible side effects include dizziness when standing up, increased thirst, needing to go to

the toilet frequently, and a rash. You might also get low potassium and low sodium after long-term use. You will have regular blood tests to check for this.

- **Beta-blockers:** Beta blockers can reduce blood pressure by making your heart beat more slowly and with less force. They used to be a popular treatment for high blood pressure, but now tend to be used only when other treatments have not worked. This is because beta blockers are considered less effective than other blood pressure medicines. Common examples are atenolol and bisoprolol. Possible side effects include dizziness, headaches, tiredness, and cold hands and feet.
- **Alpha-blockers:** These medicines reduce nerve signals to blood vessels. They help lower the effects of natural chemicals that narrow blood vessels. Alpha blockers include doxazosin (Cardura), prazosin (Minipress) and others.
- **Alpha-beta blockers:** Alpha-beta blockers block nerve signals to blood vessels and slow the heartbeat. They reduce the amount of blood that must be pumped through the vessels. Alpha-beta blockers include carvedilol (Coreg) and labetalol (Trandate).
- Beta blockers are not usually recommended as the only medicine prescribed. They may work best when combined with other blood pressure drugs.
- **Aldosterone antagonists:** These drugs may be used to treat resistant hypertension. They block the effect of a natural chemical that can lead to salt and fluid buildup in the body. Examples are spironolactone (Aldactone) and eplerenone (Inspra).
- **Renin inhibitors:** Aliskiren (Tekturna) slows the production of renin, an enzyme produced by the kidneys that starts a chain of chemical steps that increases blood pressure.
- **Vasodilators:** These medicines stop the muscles in the artery walls from tightening. This prevents the arteries

from narrowing. Examples include hydralazine and minoxidil.

- **Central-acting agents:** These medicines prevent the brain from telling the nervous system to increase the heart rate and narrow the blood vessels. Examples include clonidine (Catapres, Kapvay), guanfacine (Intuniv), and methyldopa.

High blood pressure in older people

The target blood pressure reading for the over-80s is below 150/90 mmHg when it is measured in the clinic or surgery, and below 145/85 mmHg for home readings. While there are definite benefits from taking medicines to reduce blood pressure if you are under the age of 80, it is less clear it is useful if you are over 80.

According to the American NHS, "If you reach 80 and you're taking medicine for high blood pressure, it's fine to continue treatment provided it's still helping you and is not causing side effects. If you're diagnosed with high blood pressure and you're aged over 80, your doctor will also consider your other health risk factors when deciding whether to give you treatment for the high blood pressure."

Preventing hypertension

Lifestyle changes that can help prevent and lower high blood pressure will include among others, eating more vegetables and fruits, sitting less, and being more physically active, which can include walking, running, swimming, dancing, or activities that build strength, like lifting weights.

Physicians specifically recommended that getting at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity will help to lower or prevent hypertension. The NHS specifically advises that one should do strength-building exercises for two or more days each week, lose weight if one is overweight or obese, take medicines as prescribed by your health care professional, and as well keep appointments with health care professionals.

To keep your blood pressure at normal and avoid hypertension, doctors recommend that you should not eat too much salty food (try to stay under 2 grams per day), don't eat foods high in saturated or trans fats, do not smoke or use tobacco, do not drink too much alcohol (1 drink daily max for women, 2 for men), and do not also miss or share medication.

Anyone can also reduce the risks of hypertension by reducing and managing stress, regularly checking blood pressure, treating high blood pressure, and managing other medical conditions.

Report compiled by Ranmilowo Ojalumo with additional reports from the World Health Organisation, The Guardian, American National Health Service, Webwed, Nigeria Heart Foundation, European Heart Journal, The Punch, Nigeria Ministry of Health, America National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention, Castleman Disease Collaborative Network and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of America

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Marburg virus disease: important facts

By Patrick Iwelunmor

The Marburg virus disease (MVD) was first discovered in Europe - Marburg, Germany, to be precise - in 1967. Since then, most of the incidents of Marburg virus infection have occurred in East Africa. Marburg viruses are known to cause severe haemorrhagic fever in both human and non-human primates, just like the Ebola viruses. The main route of infection among human remains person-to-person transmission.

About 600 MVD cases have been reported in outbreaks in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Angola. The first large outbreak, in Durba, DRC (1998-2000) occurred among gold miners and involved 154 cases and 128 deaths (case fatality rate 83 per cent). The largest outbreak, to date, in Uige Province, Angola (2004-2005) resulted in 374 cases and 329 deaths (case fatality rate 88 per cent). In a 2012 outbreak in Uganda, a total of 26 confirmed and probable cases were notified, 15 (58 per cent) of which were fatal.

Most of natural MVD outbreaks have been connected to human entry into bat-infested mines and caves. This indicates that bats play a key role in Marburg virus transmission. In 2007, Marburg virus (MARV) was isolated from *Rousettus aegyptiacus*, bats giving strong evidence that this species represents a major natural MARV reservoir.

However, the virus maintenance and transmission within bat populations remains unknown. Moreover, it is not clear how MARV transmission from bat reservoir to humans occurs.

In July 2008, an imported fatal case of MVD was detected in a Dutch woman, who developed symptoms within two weeks after she returned from vacation in Uganda. There were suspicions that her exposure to the virus most likely occurred in the Python Cave, Maragambo Forest, which is known for its colony of fruit-eating bats (*R. aegyptiacus*) that have been found positive for filoviruses, including MARV in other sub-Saharan African areas. No MVD cases have been reported in the EU/EEA thereafter.

Similarly, in 2008, MVD was recorded in a US tourist returning from a two-week safari in Uganda. Ten days before the onset of symptoms, the patient from Colorado had visited the same cave as the Dutch tourist mentioned earlier.

Symptoms

Generally speaking, MVD is characterised by fluid distribution problems, hypotension and coagulation disorders, which collectively lead to the development of fulminant shock. Major pathogenic factors include viral replication together with immune and vascular dysregulation. There is currently no licensed treatment or vaccine available.

Just like African ebolaviruses, Marburg viruses can both cause severe

disease in humans, such that it has been said that, "the evolution of disease often seems inexorable and invariable." After an incubation period of usually 4-10 days, there is an abrupt onset of illness, with initial nonspecific signs and symptoms, such as fever, severe frontal headache, malaise and myalgia. Profound leukopenia, bradycardia, conjunctivitis, and macropapular rash also occur.

Following two to three days, the disease deteriorates and is marked by pharyngitis, nausea, vomiting, prostration and bleeding, which manifest as petechiae, ecchymoses, uncontrolled bleeding from venipuncture sites and melena. Though external haemorrhage is a notable characteristic of these diseases, less than 50 percent of cases experience it. Abortion is a common consequence of infection of pregnant women, and infants born to infected mothers usually die.

Transmission and dis

Frontline health workers have been reported to be infected while treating patients suspected or confirmed to be having MVD. This happened through close contact with infected patients when control

and prevention guidelines were not strictly adhered to.

Transmission through contaminated equipment, such as syringes or through needle-stick injuries is linked to more severe disease, rapid deterioration and the possibility of a higher mortality rate. Transmission can also occur during burial ceremonies that involve direct contact with the body of the deceased.

Clinically differentiating MVD from other infectious diseases, such as malaria, typhoid fever, shigellosis, meningitis and other viral haemorrhagic fevers can be a very difficult exercise. To confirm that symptoms are caused by Marburg virus, the following diagnostic methods will have to be used: antibody-capture enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), antigen-capture detection tests, serum neutralization test and reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay. Others are: electron microscopy and virus isolation by cell culture.

Collected samples from patients pose a serious biohazard risk. It is recommended that laboratory testing on non-inactivated samples should be conducted under the highest biological containment conditions. The triple packaging system should be used when packaging all biological specimens for national and international transportation.

There are currently no vaccines or antiviral treatments approved for MVD. However, supportive care - through rehydration with oral or intravenous fluids - and treatment of specific symptoms improves survival.



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Dana Pharmaceuticals celebrates Children's Day in Schools across Nigeria



As part of efforts to identify and support the education and aspirations of children in Nigeria, Dana Pharmaceuticals limited, a part of Dana Group and one of the foremost infusions and pharmaceutical manufacturing company in Nigeria, has celebrated this year Children's Day with pupils and staff of selected schools across the country.

Speaking during the visit to one of the schools in Lagos, the Marketing Manager, Mr Malachy Omondia, stated that Dana Group is an established integral part of the Nigerian economy, with visible

presence in Nigeria for four decades. Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited operates two factories in Nigeria at Ibadan and Minna, which were established in 1986 and 1996 respectively and are both ISO 9001:2015 certified.

According to him, Omondia, the company's motto which is "a Commitment to Healthcare" ensures that Dana employs the best technologies in its operations and is deeply committed to the production and marketing of genuine quality and effective products that are offered at the most affordable prices nationwide.

"The existing product range includes generic formulations such as tablets, capsules, syrups, and intravenous infusion fluids. Unwavering commitment to healthcare

at affordable prices is the organisation's mission. Dana Pharmaceutical's flagship brands such as Danacid tablets and Suspension, Ferrodan capsules and tonic, Paradana tablets and syrup, XPEL cough

expectorant, LAM suspension and leading range of Intravenous fluids have become leaders in their respective categories;

Omondia further explained that the visits to the schools on Children's Day underscore the commitment of the company to the welfare and education of the children in Nigeria and beyond.

He added that as a pharmaceutical company, Dana remains deeply committed to the manufacturing of quality products and would always seize opportunities to give positively to the society. He emphasised that the Children's Day visit to schools has been replicated in several other states across the country to show support for their growth and aspirations.

Several gifts items and branded writing materials were presented to the schools across the nation.

Mrs Rasheedat Dabiri, the Headmistress of Victoria Memorial School, Surulere which is one of the schools visited, also used the opportunity to thank Dana Pharmaceuticals for identifying with the children on their day and wished the company more successes in it's operations.



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Tackling inter-professional rivalry in health must begin at university level – President, PANS-UNIBEN

In this exclusive interview with **ADEBAYO OLADEJO**, President of the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria Students (PANS), University of Benin (UNIBEN), Edo State, Osakpolor Ogiemudia, speaks on his journey into Pharmacy and PANS politics, the strides of his administration, the future of pharmacy education and practice in Nigeria, as well as his expectations from the leadership of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN). Excerpts:

How did you arrive at studying Pharmacy?

There was a time I wanted to study Medicine and Surgery but at the point of entering university, I had a conversation that exposed me to the versatility of the pharmacy profession and that changed my life forever. I am happy I did not miss the opportunity to study Pharmacy.

How did you end up as PANS president?

I always loved leadership and admired political or administrative leaders. When I got into the university, I wasn't sure I was going to be contesting for any office. I imagined that I would do more of supporting people to run and also assisting them in their leadership.

However, I had several people who thought I would make a good president, long before I ran for office. When the time came, I tested my ideas with the office of the public relations officer and saw things from a different perspective, especially the fact that leadership isn't about you, but about others.

With the help of all students, I did my best to set a mark and a new standard as PRO and was awarded Best Public Relations Officer in PANS, Nigeria, at the National Convention at Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State.

Seventeen months after being elected as PRO, I contested and won the office of the president, with the largest margin in any election I have witnessed and this brought me great humility and I'm now more determined to serve my association. I sincerely appreciate my classmates and all members of the association who thought me worthy.

What aspects of your responsibilities as president do you consider particularly challenging, and what are you doing concerning it?

Juggling several activities, meetings, and messages and still having to keep up with my academics has been challenging. Sometimes I forget the meetings I set and I also forget to check up on my friends and family, which can be hurtful.

Another challenging aspect would be the quest to source for funds to accomplish ideas and plans. This is not an easy task and I pray God continues to help. In all these challenges, I am grateful for the help of my vice president, Jennifer Akanu, and the executive council, for making things a lot easier.

The present Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN, commenced operation in 1970. How would you compare the Pharmacy of that time in UNIBEN, to what you have today?

I'm sure a lot has changed; the students of those days are the professors of these days. Also, we operate the Pharm.D degree now and thus there's growth in the profession overall. However, students have more distractions, and we have the problems of our generation. This brings opportunities for creativity and applying modern solutions to modern problems.

The unhealthy rivalry among health professionals has been a major challenge for some time now. Do you also experience this in the university setting? How do we facilitate inter-professional collaboration among healthcare professionals?

Actually, the rivalry begins in the university and then grows when these health professionals leave school. I think the right way will be to come down to the university level and organise joint faculty seminars and conferences among health-related courses.

There has to be a setting where we all come together and agree on the dangers

of having disjointed forces in the health sector and make practical efforts to be united and pursue, in togetherness, our common goal of catering for the health of individuals.

The current president of PSN, Prof. Cyril Usifoh is a lecturer in UNIBEN. What grey areas in pharmacy education would you want him to address before leaving office?

If possible, focus can be given to emerging areas of the pharmacy profession in the education sector – especially areas relating to tech, such as tele-pharmacy, pharma data science, robotics, etc. Some of these areas are mentioned when teaching but more focus should be given to them. They are exciting and fascinating, and they are the future.

The importance of politics in the

pharma profession should also be given cognisance, even in the education sector. I believe engaging in politics is how we make hard things easy and create assess were there was none. This has to be reiterated in the classroom, shaping the minds of the future of the profession in that regard.

What do you hope to achieve and where do you see PANS-UNIBEN by the time you will be leaving office?

Already, several achievements have been made, including the creation and launch of the PANS-UNIBEN website; as well as the creation of the committee on capacity building, with a focus on facilitating mind-transforming seminars and events that build extracurricular skills in students.

We have launched the first-ever yearbook for an inducting class and introduced the Student Leader award, to deserving students. We have also begun the quest to ensure comfortable classrooms, and many more projects we started tailoring.

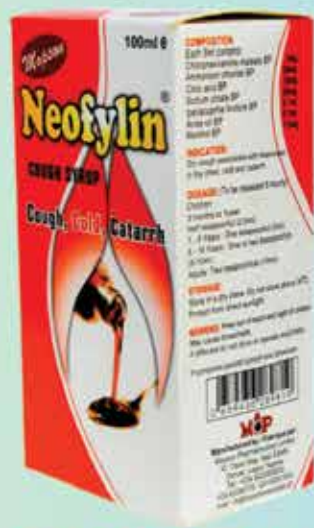
Where I see PANS after I leave office – growth must be evident, as each



Osakpolor Ogiemudia

student would have been impacted in various capacities; and without doubt, the association would have grown structurally and intellectually.

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World Milk Day: Experts endorse heart-healthy milk for adults

By Temitope Obayendo

Medical experts from the field of cardiology and nutrition have dispelled the widespread notion that milk consumption is unhealthy for adults above 40 years of age, saying dairy products are essential for the maintenance of adults health. They however specified that milk to be consumed by adults must be "heart-healthy".

Heart-healthy milk, according to them, is such that is low in sugar and saturated fat, with nearly zero level of trans fat, adding that this further justifies the need for locally manufactured dairy products to meet the health needs of Nigerians.

The experts, from the Nigerian Heart Foundation (NHF), also urged the newly inaugurated administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to prioritise local milk production, saying this is nutritionally better and healthier for the populace than imported milk.

The Executive Director, NHF, Dr Kingsley Akinroye, while fielding questions from journalists during the recent World Milk Day 2023, organised in collaboration with Three Crowns Milk, charged Tinubu's government to formulate policies that will encourage local manufacturing of milk, lamenting the present importation rate of dairy products, which is not less than 80 per cent.

"I will be glad to see in ten years time that milk local content has improved significantly, as dairy products low in sodium, saturated fat and sugar are heart-friendly," he



L-R: Brand Manager, Three Crowns Milk, Mr Victor Adeniran; Executive Director, Nigerian Heart Foundation, Dr Kingsley Akinroye; Director Legal, Nigerian Heart Foundation, Mrs Taiwo Lambo; Communication Advisor, Nigerian Heart Foundation, Abiola Awe; Kunle Abiola, Sustainability Manager; Three Crowns Milk at the media conference.

said.

Akinroye, a consultant cardiologist, while emphasising the importance of milk consumption in boosting the nutritional needs of humans, however decried the low awareness of milk intake among Nigerians.

He explained that milk is a whole food, as it contains 13 essential nutrients that play an important role in the growth and development of both adults and children.

The 13 essential nutrients in milk, according to him are: protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin A, vitamin D, riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3),

pantothenic acid (B5) and cobalamin (B12), iodine, potassium, selenium and zinc.

Also speaking in commemoration of the annual event, Professor Tola Atinmo, nutrition chairman, NHF, highlighted the crucial functions of dairy products in maintaining healthy diets and responsible food production, as well as supporting livelihoods and communities. He pointed out that dairy has a vital role in global food systems, providing economic, nutritional, and social benefits to everyone.

Atinmo nonetheless bemoaned the burden of malnutrition in

Nigerian children, citing statistics which shows that 37 per cent of the 31 million children under five years are stunted, due to lack of adequate milk consumption. He therefore called for increased local production of dairy products for consumption.

"The benefits of providing school children with milk are well-recognised. The well-known natural richness of dairy products makes them excellent sources of an abundant supply of high-quality protein, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, iodine, vitamins B2 and B12.

"Evidence shows that a quality education, combined with a secure package of health and nutrition interventions at school, such as school feeding, can contribute to high cognitive children and adolescent development and build human capacity," he stated.

Also speaking, Mr Victor Adeniran, brand manager, Three Crowns Milk, hinted on the activities of the company in promoting dairy food consumption and healthy lifestyle, saying that the company recently engaged over 5000 consumers in Osogbo and Kano on healthy living.

"As a brand, we are not limited to milk promotion, but healthy lifestyle, which we have been doing for over 30 years. At Friesland Campina WAMCO, we delight in supporting our farmers to producing heart-healthy milk and we will continue to do that for the health of Nigerians", Adeniran disclosed.

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1.) Beevers et al. BMJ 2001;322:912-916

2.) ESH ESC Guidelines. J Hypertens 2003;21:1011-1053

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Wellness
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Dr Patrick Ijewere

Tel: 0809 771 4455
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This edition is about the journey of the wellness tree and how it came to be. A tree, as is seen on the wellness tree, there are roots, are branches, and a trunk.

THE ROOTS

The roots have five roots: Spirituality, Mindset, Nutrition, Lifestyle and Environment. We call this the five pillars of wellness. This implies, if there's balance in the root, it's a very healthy tree. If there is deficiency, if there is chemical pollutants in the soil, if the soil is unhealthy, inadequate, the soil is imbalanced. If the soil is not well cared, the roots that are in the soil would be unhealthy and cause an unhealthy tree.

THE BRANCHES AND LEAVES

Healthy roots give rise to a healthy tree. The evidence is in the branches and leaves. A healthy tree has leaves that are green and radiant. We call or label those branches, "Wellness". Thus, the



leaves are radiant green at the top of the Wellness Tree.

Whereas, when the tree is unhealthy due to unhealthy roots and deficient soil, the

branches give rise to leaves that are yellow, orange, and, or red. And these branches have been labelled with the different chronic degenerative

inflammatory medical conditions or diseases.

Hence, it's imperative that we take care of the root system. Failure to do so, these **PILLARS** of Wellness, these roots could easily and rapidly become the **ROOTS** of all our illnesses. The red, orange, yellow leaves represent illnesses, ranging from head to toe. Starting with neurological and neurodegenerative ailments, including ocular or eye diseases, memory impairments leading to dementia. Ailments of the Oral and dental cavity, from gingivitis, to periodontitis, to recurrent dental carries.

Likewise, if the root system is impaired, ailments of the respiratory system, could also present. Ailments of the respiratory

system, from sinus conditions to pharyngitis, to bronchitis, pneumonia, and recurrent pneumonia. Likewise, diseases of the cardiovascular system

from high blood pressure to ischemic heart disease and cardiomyopathies.

Likewise, these ailments could track even further down into our musculoskeletal system. joint issues, arthritis, muscle issues, myositis, myalgia, arthralgia, to more complex issues, such as gout, osteopenia, osteoporosis. Of course, auto immune disorders, ranging from lupus, multiple sclerosis to psoriasis. Gastrointestinal and hepatic conditions, irritable bowel, Inflammatory bowel. Skin disorders from eczema, acne to other severe dermatitis. Other ailments I haven't mentioned include ailments of reproduction, infertility, fibroids, low sperm count, endometriosis, men with erectile dysfunction, ailments of the neurological system, So nurturing the root system is paramount.

What am I saying, all diseases have a cause that is linked to the roots. Our spirituality, our mindset, our nutrition, our lifestyle and our environment.

Likely, the most powerful message from this tree is, disease is reversible. Fix the underlined cause in the soil and roots, and the body will bounce back.

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Pharmanews honours award winners, Ezeofor, Ajilaran

By Adebayo Oladejo

It was a historic moment at the Pharmanews corporate head office, Lagos, as the management and staff recently assembled to celebrate the duo of Pharm. (Dr) Ozioma Onyedikachukwu Ezeofor, winner of the Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year Award 2022; and Ahmed Olasunkanmi Ajilaran, a 400 level pharmacy student of the University of Lagos (UNILAG), who emerged winner of the Pharmanews PANSite of the Year Award 2023.

The Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year Online Poll was established in 2018, with Pharm. Isah Muhammad as the first winner. Daniel Eze won in 2019; Frank Eze, in 2020; while Ezeofor emerged winner of the 2022 edition.

The PANSite of the Year Award, which commenced in April 2019, saw Yusuf Hassan Wada, from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State, emerge as the first winner. Izukanne Emembolu, of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa, Anambra State, won in 2020; Martin Chukwunonso Nwofia, of Chukwuemeka Odumegbu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, won in 2021; Jennifer Ekuma from the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, won in 2022; while Ahmed Olasunkanmi Ajilaran, from the University of Lagos, clinched the 2023 edition.

Speaking at the award presentation ceremony, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, publisher, **Pharmanews**, appreciated the award winners for emerging the best among other contestants. He added that the company was delighted to celebrate the winner of the 2022 Young Pharmacist of the Year, which he said could not be done last year, and also to reward the current winner of the PANSite of the Year Award.

Atueyi said: "I want to thank God for making this day possible. We all know that last year, we were unable to celebrate winner of the Young Pharmacist of the Year Award, for one reason or the other, but today, I want to thank the Pharmanews team for their efforts in making the ceremony a reality."

The octogenarian further noted that the awards were to recognise, encourage and reward excellence among pharmacists and pharmacy students, adding that the winners must be outstanding individuals in all specified requirements.

Atueyi narrated how the relationship between Pharmanews and pharmacy students began in May 1979, when the publication newly started, adding that with the vision of "catch them young", the company has sustained its relationship with young pharmacists over the years. He added that it was in a bid to solidify the relationship that the company had consistently established novel annual programmes and awards.

According to him, "We started Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay and Debate Competition in 2015, the Young Pharmacist Award in 2018, and the PANSite of the Year Award in 2019. In 2020, we introduced the Outstanding Pharmacist Award, and then the Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition in 2021. Last year, 2022, we introduced the Dean Award, and the competition was very keen".

The Pharmanews boss



L-R: Sir (Dr) Emmanuel Udoye, representing the Young Pharmacist of the Year, Pharm. (Dr) Ozioma Ezeofor; Pharm. Ifeanyi Atueyi, publisher, Pharmanews; Ahmed Olasunkanmi Ajilaran, winner, PANSite of the Year 2023; and Temitope Obayendo, online editor, Pharmanews.



Awardees and their relatives and friends with the Pharmanews team at the programme.

charged the award winners to be true ambassadors of the company, by upholding its core values and making more meaningful impacts in Pharmacy and the world at large.

"If you say you are the winner of the **Pharmanews** Award, people should respect you; they should not find you with questionable character. When people see you, they see Pharmanews, especially because your name will be published in Pharmanews as one of our ambassadors", he stated.

In her reaction to the presentation of the award plaque and the cheque of N150,000, an excited Ezeofor noted that the joy that came with being a recipient of the Pharmanews Award cannot be quantified, adding that apart from the noble reputation of the publisher, the journal itself had been a greatly positive influence in the pharmacy world and beyond.

Ezeofor, who was not in the country, was represented by

her uncle, Sir (Dr) Emmanuel Udoye, who is also a pharmacist. She promised not to let down Pharmanews' expectations for her, adding that she was ready to be a good ambassador of the company and project its image.

Speaking in the same vein after receiving the award plaque and the cheque of N100,000, an excited Ajilaran promised not to disappoint the confidence reposed in him by his colleagues, while also striving to live up to Pharmanews' expectations of him.

Recounting the remarkable way in which he got into the competition, he revealed that information filtered to him that UNILAG had never won the competition since inception. This, he said, prompted him to start a public health campaign project with a view to joining and winning competition.

"I saw the criteria for

participation, and I discovered I was qualified, so I worked on getting nominated, and today, I am the winner to the glory of God", he said.

Also speaking at the ceremony, the duo of the Editor, Pharmanews Limited, Mr Patrick Iwelunmor, and Business Development Manager, Mr Moses Dike, congratulated the winners and urged them to aspire to do more in life, adding that Pharmanews would continue to do its best to advance the pharmacy profession in Nigeria.

In her remarks, Pharmanews Online Editor, Mrs Temitope Obayendo, commended the winners for standing out among the crowd, adding that the two winners were unique in their individual ways, with Ajilaran being the first UNILAG student to emerge winner of Pharmanews PANSite Award, and Ezeofor, becoming the first female to win the Young Pharmacist Award.

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World Hypertension Day: Ajah harps on regular check-ups

- As May & Baker conducts sensitisation walk, free screening

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Managing Director, May & Baker Plc., Pharm. Patrick Ajah, has called on Nigerians to prioritise regular medical check-ups, so as to know their health status, especially their blood pressure, saying hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is prevalent in the country.

Ajah also urged Nigerians to make walking a part of their daily routine, saying walking is an exercise that can enhance healthy living.

The May & Baker boss made the calls as part of activities organised by the company to commemorate this year's World Hypertension Day. World hypertension day is marked on 17 May of every year. The theme of this year's edition is "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer."

To mark the event, the management and staff of May & Baker, led by Ajah, staged a walk, tagged "Walk For Life". The walk started from its Ikeja corporate office on Sapara William Street, through Oba Akran to Adeniyi Jones, linking Allen Avenue Junction, and later to Ipodo and finally to Ikeja Local Government Secretariat.

Speaking with **Pharmanews** at the event, Ajah described hypertension as a silent killer, adding that it is alarming that many Nigerians are going about without knowing their health



MD, May & Baker PLC, Pharm. Patrick Ajah (3rd left) with other management staff and Lagos State health officials during the company's world hypertension day walk in Lagos, on 17 May, 2023.

status. He said the walk was to create awareness on the need for Nigerians to check their blood pressure on a regular basis.

"We are using this medium to educate Nigerians on the need to check their blood pressure regularly, as it helps to identify hypertension on time and to treat it on time as well," he stated.

Ajah also tasked Nigerians to eat healthily, with plenty of fruits and vegetables. According to him, "Nigerians should keep

themselves at a healthy weight, as overweight can increase the risk for high blood pressure. Be physically active, as it helps to keep you at a healthy weight. Do not smoke, as smoking raises blood pressure and puts one at a higher risk for heart attack and stroke. Limit alcohol consumption because alcohol can raise your blood pressure; and then get enough sleep, which helps to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy."

the sensitisation walk, May & Baker shared reading materials to educate people, saying measuring blood pressure regularly will help to identify hypertension early and also assess the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and other health conditions associated with high blood pressure.

The sensitisation team also pointed out that monitoring blood pressure is a vital component of preventive healthcare that helps to ensure optimal health.

The Executive Chairman, Ikeja Local Government, Hon. Mojeed Alabi Balogun, who hosted the company's delegates in a brief session, expressed his commitment to supporting May & Baker on matters relating to public health in the council area.

Balogun also urged the company to specially sensitise the womenfolk on the appropriate foods the family should be eating to achieve a healthy life for the family.

While giving some tips to help prevent hypertension during

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Unlocking business growth through artificial intelligence

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool for organisations seeking sustainable growth and competitive advantage. Leveraging AI enables businesses to enhance operational efficiency, gain valuable insights, improve decision-making, and deliver personalised experiences to customers.

In this article, we will explore practical examples of how AI can foster business growth across various industries.

1. Enhancing customer experience: AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants have revolutionised customer service by providing instant support and personalised interactions. For instance, companies like Bank of America and Zenith Bank employ AI-powered chatbots that assist customers with basic queries, transactions, and financial recommendations, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2. Data-driven decision-making: AI empowers organisations to extract actionable insights from vast amounts of data, driving informed decision-making. Retailers leverage AI algorithms to analyse customer behaviour, preferences, and market trends. Amazon's recommendation engine is a prime example of using AI to deliver personalised product recommendations, leading to increased customer engagement and sales.

3. Process optimisation: AI-driven automation streamlines business processes, reducing costs, and enhancing operational efficiency. Logistics companies employ AI algorithms to optimise supply chain management, route planning, and inventory management.

UPS, for instance, uses AI-powered route optimisation algorithms to minimise fuel consumption, reduce delivery times, and enhance overall operational performance.

4. Predictive analytics: AI facilitates predictive analytics, enabling businesses to anticipate customer behaviour, market trends, and demand patterns. Netflix employs AI algorithms to analyse user viewing patterns, preferences, and historical data to recommend personalised content, leading to higher user engagement and retention.

5. Personalised marketing: AI enables businesses to deliver targeted and personalised marketing campaigns. Spotify uses AI to analyse user data and music preferences, tailoring playlists and recommendations to individual users. This personalised approach increases customer satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, subscription renewals.

6. Risk management and fraud detection: AI helps businesses identify and mitigate risks while detecting fraudulent activities. Financial institutions leverage AI algorithms to analyse transactional data, identify anomalies, and detect potential fraud in real time. This enables proactive risk management and enhances security, protecting both businesses and customers.

7. Product and service innovation: AI plays a pivotal role in driving innovation by identifying market gaps and uncovering new opportunities. For example, pharmaceutical companies leverage AI to analyse vast amounts of medical research data, accelerating drug discovery and development processes. This leads to faster time-to-market for new medicines and improved patient outcomes.

8. Hyper-personalisation: AI enables businesses to deliver hyper-personalised

experiences to customers. By leveraging customer data, AI algorithms can analyse individual preferences, behaviours, and purchase histories to tailor products, services, and recommendations. This level of personalisation not only enhances customer satisfaction but also drives customer loyalty and repeat business.

9. Advanced analytics: AI facilitates advanced analytics techniques such as machine learning and deep learning, enabling businesses to uncover hidden patterns, correlations, and insights within their data. These insights can inform strategic decision-making, identify market trends, and uncover opportunities for innovation and optimization.

10. Intelligent automation: AI-powered automation allows businesses to automate repetitive and time-consuming tasks, freeing up human resources to focus on higher-value activities. For example, in manufacturing, AI-enabled robots can handle repetitive assembly line tasks, leading to increased productivity, reduced errors, and cost savings.

11. Supply chain optimisation: AI plays a crucial role in optimizing supply chain operations. By leveraging AI algorithms, businesses can analyse historical data, market trends, and external factors to forecast demand, optimise inventory levels, and improve logistics and distribution processes. This helps reduce costs, minimize stock-outs, and enhance overall supply chain efficiency.

Artificial intelligence has emerged as a transformative force in driving business growth across multiple industries. By leveraging AI, organisations can enhance customer experiences, optimise processes, make data-driven decisions, and



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drive innovation. The practical examples mentioned above highlight the potential of AI to create a competitive edge, boost profitability, and foster long-term growth.

However, successful implementation requires a strategic vision, robust data infrastructure, and a commitment to developing AI capabilities within organisations. Embracing AI can unlock untapped potential and position businesses for success in the dynamic and competitive business landscape of the future.

Also, it is important to note that while AI presents significant opportunities for business growth, organisations should also consider ethical considerations, data privacy, and potential biases inherent in AI systems. A responsible and well-governed approach to AI implementation is crucial to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability.

ACTION PLAN: Learn more about how to use AI tools to improve your areas of practice. Invest in AI solutions to increase your company's performance and profitability.

AFFIRMATION: Every day in every way I am getting better and better. I am blessed and highly favoured.

Sesan Kareem is the founder of HubCare Health, www.hubcarehealth.com, and the principal consultant of SK Institute, www.sesankareem.com.ng

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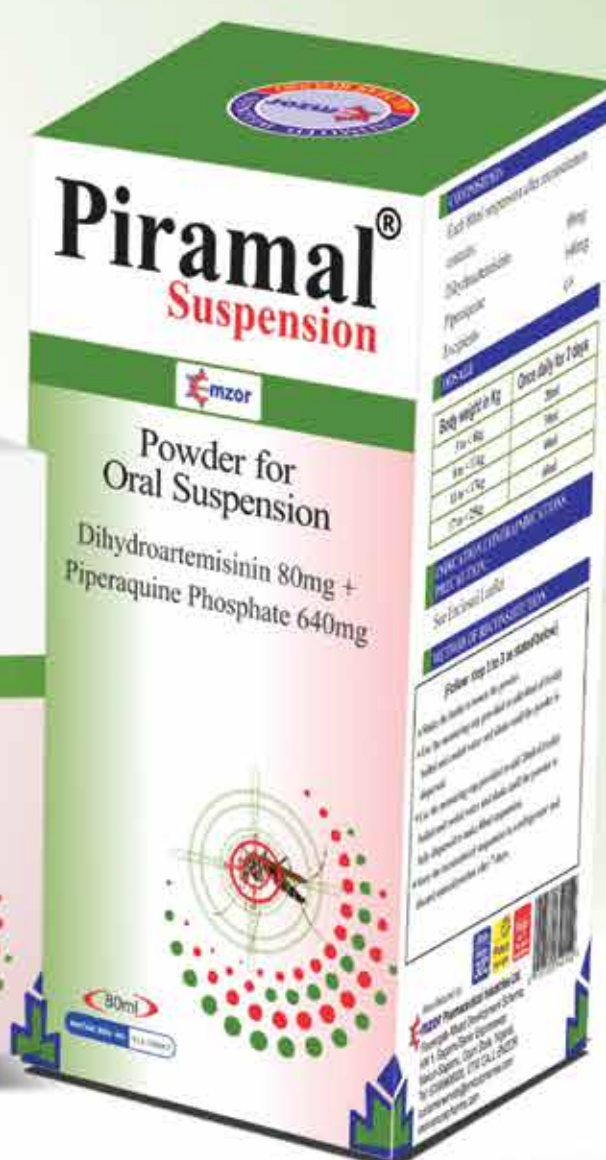
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Nigeria, our biggest market outside UK – Vitabiotics VP

Vitabiotics held its 2nd Science and Health International Conference in the Nigerian cities of Lagos and Abuja, from 15 to 18 May, 2023, with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, nutritionists and other ancillary care providers in attendance. In this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, Vice President/UK Director of the group, Rohit Shelatkar, outlines the impacts of his company in the Nigerian market, while expressing satisfaction with the standard NAFDAC has set for manufacturing in the country. Excerpts:



Rohit Shelatkar

Vice President/UK Director of the Vitabiotics.

What are the values driving your operations in Nigeria and beyond?

The values are exactly the same – how we operate internationally and then in the United Kingdom. For us, the science of healthy living is not just about how to sell your products but we also try to educate people about the concept of healthy living. Healthy living starts with eating well, sleeping well and exercising, having a good lifestyle.

And these vitamins that you see – they all support a healthy lifestyle. Supplements may not replace a healthy diet but they give you what your diet may not give you, as a result of food devaluation. The philosophy is exactly the same – we encourage a healthy life, good exercise, good sleep and have the multivitamin supplements which give you what your food doesn't give you.

Speaking about your performance in terms of finance, how would you rate the Nigerian market?

In terms of absolute financials, Nigeria stands tall in all our export markets. In fact, outside the United Kingdom, Nigeria is our biggest export market and it is growing. The growth is phenomenal and the country has a lot of promise as well. It is a big country with a large population. It is about bringing more awareness into the market.

We are very positive; we are going to invest more in the market and we are going to do more conferences like this; above-the-line and below-the-line advertising. And most importantly, get the

support of the medical community – the doctors, the pharmacists, the nurses and the nutritionists.

There are arguments in some quarters that the Indians and the Chinese are exploiting Nigeria in terms of pharmaceutical manufacturing because most of the APIs are sourced from these countries. How do you react to the allegation that these countries discourage local manufacturing in Nigeria?

I would say that Indian and Chinese manufacturers of APIs are supplying to the whole world, not just Nigeria. The reason they do that is because they produce in large quantities. If you combine the Indian and Chinese populations, that is just about one-third of the population of the world. The same applies to the global pharmaceutical market, if you

Vitabiotics has immensely contributed to the job market in Nigeria and if you consider the overall economy, by supporting the job market, we are promoting local talent and providing opportunities for men and women, young and old, from all backgrounds. I think it is fantastic and the best way to contribute to the economy of a foreign market.

see what goes around in the world.

I think it is the demand that these markets are satisfying. If the demand is high, then you would get products from all over the world. Having said that, I also believe that every country has its own potential of manufacturing and producing APIs or finished products. The government and the local authorities should sit and consider what can be best produced homegrown and what can be imported.

The most important thing is making healthcare products available to a wider range of audience and to all your population at the right price. If you can do that, it does not matter whether the products are coming from the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe, India, China or locally manufactured. If you can satisfy the whole strata of people in your country and if you provide good products at the right price, then you would be solving healthcare problems.

In terms of product offering, can you just give us a rundown of some of your products that have done well or that have become household names in the Nigerian market?

Traditionally, Nigeria is the first export market we ventured into 50 years ago. This is the most important market for us. You may have heard of products like Omega H3 and Feroglobin; they have been there for 40 to 45 years. Other products which have come up and growing fast in recent years are Pregnacare, Wellman and Wellwoman, Perfectil for hair, skin and nails, Wellbaby and Wellkid.

Wellman is for the overall vitality of men, while Wellwoman is for the overall vitality of women. Pregnacare remains the United Kingdom's most trusted brand. It takes about 90 per cent of the UK's nutraceutical pregnancy market. It has been relaunched in Nigeria and we are optimistic it is going to be the biggest selling brand in the country.

While pregnacare takes care of the vitamin needs of the woman during pregnancy, the Wellbaby and Wellkid help in nurturing your child after birth. To carry on with your life, you have the Wellwoman and the Wellman. Basically, it is a whole complete package, looking out for your entire family.

In terms of employment generation, to what extent would you say Vitabiotics has offered employment opportunities to Nigerians?

Our local content employment has been huge. We have a manufacturing unit here and we have been present with the help of two major distributors, Denel and Medheights. Our manufacturing plant here employs a huge number of Nigerians. This is in addition to our sales and marketing and warehousing teams. We have been providing local employment for the

past 30 to 35 years.

Vitabiotics has immensely contributed to the job market in Nigeria and if you consider the overall economy, by supporting the job market, we are promoting local talent and providing opportunities for men and women, young and old, from all backgrounds. I think it is fantastic and the best way to contribute to the economy of a foreign market.

There is a challenge in Nigeria coming from the emergence of so many trado-medical practitioners. Don't you think these people pose a threat to your operations since they also claim to offer the same or even better products for the same conditions your products manage?

In any market, including India and China, you will always find their indigenous traditional medicine. Every country has its own traditionally followed customs in terms of local medication. Usually, when there is a health issue, our grandmothers would always run to the kitchen first before considering a visit to the pharmacist or doctor. Importantly, we need to understand that there is the prophylactic as well as the therapeutic angles to medicine. You can use all those traditional or alternative medicines to keep yourself free from all those diseases and infections as prophylactic measures but when it comes to protecting organs and severe conditions, you need proper healthcare products. It is always important and safer to use therapeutic products with proven clinical data and with the advice of medical experts.

How has your relationship with NAFDAC been, in terms ensuring good manufacturing practice?

Our relationship with NAFDAC has been very good. NAFDAC is doing a wonderful job, especially in recent years. My experience with NAFDAC spans the last 20 years. They come and inspect factories in the United Kingdom and would not let you get your products into the Nigerian market, unless they are satisfied about the raw materials you use and the manufacturing facility you use. They only approve factories that are approved by the UK MHRA. There is already a standard laid down there. I am very satisfied with my dealing with NAFDAC. Their standard is indeed very high. They are a very strong scientifically-driven regulatory body.

As a company providing wellness, what excites you most about Nigeria?

To be very honest, the thing that excites me the most about Nigeria is the spirit of entrepreneurship. Today, we have a confluence of pharmacists – 850 pharmacists have registered for this conference and I am sure that as much as they are interested in the science that Professor Sabastien and myself will present, they will also be asking me commercial questions just like they did four years ago about distribution, costing and pricing. I see the spirit of entrepreneurship even in small pharmacies in Nigeria. These are things you hardly see in other countries.

Finally, what do we expect from Vitabiotics?

More innovation, more nice and quality products that you can trust. And in terms of our contribution to the Nigerian economy, more job opportunities.

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- Management of threatened miscarriage⁽¹⁴⁾



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How God made Alpha Pharmacy leading supplier of rare drugs - Onyechi

Pharm.(Sir) Ike Onyechi is a consummate pharmacist and administrator. He is the managing director and chief executive officer of Alpha Pharmacy and Stores Limited, reputed nationally to be providers of rare ethical pharmaceutical products. In this interview with **MOSES DIKE**, Onyechi who is a Fellow of many professional bodies, including the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), recounts the journey of his childhood, education, and career. He also delves into the success story of Alpha Pharmacy and Stores, highlighting how divine providence, coupled with discipline and perseverance, has helped him and his team to build the Alpha brand. Excerpts:



Pharm.(Sir) Ike Onyechi

Kindly tell us about your background, education and the events that have helped to shape your adult personality.

Thank you very much for the honour of this interview. I was born some years ago in Abatete town, in Anambra State, precisely at Iyi-Enu hospital, Ogidi. That was Bishop Ajayi Crowther Clinic, founded in 1907. It had evolved to become more like a teaching hospital in the early 1950s when I was born.

My early childhood education happened right there in Anambra state, too. And I lived between Abatete and Onitsha, where my parents were. My primary education was at the then Central School, Abatete. That was in the early 1960s; and when I finished my secondary school, I went to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) to study Pharmacy.

Growing up was good. The environment was saner and people were more friendly. Children were brought up by the community and I had many mothers. So, I could not go out to do something bad without being caught and reprimanded because we were disciplined by many mothers and many fathers.

We also had committed Christian teachers who took care of our early education and this helped to shape my current adult life. There were Sunday schools. There were catechisms and all these impacted our lives. I am a product of the CMS missionary teachers. They came with religion; they came with education, and it was a good foundation.

We understand that your 70th birthday anniversary is just around the corner. What does

attaining this new age mean to you and how is this going to affect your perception of life and engagements? Are there things you intend to start or stop doing at 70?

(Laughs) Seventy is a number. I still feel good. Fortunately for me, not much has changed for me. But in the last few years, I realised that there were certain things I used to do that I might not be able to do again with the same type of speed. I used to take my steps two at a time. I don't usually take my steps one at a time but now sometimes I have found myself taking my steps one after the other. Although I still take two steps once in a while, I have slowed down a little.

I am very cool at 70 and I thank God for that. What I have started doing already is that except when it is very important, I don't have to report to work again early in the morning by 8 or 9 a.m. I prefer 10 or 11 a.m. Sometimes, maybe because I was reading or something happened and I slept late, I would need to balance it up in the morning; otherwise, I might be sleepy at work. This is why many people will retire before 70. So, I have made certain changes as to how I start and close

my day but my output is still good. It's not about retirement; it's about adjusting your schedule of activities.

How did you come about Pharmacy as your course of study? Did you have any role models in your younger days who guided you to make the choice? If you were not a pharmacist, what else would you have loved to become?

Yes, I had a role model. From a younger age, we had one Dr Areh. Dr Areh had one pharmacy or what people called "chemists" at that time. He made extemporaneous preparations. He was compounding medications like antacids, alkalinising agents, and some other mixtures for children. People usually queued to see him and this was sometimes after they had gone to the hospital and remained unwell.

The chemist was at Onitsha and was always very busy. He was making these preparations, using British Pharmacopoeia (BP). Those days, he was making quinine and quinine was very bitter. He was providing solutions to the community and people loved him for that. He made everything. He was a star in Onitsha. He lived at Okolo Street,

almost opposite where my father lived. He was one of my earliest contacts with Pharmacy.

If I were not a pharmacist, I would have been an engineer, an aeronautic engineer, perhaps. I had other wild ideas about going to space, being a pilot and all that. But I love Pharmacy and I thank God for making me a pharmacist.

Tell us the story of Alpha Pharmacy and Stores and its journey so far. What legacies do you intend to establish with the struggles and successes of the company?

Alpha Pharmacy and Stores started in April 1985, when I registered the company. As at then, I was still working with Hoechst, a German company. In the last quarter of that year, I employed another pharmacist to register Alpha with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN). At least, to give it foundation before I would resign in early 1986 to run it.

The pharmacist (Pharm. Julie Izevbigie) had an agreement with me that he would register and run it for four months and that, by January, I would resign and take it over. That was what we did and since then I

have been on it. It has not always been rosy but that is a story for another day.

One thing is certain from the beginning - the grace of God has been with us and He has helped all the way, even in difficulty. The promise of God is that He will be with us, even till the end of time. So we have that confidence in Christ and His leadership. When we started, my faith was not as strong as it is now but God has patience with everybody. He nurtured me, pardoned all my shortcomings and guided my feet until I had a better understanding of what the price He paid on the cross of Calvary was all about. Then I gave my life to Christ. Since then, it has been much more different.

God didn't take away the struggles but the assurances of His promises provide strengths for us in the midst of our struggles. God is faithful. The struggles will be there but His grace makes you an overcomer.

What are some of the challenges you encountered in building the Alpha brand and what lessons do you have for younger entrepreneurs especially those in pharmaceutical business?

I admonish the younger ones to have patience. It is lacking now. Patience and perseverance are very key. They should be persistent because that is the staying power. You don't plant a tree today and expect it to germinate, grow and bear fruits the same day. That is the way of the microwave generation. Avoid "wait-and-get" tendencies.

The fear of God is very important and that is why Solomon the wise man said it is the beginning of wisdom. But you don't only need the fear of God; you will have to work hard for your success. That is what God has recommended. So, you obey His commandments by working hard and persevering. Persistence and hard work, coupled with the fear of God, will give you success. If it tarries, wait for it, it will surely come to fulfilment.

As a senior pharmacist, which of the issues affecting Pharmacy and healthcare in general would you like the government and stakeholders to address more frontally, especially as we usher in a new government in Nigeria?

The new government will be kind enough to shore up the forex situation in the country because we are importing a lot of finished goods, as well as the raw materials we use. The new government should de-emphasise oil and start investing the money coming from oil because what we hear is that most of the money coming from oil is being used to service loans and this is not good. It is said that up to 90 per cent of oil revenue is being used to service debt and we can't continue like this. We advise that the government should work harder on forex.

The tariff on drugs should also be looked into because the high tariff makes drugs expensive for the consumers. Pharmacists agitated for a reduced tariff and government reacted by reducing the tariff from 20 per cent to zero percent but then turned around to replace it 20 percent import levy. So, who is fooling who?

continued on page 46

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The goodness of elephant grass

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



Pennisetum purpureum

Elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpureum* L. Schumach) belongs to the Poaceae family and is native to Tropical Africa. Also known as Napier grass, it is commonly called *ciyawa giwa* in Hausa, *achara* in Igbo, and *fafa* or *wafa* or *koriko erin* in Yoruba.

Constituents

Elephant grass is a source of dietary fibre, protein, cellulose, hemicelluloses, lignin, moisture and dry matter. It contains a variety of vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin C, calcium, potassium and magnesium; as well as antioxidants and phytochemicals. Other compounds found in elephant grass are chlorogenic acid, caffeoylquinic acids and sesquiterpene lactones.

Preparations

Elephant grass is available as the raw mature leaves, the young leaves and the stalks. It may be boiled to make tea, soup or stew. The infusions of the leaf may also be used as medicines.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

Elephant grass helps to improve digestion, boost energy levels and detoxify the body. It helps in the maintenance of a healthy balance of gut flora by feeding the beneficial bacteria in the gut with its high fibre content, which makes it a prebiotic.

The anti-inflammatory properties of the compounds chlorogenic acid, caffeoylquinic acids and sesquiterpene lactones make elephant grass effective in the relief of pain and stiffness, and prevention and management of inflammatory conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, arthritis and cancer.

The plant may help to protect against colds and flus because of its antibacterial and antiviral properties, which are conferred on it by antioxidants and phytochemicals that help to boost the immune system by scavenging harmful toxins and fighting off infections. Thus, adding elephant grass to the diet may help to maintain health and reduce the risk of developing serious illnesses.

The antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties of elephant grass make it useful in protecting the skin from damage caused by free radicals, reducing

acne and other inflammatory skin conditions, improving skin health and reducing signs of aging.

The sedative properties of elephant grass, which is due to the

presence of luteolin, may help to reduce stress levels, ease anxiety and promote sleep. Elephant grass may help to achieve

weight loss through the high fibre content that increases feelings of fullness; and the chlorogenic acid, which boosts metabolism.

There are reports that elephant grass has been used as carminative, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue, anti-dyspeptic, expectorant, stimulant and stomachic; and also as a treatment for jaundice and for regulation of menstrual cycle.

Adverse effects

Elephant grass may result in side-effects such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, when consumed in large amounts. It may interact with certain medications; so caution should be exercised when taking medications as well.

Economic uses and potentials

Elephant grass is used for traditional animal feed, pest management, improving soil fertility, protecting arid land from soil erosion, paper pulp production, making handicraft articles such as baskets and for producing bio-fuel.

Elephant grass costs about N15 per kg. Cattle in Nigeria is reported to consume N5.8 billion worth of grass daily, translating to N2.14 trillion annually. There is a big market in and for Nigeria for Elephant grass in the agricultural, food, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, through cultivation, processing, distribution and sales.

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Nurses' brain drain portends setback for universal health coverage - Garbar

By Temitope Obayendo

President of the West African Postgraduate College of Nurses and Midwives (WAPCNM), Prof. Saleh Garbar, has decried the increasing exodus of nurses and midwives from Nigeria in recent years, saying it will jeopardise the realisation of universal health coverage.

He averred that, with over 3,000 migrant nurses and midwives licenced to practise in the United Kingdom in one year, the healthcare delivery system will be grossly short-staffed, leading to inadequate care for patients.

Citing reports from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Garba stated that Nigeria and 54 other countries are facing the most pressing health workforce challenges related to universal health coverage.

He listed the total of 55 countries to include 37 in Africa, eight in the Western Pacific region, six in the Eastern Mediterranean region, three in South-East Asia and one in the Americas.

According to Garbar, consequently, the UK government placed Nigeria and 53 other countries on the red list of countries that should not be actively targeted for recruitment by health and social care employers.

He, however, lamented that the brain drain has not ceased, as nurses and midwives continue to

leave in droves, stressing that only urgent intervention from the government can address the ugly situation.

The professor of Nursing, who spoke with *Pharmanews* in an exclusive interview, is also the Head of Department (HOD), Nursing Sciences, Bayero University, Kano.

According to Garba, "It is a dangerous trend for our healthcare system because we are losing quality nursing and midwifery specialists in large numbers. The implication is that we are witnessing shortages of these personnel at all levels of healthcare in the country. This will impact negatively on universal health coverage and quality of healthcare services."

"The shortage of nurses and midwives, especially in certain areas of specialisation and geographic region, the increased rates of attrition and a chronic shortage of nursing personnel in the country increase the workloads on nurses without an equivalent compensation, exposing them to more health hazards and compromising the quality of healthcare delivery."

Garba, who is a specialist in community health nursing, suggested some strategies the government can deploy to remedy the situation, which include provision of improved facilities for healthcare services; ensuring equity in the treatment of health professionals in the country; as well as provision of commensurate remuneration for the nursing workforce.

He also implored the government of President Bola Tinubu to invest in healthcare by giving priority to the training of all healthcare professionals.

Leadership in the healthcare sector should not be restricted to a particular professional group, he stated.

Garba further recommended that "government should encourage local drug manufacturers to go into production by reducing taxes, discouraging drug importation and by providing soft loans. Nurses and midwives should be allowed to take charge of PHC facilities, so that that level of healthcare will be strengthened. Government should, in a nutshell, encourage the application of international best practices in the healthcare system."

He further hinted that the Nursing Council under the current leadership is already looking at

improved education for nurses and midwives, urging nurses to embrace this.

"Postgraduate programmes in Nursing at the university and the West African Postgraduate College of Nurses and Midwives should look at clinical aspects of the training so that it will improve the practice at all levels. The qualifications acquired from this training should be recognised and be appropriately remunerated," he added.



Prof. Saleh Garbar

The WAPCNM president also counselled younger nurses to uphold the tenets of the profession by being disciplined and always operating within the orbits of the rules and regulation guiding the practice.

"No matter how many qualifications the nurse acquires, he or she must be disciplined to be a successful nurse. The younger nurses should conduct themselves in accordance with the dictates of the profession," he stressed.

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Events in Pictures



Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, presenting a Life Achievement and Leadership Award plaque to Prince Julius Adelusi-Adeluyi, at the National Daily Newspapers Awards, recently organised by the National Daily Newspapers, at Grand BallRoom of Oriental Hotels Victoria Island, Lagos.



L-R: Michael Pausler, general manager, Nigeria operations; Pharm. Ifeoma Elekwechi, Vitabiotics country manager and Pharm. Okechukwu Okonkwo, FPSN, managing director, Tandem Pharma Ltd and Vitabiotics brand partner at the Vitabiotics 2nd Scientific and Health International Conference, held in Lagos.



L-R: Pharm. Okey Akpa (PhD); Pharm. (Prof). Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; Mazi Sam Ajagu; Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi, Alpha Pharmacy MD; during the unveiling of Alpha Pharmacy cold room held recently at Alabi street, Ikeja.



Executives and members of Association of Lady Pharmacists, Lagos Chapter, presenting sanitation items to secondary school students in Lagos State.

Coming Events

WASPEN 2023 Clinical Nutrition Conference

Date: 20th to 21th June, 2023

Venue: NECA House Event Centre, Alausa, Ikeja

Phone No: 08029488257, 08106907691

Nigeria Healthcare Excellence Award (NHEA) 2023

Date: 23rd June, 2023

Venue: Eko Hotels & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Phone No. 08133464457, 08051444457

Email: nigeriahealthcareawards@gmail.com

26th Annual National Conference of Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP)

Date: 5th-8th July, 2023

Venue: Carlton Swiss Grand Hotels, Enugu

Phone No. 08034547035, 08035369184

Inaugural Lecture

Lecturer: Prof. Moses Atanda Akanmu

Date: 11th July, 2023

Venue: Oduduwa Hall, OAU, Ile-Ife.

Phone No. 08035958466

PSN-BOF 2023 Mid-Year Event

Date: 11th to 13th July 2023 Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Ikeja, Lagos

Phone No: 08021327047

University of Lagos, Faculty of Pharmacy 2nd Scientific Conference

Date: 19th July, 2023

Venue: Faculty of Pharmacy, Unilag

Phone No. 08033356197, 08185964021

Email: unilagpharmconf@unilag.edu.g

unilagpharmcof@gmail.com

42nd ACPN Scientific Conference

Date: 31th July to 3rd August 2023

Venue: The Dome Event Centre, Okpanam Road, GRA Phase 1, Asaba, Delta State.

Phone No: 08037788345

Email: acpndic@gmail.com

2023 Lagos AfriHealth Expo

Date: 27th July to 29th July 2023

Venue: Airport Hotel Ikeja, Lagos

Phone No: [08033392202](tel:08033392202)

West African Healthcare Expo 2023

Date: 23rd - 27th August, 2023

Venue: Academy Guest House Event Hall, Agidingbin Ikeja, Lagos.

Phone No. 08023899759, 08073859479

17th NAPPSA Scientific Conference

Date: 21st - 24th September, 2023

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THE JOURNEY OF AGILE ORGANISATION

Leadership: Yesterday, today and the future (4)

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

Importance of taking risks and making bold decisions

Administration is often associated with power and authority but it is also about taking risks and making bold decisions. Leaders who take risks and make bold decisions can inspire their teams to achieve extraordinary things.

Taking risks and making bold decisions can lead to innovation and growth. When leaders take risks, they are willing to explore new ideas and strategies that may be untested. This can result in the developing of new products, services, or processes that can lead to growth and success. By taking bold decisions, leaders can steer their organisations in new directions and take advantage of opportunities others may not see.

Consider the success of companies like Google and Amazon. These companies were not afraid to take risks and make bold decisions, which led to the development of innovative technologies and business models that transformed their industries. Their leaders were willing to try new things and take proactive actions, even if unsure of the outcome. This willingness to take risks has enabled these companies to become leaders in their respective markets.

Secondly, taking risks and making bold decisions can build trust and inspire confidence in a leader. When a leader is willing to take risks and make bold decisions, it shows their team that they are not afraid to take ownership of their choices and stand behind them. This can build trust and inspire confidence in their group; members will be more likely to follow their lead and work hard to achieve goals.

Consider the story of Steve Jobs and the creation of the iPod. Jobs took a significant risk by introducing a new product outside the company's traditional offerings. However, he was willing to make bold decisions and bet on the success of the iPod. His willingness to take risks and make bold decisions helped to build trust and inspire confidence in him as a leader. The iPod's success and Apple's subsequent growth are a testament to Jobs' leadership and willingness to take risks.

Essentially, the importance of leadership taking risks and making bold decisions must be balanced. Leaders willing to take risks and make bold decisions can inspire their teams to achieve extraordinary things, build trust and confidence, and create a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. While taking risks and making bold decisions can be scary, the rewards can be great for both the leader and their team.

Importance of collaboration to leadership success

Leadership has always been a complex and challenging role. Still, in today's fast-paced, ever-changing business environment, it is becoming increasingly important for leaders to collaborate with others to achieve success. Collaboration has emerged as a critical component of leadership success, and leaders who can work effectively with others can achieve their goals more efficiently and effectively. Let us explore the growing importance of collaboration to leadership success.

Firstly, collaboration can bring diverse perspectives and skills to a project or initiative. When leaders work collaboratively, they can draw on the knowledge and skills of others, which can help them to identify new opportunities, solve problems, and create innovative solutions. By working with a diverse group of people, leaders can gain a deeper

understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face and find new and better ways to achieve their goals.

Consider the success of the global pharmaceutical company, Novartis. In recent years, the company has placed a strong emphasis on collaboration. It has partnered with various organisations, including pharmaceutical companies, research institutions, and patient advocacy groups. By working collaboratively with these organisations, Novartis has accessed new technologies, gained a deeper understanding of patients' needs, and accelerated the development of new treatments.

Secondly, collaboration can help leaders build strong relationships with their team members and stakeholders. When leaders collaborate, they are willing to listen to and learn from others, which can help build trust and respect. This can lead to stronger relationships with team members and stakeholders, which can help leaders to build a solid and effective team and achieve their goals more effectively.

Consider a project where a leader works closely with their team members to develop a new product. By collaborating with their team members, the leader can understand their perspectives and ideas and work with them to create a solution that meets the market's needs. This collaboration can build trust and respect between the leader and their team members, which can help to create a positive and productive work environment.

Also, collaboration can help leaders to build their knowledge and skills. When leaders work collaboratively, they can learn from others with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This can help leaders to develop new knowledge and skills that can help them to be more effective in their roles.

Consider a leader who works collaboratively with a mentor or coach. By working with a mentor or coach, the leader can gain new insights and perspectives on leadership and develop new skills to help them be more effective in their role. This collaboration can help the leader grow and develop, achieving tremendous success.

Indeed, the growing importance of collaboration to leadership success cannot be overstated. Leaders who can collaborate effectively with others can gain new insights and perspectives, build strong relationships with team members and stakeholders, and develop new knowledge and skills.

Importance of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence, commonly known as EI or EQ, is the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Recently, it has been gaining importance as a critical factor in personal and professional success.

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in building strong interpersonal relationships. In today's interconnected world, the ability to relate to others, understand their perspectives, and respond appropriately to their emotions is essential. Emotional intelligence allows individuals to communicate effectively, build rapport, and establish trust, which is critical to successful relationships in both personal and professional settings.

For instance, a leader with high emotional intelligence can manage conflicts with team members and communicate effectively, leading to better collaboration and higher job satisfaction among team members. In contrast, a leader with low emotional intelligence may

need help managing their emotions and those of their team members, leading to misunderstandings, tension, and decreased productivity.

Secondly, emotional intelligence is crucial in managing stress and pressure. In today's fast-paced world, people are often faced with high-stress situations. Those with higher emotional intelligence can manage stress more effectively, maintain focus, and make better decisions.

For example, a medical professional with high emotional intelligence can deal with life-threatening emergencies while remaining calm and focused. They can communicate effectively with patients and their families, providing emotional support and understanding.

Thirdly, emotional intelligence is an essential element of effective leadership. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more successful in motivating and inspiring their team members, adapting to change, and making decisions that positively impact their organisations.

For example, a leader with high emotional intelligence can inspire team members to work together to achieve common goals, recognise and appreciate their accomplishments, and provide constructive feedback when needed. This enhances employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organisational success.

In addition, emotional intelligence is increasingly



becoming a sought-after attribute in job interviews and a factor in career advancement. Employers recognise the value of hiring people with high emotional intelligence because such individuals can relate well to others, manage stress and conflict effectively, and make rational decisions. People with high emotional intelligence are likelier to be hired, promoted, and succeed.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly important in today's world. It is critical to building relationships, managing stress, effective leadership, and career success. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle their emotions, understand and relate to others, and make better decisions. In essence, emotional intelligence is essential for personal and professional success and those who invest in improving their EQ stand to benefit significantly.

Continues next edition

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I would rather stay poor

By Pharm. (Dr) Lolu Ojo, FPSN
(Consultant pharmacist, Lagos)

The purpose of governance is to make the society better and, for this reason, a nation surrenders its sovereignty to a group of people in government, led by the president and commander-in-chief. It is expected that the president will work through his appointed cabinet, advisers, and the civil service. These are the people that we have entrusted with the management of our commonwealth for the good of the society.

In Nigeria, the commonwealth has, over the years, been mismanaged so much that lives have become more miserable, infrastructures are deficient, public education is in coma, security is no longer guaranteed, and citizens cannot enjoy the basic things of life.

I have pondered over this matter and concluded that it is time to beam the searchlight on the society itself where the national rebirth should take place for us to produce leaders that will take our country out of the self-imposed poverty and misery.

Pervasive evil

The atmosphere in the country is fouled up with reports of evil perpetrated by man against his fellow human being. There is hardly any aspect of our life that is not affected by the tale of atrocities committed by neighbours against neighbours. The household, hitherto considered a haven for its members, is now a devil's workshop, with reports of spousal violence leading to death on the increase.

I am usually confused and alarmed when I read reports of a man raping or killing his mother for rituals, a 45-year-old man defiling a five-year-old girl, a boyfriend luring his girlfriend to spots where she will be gang-raped and so many other weird happenings that defy logic taking the front pages of our newspapers.

The pursuit of money, power, affluence, and control has taken on a dangerous dimension where people no longer care what they do to get what they want. There is a seemingly never-ending and mad struggle for the control of environmental or national resources and everyone is a "king" in his area of influence. Nothing matters anymore. The devil seems to be in charge.

Naked truth

As we enter a new phase in the nation's history, it is time for us to tell ourselves the "naked" truth and provide answers to a myriad of questions that can be summarised as: where lies the hope for this nation? Where is the hope that things will get better? Where is the hope that Nigeria will overcome her current challenges? Where is the hope that we can, as we used to do, travel freely without the fear of being kidnapped, shot, robbed, or otherwise deprived of our humanity? Are we ever going to recover that free movement in and around the country, and that

"one nation bound in freedom, (prosperity), peace and unity"?

It is often so easy to blame the government and the leaders for the several ills of the nation, but I submit here that things have gone wrong for a long time, and we bear a collective responsibility for the state of the nation. It is true that the nation needs a visionary and purposeful leadership that will steer the ship to the bright and desired destination. However, it is equally true that "every country has the government it deserves." The legendary Greek philosopher, Aristotle, once told us that "He who has never learnt to obey cannot be a good commander". Let us look around us and see if those who sought or are seeking to rule us are people who have learnt or have been seen to obey the rules.

We have a substantial fraction of the population that are reputed for their cunning ability to live outside the normal standard set for society and yet, at each election cycle, we are always expecting a miracle for a messiah to emerge from our midst. Are we not the ones who know the right things to do but who always choose to do otherwise? Are we not the ones, who as contractors, will collect money from government and do nothing? Are we not the ones crafting the state or federal budgets every year that tend to attend to individual greed, rather than the common good of state or the nation? Are we not the ones that populate the civil service which has, over the years, grown experts in self-enrichment? Is it not true that many of our civil servants are in-house contractors and are awarding contracts to themselves?

Are we not the ones in position everywhere? Are we going to truly say that the president is responsible for the 80 billion naira allegedly stolen by the accountant general? What about our elected representatives in the National Assembly and the tales of massive allowances and corruption-driven endorsements and activities? Are we not the ones who are collecting money in the name of constituency projects, but do nothing and appropriate the money to ourselves? The situation at the local government levels may be worse, as the officials there are known to share the monthly allocations among themselves.

Overall, we have, by our individual activities at the official, private and community levels, brought this country down and we have a collective responsibility to bring the country back to normalcy. No country can thrive or survive if her elites at all levels are neck deep in corruption and evil practices.

Way forward

The first step in the discharge of this responsibility is to accept that we have all "sinned and come

short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and we must do personal introspection and take a decision to change. We must accept that we have been wrong and take a stand that "I would rather stay poor than to amass fortune from the misfortune of others. I would rather stay poor than to become a billionaire by using my position for extortion or outright stealing of government fund earmarked for developmental projects. I would rather stay poor than to get promoted either in

politics, societies, organisations, associations, or offices by bringing other people down. I would rather stay poor than to be engaged in kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, 419, yahoo-yahoo or other vices to make money. I would rather stay poor than to be a ritualist, killing people and using their body parts

for concoctions."

We must clean up our society and this will start at the individual and family levels. No one is going to live forever, irrespective of the status attained in life. As for me and my family, we have taken a position that we would rather stay poor than to make life difficult for others.



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How God made Alpha Pharmacy leading supplier of rare drugs - Onyechi

continued from page 36

If they wanted to reduce by five or 10 per cent, that would have been better than removing it through the front door and reintroducing it through the back door. So I want to encourage the government to do what is beneficial to the people.

There is also the problem of dearth of infrastructure. The industries are struggling because they are suffering from bad roads and are paying for water, electricity and everything else. Other countries are building clusters. We could build industrial clusters where government will provide these industries with light, water and other basic amenities that they need to function maximally. When companies come there to set up their factories, by economy of scale, you will find out that the operating cost will be low. What we have now is a chaotic situation where everybody is firing his generator.

Also, let there be more remuneration to healthcare workers because it takes a lot to train pharmacists, doctors, nurses and others, and Europe is taking many of them away at this time. That is the "japa" syndrome that is dealing with our healthcare sector now. The new government should try to improve the condition of service so that our healthcare professionals will be encouraged to stay and add value locally.

You have had an illustrious career as a pharmacist and as an entrepreneur; can you briefly share with us some of the most memorable moments of your career?

There are several of them and sometimes one doesn't even know which is more memorable than the other. We see a lot of people come here for their needs and some of the memorable moments are when I pray with some of our customers and God grants them healing. I said God grants them healing because I don't know how it happens. In one of the cases, God opened my eyes to see how the sciatic nerves that run from the waist to the legs were already withered and I said a five-minute prayer and after this short prayer, it appeared like both oil and milk were being poured on those nerves and her healing came. This young lady was already getting paralysed and said she had gone to LUTH and so many other places and had run like six X-rays within two weeks to no avail. So she came to the pharmacy and didn't know what to do again. She just came to buy analgesics and was walking away. When I saw her, the Spirit of God made me to call her back and ministered to me to pray with her.

She later told me some bitter stories about her husband who had left home for about a year and left her with a two-year-old child. She said she lost her former job and was about to lose the present one because she hadn't been to work for close to two weeks. So she was very sad. So we prayed and our awesome God healed her immediately. I have had some other experiences but nothing as dramatic as that.

There are times we have prayed and it seemed nothing happened but God is still very merciful. Keep calling Him. He will answer when He will answer. That is another message

I want to send out because I work as an evangelist and I try to be a minister in the marketplace. Although we are in the pharmaceutical business, we pray when we need to pray and it doesn't stop all the counselling that we give.

I go for rare drugs that are not everywhere and when I find them, I am happy and I locate the manufacturers. But I am even happier when people who have looked for the drugs everywhere are directed to come to Alpha Pharmacy and are told that if Alpha does not have it, then it may not be in Nigeria. So we go out of our way to satisfy pharmaceutical yearnings and needs.

Unlike how almost everything is available now, some years ago, drugs were not readily available because of austerity measures and the Indians had not filled up the space like they have done today. So things were tougher because some of the Europeans were going and their drugs became scarce. I was going to Europe mainly those days, trying to fill the gap for some very important drugs. That was how we earned the reputation of becoming the providers of rare ethical pharmaceuticals or suppliers of the last resort. That is what God has helped us to become and that was how our success story began.

You know community pharmacies are pharmacies that serve their communities. So, by that activity, the whole Nigeria became our community and we had to set up branches.

Tell us about your family. Did any of your children take after you to study Pharmacy or other

health-related professions?

Yes - only one out of my five children; two boys and three girls. They have all finished from school now. The last one is waiting to get a second degree in the United States of America. The one before her studied Pharmacy in the UK. I thought she would come back to join us, but on graduating, she got married in England and she is still living there. But, remotely, she is still contributing. So I have, at least, scored one out of five. (laughs)

How do you relax? Tell us about some of the pastime activities and lifestyle modifications you have adopted to stay fit and active especially as you join the league of septuagenarians.

Much earlier than now, I had given up some of the youthful vices like smoking, drinking, staying out late at night and all that. These are obvious modifications that anybody who is growing must make. The early one does that, the better; so that you have a longer and more enjoyable life.

To stay healthy, I have been active from school. I like to jog. I was a martial artist, involved in karate and judo. I am not doing all that now but I still can kick. Once during a golf match, I had to break my fall. When a wrongly kicked golf ball was coming in my direction, I had to duck and break my fall. I was surprised I could still do that. So no knowledge is ever wasted.

I play golf two to three times in a week. It helps me to stay fit and relax. I can play golf alone and I can play in a team, either here in Nigeria or when I am overseas. I can play in a range, and this helps to keep me fit because it keeps every part of my body moving. I have a treadmill, stationary bicycle and a few other things that I use to exercise my body.



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Building a world-class pharmaceutical company

Recently, two of my good clients expressed a strong desire to build an organisation that is similar to a leading indigenous publicly quoted company in Nigeria. One of them is quite young; the other has been around for some time, and if you ask me, pulling less than his weight. What was playing in my head was "do they know what it takes to build a world-class company?" This was what provided the impetus for this piece.

In today's competitive business landscape, pharmaceutical organisations operating in Nigeria face unique challenges and opportunities. To build a world-class pharmaceutical organisation, business leaders and CEOs must adopt a set of imperatives that align with the dynamic nature of the industry and environment, with corresponding discipline, consistency, grit and determination.

This article explores the key imperatives and provides relevant examples and insights specific to the Nigerian pharmaceutical context. By understanding and implementing these imperatives, pharmaceutical companies can enhance their capabilities, effectiveness, profitability, longevity, drive innovation, and make significant contributions to healthcare advancements in the nation.

Here is my list of imperatives for building a world-class pharmaceutical organisation:

1. Vision and purpose: A world-class pharmaceutical organisation must have a clear and inspiring vision and purpose. This involves defining the organisation's long-term goals and the impact it seeks to make in the healthcare sector. For instance, a Nigerian pharmaceutical company could focus on providing affordable and accessible medications for prevalent diseases in the country, such as malaria and emergent chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

By aligning the vision with the local healthcare needs, the organisation can direct its resources and efforts towards addressing critical health challenges and improving the well-being of the population.

2. Strategic thinking and planning: Pharmaceutical organisations in Nigeria need to develop strategic thinking and planning capabilities to navigate the complex and evolving market conditions. This includes conducting market research, analysing healthcare trends, and identifying growth opportunities. For example, a pharmaceutical company could conduct research to identify prevalent or new diseases and develop innovative products that cater specifically to the local population. And by anticipating future needs and aligning their strategies accordingly, organisations can gain a competitive edge and contribute to better healthcare outcomes.

3. Customer-centric approach: Adopting a customer-centric approach is essential for pharmaceutical organisations to understand and meet the unique needs of patients, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders.

In Nigeria, where access to quality healthcare is a challenge, pharmaceutical companies can focus on developing affordable and locally relevant medications. For instance, a company could

Pharmaceutical organisations in Nigeria need to develop strategic thinking and planning capabilities to navigate the complex and evolving market conditions. This includes conducting market research, analysing healthcare trends, and identifying growth opportunities.

develop paediatric formulations that are palatable and easy to administer, addressing the challenges of treating children in resource-constrained settings. By actively engaging with customers, collecting feedback, and tailoring their products and services accordingly, pharmaceutical organisations can build trust, enhance patient outcomes, and drive sustainable growth. It is noteworthy that healthcare professionals are, in fact our customers, especially for companies with significant PoM in their portfolio.

4. Continuous learning and agility: The pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria is characterised by rapidly evolving regulatory frameworks, changing disease profiles, and technological advancements. To remain competitive, organisations must foster a culture of agility and continuous learning. This involves encouraging employees to stay updated with the latest industry trends, attending training programmes, and fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

For example, a pharmaceutical company could establish cross-functional teams to work on projects, leveraging diverse expertise and perspectives. By continuously learning, adapting, and innovating, organisations can overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and contribute to the development of locally relevant healthcare solutions.

5. Deliberate policies, processes and systems: Efficient and effective processes and systems are crucial for pharmaceutical organisations in Nigeria to optimise their operations, minimise waste, and deliver high-quality products and services. A pharmaceutical company could invest in advanced manufacturing equipment to improve production efficiency and reduce time-to-market for critical medications.

Also, policies, processes, and systems play a critical role in building a world-class pharmaceutical company's sales and marketing department. By implementing effective policies, SOPs, and appropriate systems, pharmaceutical companies can optimise their sales and marketing efforts, achieve better customer engagement, and drive sustainable growth in a highly competitive industry.

By streamlining processes, organisations can enhance productivity, reduce costs, and ensure consistent product quality, ultimately benefiting patients and the healthcare system as a whole.

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collaboration: Empowering employees and fostering collaboration is vital for building a world-class pharmaceutical organisation. In Nigeria, where talent retention can be a challenge, organisations must provide opportunities for growth, encourage innovation, and empower

individuals to take ownership of their work. This includes promoting a culture of trust, delegating responsibilities, and recognising and rewarding achievements.

For example, you could establish employee development programmes, mentorship initiatives, and innovation challenges to encourage employees to contribute their ideas and expertise. By empowering employees and fostering collaboration, organisations can tap into the collective intelligence of their workforce, drive innovation, and enhance organizational performance.

7. Pursuit of excellence: To be a world-class pharmaceutical organisation, a commitment to being and doing the best is paramount. This involves setting and implementing high standards for quality, safety,

and efficacy in the development, manufacturing, marketing and distribution of medications. In Nigeria, pharmaceutical companies can strive to obtain international certifications, such as ISO 9001 or WHO GMP, to demonstrate their commitment to global quality standards.

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We will stop here now and continue next time.

Tunde Oyeniran, B Pharm. MBA, a Sales/Marketing Strategist, Selling/Sales Management Trainer and Personal Sales Coach is the President of the Society for Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing of Nigeria and Lead Consultant, Ekini White Tulip Consulting Limited, Lagos. 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

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Lagos ALPs elects new executives, returns Adesina as chairman

Members of the Association of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs), Lagos State Chapter, have elected a new set of executives to coordinate the affairs of the group, as the Chairman, Pharm. (Dr) Afusat Adesina and the Vice-Chairman, Pharm. Yewande Olorunsola were re-elected for another two-year term.

The election took place during the association's recent Biannual General Meeting (BGM), held at the Secretariat of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Lagos State Chapter.

Other newly elected executives are Pharm.(Mrs) Omolara Ebitigha, secretary; Pharm. Yemisi Chukwu Uro, assistant secretary; Pharm. Patricia Odunuga, treasurer; Pharm. (Mrs) Adenike Mayugbe financial secretary; Pharm. Bolanle Toki, publicity secretary; Pharm. Mutiat Yaqub, assistant publicity secretary; Pharm. Margaret Chibututu, welfare officer.

The list also includes Pharm. Winifred Ogwu, assistant welfare officer; Pharm. Seliatu Ohimor, editor-in-chief; Pharm. (Mrs) Foluke Akinniranye, chief whip; Pharm. Olubunmi Laja, unofficial member; Pharm. Beatrice Onuba, unofficial member; and Pharm. Modupe Alli, immediate past chairman.



Chief (Mrs) Yetunde Morohundiya, administering oath of office to the newly elected executives.

Expressing gratitude to her colleagues for the confidence reposed in her again, Adesina pledged her commitment and that of her team to do more for the group than ever before.

She disclosed that while her administration would continue with its seven-point agenda, she and her team will be engaging more with young pharmacists and retirees, by organising programmes that will cater for their welfare and professional excellence.

She specially appreciated all the past chairpersons of the association in attendance at the BGM, including Chief (Mrs) Yetunde Morohundiya, Pharm. (Mrs) Bolanle Adeniran, Pharm. (Dr) Modupe Alli;

Pharm. (Dr) Margaret Obono; and Pharm. (Dr) Modupe Ologunagba, for their continuous support to the group.

Commending the previous ALPs executives for their impactful programmes in healthcare delivery in the state, the PSN Chairman, Lagos State, Pharm. Babayemi Oyekunle, urged the association to continue reaching out to the underserved with health awareness programmes, for the maintenance of good health.

He also assured them that their demand for the implementation of consultant cadre was settled, as he was able to present the request personally to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, at the last meeting

they had, which, he said, yielded a positive outcome.

"As an indigene, I had the privilege of meeting the governor one on one when he came for the commissioning of the road leading to our secretariat, and I discussed the issues on ground with him. He gave me the assurance that all our demands will be met soon," he revealed.

In her remarks, the Vice-Chairman, PSN-Lagos, Pharm. (Dr) Shakirat Adeosun, congratulated the ALPs chairman for her administration's achievements in the last two years, imploring all members of the association to contribute their quota to its continued progress.

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Creating wealth with tiny healthy habits

By Onyinye Chiekwe, B.Pharm, PharmD, MScPH

When we say *health is wealth*, do we mean a healthy person is wealthy? To broaden the scope, does this mean that the healthiest people are the wealthiest?

The origin of "health is wealth" can be traced back to the American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, in 1860, said, "The first wealth is health". In his Finance and Development article, *The Shape of Global Health*, David E. Bloom also quoted this. In that article, Bloom pointed out an established relationship between income and health. He also noted that good health is the foundation for building a good life, a flourishing society, and a thriving economy.

So, when we say, "Health is wealth", I believe what we mean is that good health creates the propensity for wealth, not just for individuals but also for nations. There are real-life scenarios in which how people cannot earn a living or maintain a source of income because of failing health. Maybe the question should not be "How healthy are you?" Maybe we should ask instead, "How rich can you be?"

Tiny drops of habits

The quote, "health is wealth" also suggests that how rich you can be depends on how healthy you are. At first glance, trying to achieve good health amid a busy and sometimes chaotic life seems herculean. However, things become easier when we remember or realise that what constitutes a healthy life is healthy behaviour, which builds on healthy habits.

Recently, I came across B.J. Fogg's book, *Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything*. In this book, Fogg goes in-depth about how effective behaviour change happens using the "Fogg Behaviour Model". In a TED talk that he gave, which nearly summarises his book, he mentioned that one effective way to achieve long-term change, like positive health outcomes, is to change your behaviour and to make the behaviour change so tiny that it becomes automatic.

To do this, take note of the following:

1. Do not focus on the outcome. Instead, focus on the behaviours that lead to the outcome. For example, if your desired outcome is to maintain a healthy weight, certain behaviours that influence this are exercising, eating healthy, reducing stress, etc.

2. We determine our behaviour by our habits. Habits are more specific versions of our behaviour; they are the root of behaviour change. For example, to develop a behaviour of healthy eating, you must cultivate the habit of buying fruits and vegetables, shunning excess alcohol and sugary drinks, eating breakfast, preparing homemade meals, not eating late, etc. To develop a behaviour of exercising, you should cultivate the habit of taking evening walks, riding a bicycle, using the stairs instead of taking the lift, skipping, going to the gym, doing sit-ups, etc. To develop a behaviour of stress reduction, you should form a habit of saying no to activities that do not fit into your schedule, taking a 30-45 minutes power nap by 2 pm every day, not taking phone calls

after 11 pm, engaging in a leisurely activity every Friday (or every third Friday), etc.

3. To ensure lasting change, anchor the new habit to an existing habit or event. The format is: *After I (do an existing habit), I will (do a new habit)*. For example, *After I brush my teeth in the morning, I will do 10 sit-ups*; or, *After I get to the bus stop, I will buy fruits*; or *After I arrive at the office, I will drink a cup of water*.

Do not drop the baton

The responsibility of observing healthy habits and maintaining good health is one that we encounter every day. It is like a marathon or a relay race, but you are the only athlete; you are constantly passing the baton to yourself.

You are your only competition, constantly competing against who you were the day, week or year before, which is a different version

of yourself. The goal is to ensure that who you are today is a healthier version of who you were yesterday. That is how you win.

According to the Olympics website, one of the rules in an Olympic relay race is that "the baton exchange has to happen within a 20m changeover box... a team can be disqualified if any member drops the baton during the handover." Basically, do not drop the baton during an exchange. Interestingly, this rule also applies in observing healthy habits: try not to drop the baton or fall off the wagon; always show up.

Interestingly, in some relay races, dropping the baton does not result in disqualification. The athlete can pick it up and keep going. While trying to maintain good health, will we drop the baton at some point? Possibly. However, what matters is that we can pick it up.

You can pick up from the last time you took an evening walk, skipped,



avoided alcohol, or consistently consumed fruits and vegetables. No matter how long ago it was, you can pick up from the last time you observed a healthy habit. That is the difference between living and an Olympic relay race - dropping the baton during an exchange does not disqualify you. You can pick it up again and keep going!



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Why I ventured into manufacturing as a community pharmacist - Mafo

By Adebayo Oladejo

Pharm. Rapheal Omoniyi Mafo, a 2014 graduate of the University of Ibadan, and managing director of Colleagnant Pharmacy, a division of Colleagnant International Limited, has revealed that venturing into manufacturing of herbal and natural products is a fulfilment of a long-cherished dream for him.

Speaking with Pharmanews in a recent interview, Mafo noted that Nigeria is blessed with a plethora of healthful herbs that can be harnessed for the benefit of the populace, adding that he was inspired because he saw "prospects, health and finances in natural products."

Reminiscing on his beginnings as a young pharmacist, the resourceful entrepreneur recalled the various obstacles he surmounted, having spent his initial working years in both industrial and community pharmacy practices.

Mafo also examined some key issues affecting community pharmacy practice in Nigeria, with suggestions for advancement. Below is the full text of the interview:



Pharm. Rapheal Omoniyi Mafo

Tell us about your outfit, Colleagnant International Limited, the philosophy behind this enterprise, and the challenges encountered at the initial stage.

Colleagnant International Limited was registered in 2018 with the Corporate Affairs Commission to carry out the business of manufacture, sales and distribution of licenced and approved pharmaceutical products and drugs within and outside Nigeria, among other businesses.

In 2019, Colleagnant Pharmacy, a retail pharmacy, was established, as a division of Colleagnant International Limited, to provide quality and affordable drugs, medical devices, nutraceuticals, and pharmaceutical and herbal supplements to our customers. We believe in their overall wellness and we have taken such as our concern. We always want to exceed their expectations and hold ourselves accountable in everything we do as our quota to the health of our nation.

We strongly believe in the saying, "A healthy nation is a wealthy nation." At Colleagnant, our core values include innovation, accountability, customer focus, diversity and integrity.

Talking about community pharmacy, what would you say

are the peculiar challenges facing community pharmacy practice in this part of the country?

Every aspect of pharmacy practice in Nigeria has its challenges, but for community pharmacy, they include: a lack of well-defined standards of practice, and the absence of a central national drug distribution programme. This has opened the way for various aberrations and mishandling of drugs by quacks and non-professionals. It has also contributed to the high levels of drug abuse and addictions in the country, as well as the poor security, where community pharmacies are robbed by gunmen. We have lost some of our colleagues to robbery.

There is also shortage of pharmacists to serve the ever-growing Nigerian population, thereby leaving most pharmacy outlets without a licenced pharmacist. Moreover, there

is unhealthy competition from patent medicine vendors, who engage in responsibilities outside their legal boundaries. Added to this is poor inventory management, which leads to the expiration of drugs on shelves, as well as the menace of counterfeit and adulterated drugs, among many others.

As a pharmacist with over eight years of professional experience, at what point did you decide to go into local manufacturing of herbal and natural products, and what prompted the decision?

I did my degree final year project in the Department of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Ibadan. Pharmacognosy is a branch of Pharmacy that deals with medicinal drugs obtained from plants and other natural sources. Therefore, my decision to go into local manufacturing of herbal and natural products had been a long-time desire because I saw prospects, health and finances in natural products.

Unfortunately, this aspect is being taken over by non-pharmacists and they are doing very fine, except for the issue of standardisation which they are still lacking. Our environment is blessed with a plethora of herbs with health benefits which we can harness. I also took an elective course, Drug Design, in my final year because I believed that one day, I would develop drugs that will benefit humanity.

Tell us about your products and the challenges you encountered at the initial stage of venturing into manufacturing.

Neuvorals cream and Neuvoral tea are herbal products. These products are effective for the treatment of any type of paralysis and stroke, being the commonest cause. They are also indicated for other conditions, such as arthritis, neuralgia, nerve and muscle pain, and spasms. Patients with loss of bladder control can also benefit from using it. Neuvoral cream can also be used as a massage cream.

In our society, stroke is an epidemic; even at the global level - with no suitable drugs. Patients only rely on palliative care and physiotherapy. Most of these patients become permanently disabled, while some spend a couple of years fighting the battle of paralysis.

With these products, there is renewed hope for these victims as

the products have the capability to restore normalcy within two months of the start of therapy.

However, the major challenge we are facing is the lack of funds to manufacture the products on a large scale so that many people can benefit from them. A lot of money is required to set up the facility and scale through the regulatory registration, but we are working hard to get finances to get everything necessary done. We are also looking for partnerships and/or sponsorship from interested persons to make this project a reality.

Another challenge is scepticism from people as to whether our claims for the products are genuine. I can tell you confidently that these products are very effective and safe.

What gap is Colleagnant working to bridge in the Nigerian pharmaceutical landscape?

We are working to be innovators of life-saving medications, especially for disease conditions peculiar to our nation, for which there are no conventional or orthodox medicines. We also want to be a leading producer of raw materials for pharmaceuticals, which currently are being imported from other countries like China, India, Germany, France, etc.

We would also like to produce for export, as well as increase local production, in order to increase the contribution of the pharmaceutical sector to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is currently less than 0.25 per cent

Are there local regulatory protocols you adhere to in your operations and are you regulated by NAFDAC?

Yes, the extant NAFDAC guidelines on the manufacture, importation, distribution and sale of herbal medicines are applicable to our products, from production to quality control aspects, and because of these, we are regulated by NAFDAC. We are however working to meet the Global Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards, in order to produce products that are consistently safe, efficacious and of good quality.

What is your advice to the Nigerian government on how to create an enabling environment for the availability of raw materials in the country?

Most of the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (raw materials) are currently being outsourced from other countries, such as China and India, making local production of medicines in the country semi-production. Nigeria should be able to produce drugs for Nigerians and the rest of Africa.

So, the government needs to put in place incentives for stakeholders in the sector, in order to encourage local production of these APIs. They should facilitate and increase financial support to the pharmaceutical industry with low-interest rates and tax exemptions for locally produced raw materials. And they should be directly involved in raw materials production through public-private partnerships

Comparing your aspirations in the university with what you are doing presently, would you say studying Pharmacy was a good decision for you?

Studying Pharmacy was a very good choice for me. As an important member of the healthcare team, I am able to impact lives and I am helping a lot of people get well. So I can boldly say that through Pharmacy, I am fulfilling my desired service to humanity.

We are working to be innovators of life-saving medications, especially for disease conditions peculiar to our nation, for which there are no conventional or orthodox medicines. We also want to be a leading producer of raw materials for pharmaceuticals, which currently are being imported from other countries like China, India, Germany, France, etc.



Commissioning of the Pharmaceutical Cold Room of Alpha Pharmacy

The President Of The Pharmaceutical Society Of Nigeria, Pharm (Prof) Cyril Usifoh FPSN, Paid a Working Visit to Alpha Pharmacy and Stores Ltd During Which He Commissioned The Company's Pharmaceutical Cold Room In Lagos, Recently. He Was Accompanied By The National Secretary, PSN, Pharm Gbenga Falabi and The National Treasurer, PSN, Pharm Gafar Mandehin, Amongst Others. The Highlights of Events are Captured in the Pictures Below.



The President of PSN, Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh cutting the tape during the commissioning of the Pharmaceutical Cold Room of Alpha Pharmacy in Lagos.



Pharm. (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; unveiling the plaque in Alpha pharmaceutical cold room



MD, Alpha Pharmacy, Pharm (Sir) Ike Onyechi explaining the use of one of the antidotes at the Narcotics store of the Alpha Pharmacy warehouse to the PSN President, Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh and Mazi Sam Ajagu.



A cross section of dignitaries and staff during the reception of the PSN President, Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh during the visit.



L-R: Mazi Sam Ajagu; Pharm Okay Akpa (PhD); Pharm. (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh; Pharm (sir) Ike Onyechi, during the unveiling of the pharmaceutical cold room



A cross section of dignitaries and staff at the warehouse being briefed by the Regulatory Affairs Manager, Pharm. Sola Adenigba.



L-R: Alpha Pharmacy MD, Pharm. (sir) Ike Onyechi; Pharm. (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; and Mazi Sam Ajagu inspecting the drugs on the shelf inside the cold room.



MD Alpha Pharmacy Pharm (Sir) Ike Onyechi welcoming the PSN President Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh and other dignitaries during the visit.



Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN President, pose for a photograph with some YPG who work at one of the Alpha Pharmacy branches during his working visit.



Pharm IG Anukwu, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Alpha Pharmacy, briefing the PSN President and other dignitaries before the commissioning of the Pharmaceutical Cold Room.



L-R: Mazi Sam Ajagu; Pharm. (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; and Pharm. (sir) Ike Onyechi; inside the pharmaceutical cold room during the inspection.



Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN President, delivery his speech during the visit while Pharm. Okay Akpa (Ph.D) and Pharm (Sir) Ike Onyechi listened with rapt attention.



The PSN President, Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh in a group photograph with his entourage, Guests and staff of Alpha Pharmacy during his visit.



L-R: Pharm Sidi Rufai; Pharm. (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh, PSN president; pharm Vivian Ibe; and Pharm. (sir) Ike Onyechi



The PSN President Pharm (Prof) Cyril O. Usifoh flanked by Pharm (Sir) Ike Onyechi and Mazi Sam Ajagu in a group photograph with staff of Alpha Pharmacy Supply Chain Department.

We've enjoyed wide coverage, readership from *Pharmanews* - ALPs

We, members of the Association of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs) in Nigeria, felicitate with Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi on the attainment of 44 years of consistent monthly publication of the *Pharmanews* journal.

It's a great feat through the decades and the volume of information passed on for improved health cannot be underestimated.

You have been a great partner to ALPs over the years and we have enjoyed wide coverage and readership. We wish you many fruitful years ahead.

God bless *Pharmanews*
God bless Pharmacy
God bless Nigeria.

Pharm. Scholastica M. Lan, FPSN, FPCPharm
National Chairman

Pharmanews' consistency highly commendable – Pharm. Azuïke

It is with great joy that I felicitate with you on the occasion of the celebration of the 44th anniversary of uninterrupted monthly publication of *Pharmanews*. The consistency you have maintained throughout these 44 years is indeed highly commendable. It has been possible because of the clear vision of what you set out to do, as well as your dedication and that of the entire staff of your organisation.

I am aware that in the past five years you have won the Nigerian Healthcare Excellence Award (Print Media) and indeed looking forward to being the winner for this year, 2023. To all of you, I doff my hat and say congratulations. I know it has not always been all that very rosy; nevertheless you have not been in lack of divine support.

It is my prayer that the Almighty God who has sustained you thus far will continue to uphold you and your entire staff even for more achievements and contribution to the healthcare industry and the pharmacy profession, in particular. Once again, accept my very sincere congratulations.

Moses Azuïke, FPSN, FPCPharm

Pharmanews has set enviable record in pharma journalism – Pharm. Okonkwo

On this auspicious occasion of the 44th anniversary of the one and only pharmaceutical journal in Nigeria and the West African sub-region, I wish to congratulate the management and staff of *Pharmanews* on their achievement of 44 years of uninterrupted monthly publication.

Pharmanews has set an enviable record in pharmaceutical journalism by clinching all accolades in its class for many years. I am therefore to send my hearty congratulations to Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi and his staff for their excellent service to the medical and pharmaceutical professions. The sky will not be your limit.

Pharm. Eugene Okonkwo

Big congratulations to *Pharmanews* – Pharm. Ogundare

It was like a child's play when you were using your camera at FIP conferences in European countries to cover the events and we were delighted by it. Now, it has brought you into limelight worldwide and made you what you are today. Yoruba language says: *Ori l'omo ise asela*. ("Only your head knows where it is leading you"). I hereby say big congratulations on the 44th anniversary of the *Pharmanews* publication.

Bravo!

Pharm. Jacob Ogundare, FPSN, JACCO

I'm glad to be part of *Pharmanews* success story – Pharm. Paul Ozieh

It's with utmost pleasure that I write to congratulate the founder of *Pharmanews* Limited, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, and the entire management and staff of *Pharmanews* on this occasion of the 44th Anniversary of this premier healthcare journal. I am particularly glad to be part of the success story at some point in time, having been an associate editor/training coordinator between 1995 and 1996.

We celebrate *Pharmanews* today because this publication has weathered the storms to become a proud reference point, not only in the healthcare sector but also in the media industry. Here's wishing *Pharmanews* more impact, more resourcefulness and more relevance in the years ahead.

Pharm. (Mrs) Biola Paul-Ozieh FPSN, FNAPharm

Pharmanews' success historic – Prof. Onyeji

Pharmanews is undoubtedly a reputable and leading journal, covering a wide range of health and pharmacy-related issues.

It is highly commendable that *Pharmanews* has solidly remained steadfast in qualitative service delivery to healthcare providers and has maintained an unbroken monthly publication over the past 44 years. It is indeed quite historic. It takes ingenuity, fortitude, high managerial acumen and tenacity of purpose to weather the storm successfully during all these periods of chequered economic activities in Nigeria.

I join millions of persons of goodwill and lovers of embodiment of success in congratulating the staff and management of *Pharmanews* Ltd on this momentous occasion.

Prof. Cyprian O. Onyeji, FPSN, FNAPharm, OON

Many more years of impactful journalism – Prof. Uzodu

Congratulations on your 44 years of uninterrupted publication of *Pharmanews*.

It is commendable that your dragnet does not only cover Pharmacy profession but also Nursing, Medicine and other health professions. Worthy of note is the practical, life-changing information you are giving to all strata of the society.

Bravo! I wish you many more years of impactful journalism.

Pharm. (Prof.) Mrs A. L. Uzodu

Congrats on your incredible success – Ridge-Mart

We at Ridge-Mart Nigeria Limited are so thrilled to read that you and your organisation have achieved this feat. Congratulations on your incredible success.

You worked very hard this period of 44 years to achieve this accomplishment and we can't think of anyone who deserves it more than you and your organisation.

Cheers to you and your team for a job well done.

Congratulations!!!!
Samuel Olakunde
Principal Partner
RMNL

Many more milestones to *Pharmanews* - Greenlife

We, the management and staff of Greenlife Pharmaceuticals Limited, heartily felicitate with the Publisher and the entire *Pharmanews* team on the occasion of your 44th anniversary of uninterrupted monthly publication.

Pharmanews has been a reliable source of health information for millions of people around Nigeria and beyond. Your ceaseless effort at bringing awareness to every aspect of the healthcare sector is highly appreciated.

We wish you many more milestones.

Congratulations!
Dr Obiora Chukwuka
Chairman/CEO, Greenlife Pharmaceuticals Limited

Congratulations

A rare fit indeed but nurtured by grace, focus, resilience and determination. These are the key words and tapping into divine strength at every point of challenge must have kept this boat afloat for 44 years.

May it continue to survive the business challenges in this country. 44 hearty cheers to Pharm. Elder Atueyi and the *Pharmanews* crew!
Em & May Pharm Ltd and MD- Pharm. Mrs May Ohaedoghasi

Pharmanews remains a delight – Pharm. Oguine

Congratulations, Sir. You have done well and *Pharmanews* remains a delight. I remember receiving my complimentary copies as a student. Keep up the good work, Sir and keep showing the light.

Fiat lux!

Pharm. Chigozie Oguine

More prosperity to *Pharmanews* – Pharm. Omaliko

The management and staff of Malix Pharmaceutical Nigeria Ltd wish to congratulate *Pharmanews* and the very seasoned Managing Director, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, on this great success of publishing *Pharmanews* for 44 years without interruption.

May our ever good and perfect King continually keep and prosper *Pharmanews* more. Amen.

Congratulations!
Pharm. (Lady) Adaeze Omaliko, FPSN, FPCPharm

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Shalina records impressive growth, despite economic crunch - Clifford

By Adebayo Oladejo

The Chief Executive Officer, Shalina Healthcare Limited, Shalina Clifford, has revealed that, despite the recent widespread cash crisis witnessed in the country, which caused a decline in business activities, the company successfully consolidated the success it recorded last financial year by wrapping up the 2022/2023 financial year remarkably.

Clifford made the disclosure at the opening ceremony of the company's recent national conference, tagged "Celebrating Outstanding Achievements", which took place at the Mariot Hotel, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.

Noting that the aim of the event was to celebrate the business partners, staff and friends of the company, and to celebrate the success recorded so far, and as well as plan for years ahead, Clifford said, "Against all odds, the company made a lot of remarkable progress in the year which accumulated into a success story."

According to her, one of the success stories is that the company has become a truly Nigerian brand with its first mega factory in Africa being completed in Nigeria, adding that in the upcoming new financial year, the company will be exporting Shalina's products manufactured in Nigeria to the outside world.

While appreciating the business partners for their outstanding performance in the



L-R, Chief Operating Officer, West Africa (Pharma) Business Operations, Arun Raj; Shalina's Best Partner of the Year, Mr Tochukwu Agu; and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Shalina Healthcare, Shalina Clifford, at the company partners conference in Lagos.

outgone year, Clifford reiterated the company's commitment to the provision of affordable quality healthcare delivery in Nigeria, saying the success is dedicated to the business partners for the wholehearted support, which she said made the company grow against all odds.

Also speaking on the company's success stories in the 2023 financial year, its Chief Commercial Officer (Pharma) West Africa, Arun Raj, declared that the company has exceeded

expectations by increasing its business activities in coverage, visibility, improved products, customers and staff appreciation, among others.

According to him, "With Nigeria as its primary market in Africa, today, a good number of the company's brands and products are visible all over the country and have exceeded expectations in camaraderie, respect, credibility, pride, quality and so on. It is also good to note that, in 2022/2023, our corporate market initiatives

have made us reach out to our

customers in unique and special ways."

He continued, "Some of our activities – national conferences participation, Shalina Youth Talents Award (SYTA), Rising Stars Award, 'My Voice My Identity' among others - have created an unprecedented place for us in the market."

The high point of the event was the award ceremony which featured presentation of awards to distinguished members of staff in different categories. There was also presentation of

special recognition awards to the brand ambassadors of the company for their significant contributions to its growth.

Some of the ambassadors present included popular skit makers, Samuel Animashaun Perry, popularly known as Broda Shaggy; Emmanuela Samuel and Mark Angel; award-winning dancer, Kafayat Oluwatosin Shafau, aka Kaffy; as well as musician and songwriter, Zadok Aghalengbe.



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...innovative and consistent in quality.

Usifoh calls for more investment in pharma industry, as Alpha unveils cold room

continued from back page

It shows that the company is willing to make sure that drugs get to the final users in the right quality. A lot was invested in the cooling system. Though we are still investigating, we can say that the cold room is the biggest in the country.

"Alpha as a team should not stop at the point they are now. They should keep moving by adding more value and new things to what is already on the ground. The cold room contains rare drugs you can't get anyhow. So it is a massive investment. It shows that Alpha has a large heart by ensuring that people can get those special drugs at the right specification."

While speaking to **Pharmanews** on the cooling facility, Alpha's Managing Director, Pharm. Ikechukwu Onyechi, said the company decided to build the facility to meet Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards, which involve how drugs are manufactured, packaged, transported, and stored until they get to the final user. He added that if some of the special drugs are stored contrary to the specified temperature, they will lose quality.

Onyechi further explained that most of the drugs that the company brings into the country need special storage.

"At the beginning, we were using fridges but after a while, the fridges were not sufficient; so we built the first cold room about 20 years ago. After about five years, we upgraded it, and about



L-R: MD SKG, Pharm. (Dr) Okey Akpa; PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh and MD Alpha Pharmacy, Pharm. Ike Onyechi at the Alpha Pharmacy cold room, during the commissioning of the facility recently in Lagos.

five years again, we upgraded until it got to a stage where we decided to build the one we just commissioned, so as to meet the current demand," he said.

The Alpha MD, who revealed that the company has the vision to be foremost in the provision of world-class quality products to Nigerians, expressed special appreciation to their German partners, G. Koepcke, for assisting in the establishment of the new facility.

He also called on Nigerians

to ensure they always get their special drugs from the right channel, where they are guaranteed that the drugs will be in the appropriate condition, as specified by the manufacturers.

In his remarks at the occasion, the managing director of SKG Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. (Dr) Okey Akpa, commended Alpha Pharmacy for taking the bold step to set up such a huge facility, saying it is a gesture that will positively impact the pharma sector.

The National Secretary, PSN, Pharm. Gbenga Falabi also commended Alpha, stressing that the company had always been known to represent excellence.

The Supply Chain and Store Manager for Alpha, Mr Chidi Chukwuemeka, disclosed that the new pharmaceutical cold room can preserve over five tons of pharmaceutical products and is powered 24 hours through three different sources: the national electricity grid, solar, and generator.

Cardiologist raises hope of stroke prevention in high risk patients

continued from back page

break up clots that you already have, but they can stop those clots from getting bigger. It's important to treat blood clots, because clots in your blood vessels and heart can cause heart attacks, strokes, and blockage."

She continued: "We have hope for Nigeria in managing stroke, we have better tools to pick up the pieces, but the issue is that can patients afford the cutting edge maximum treatment we want to give them and this is where health insurance comes in."

Mbakwem, who was the keynote speaker at the relaunch of Eliquis, a brand of apixban, produced by Pfizer, said anticoagulant medications are used in the treatment and prevention of blood clots in people with an irregular heartbeat, called atrial fibrillation.

Speaking on the topic, "Unmet needs in stroke prevention for high risk patients with NVAF – Nigeria perspective", the consultant cardiologist stated that the apixban drug prevents blood clots from forming in the heart of patients with atrial fibrillation, venous thromboembolism (VTE) and at least one additional risk factor.

She described VTE as referring to blood clots in the veins, which, she said, is a serious, yet preventable medical condition that can cause disability and death.

In her words, "Blood clots may

break off and travel to the brain and lead to a stroke or to other organs and prevent normal blood flow to that organ, also known as a systemic embolism.

"Increasing evidence has shown that blood thinner medicines play an important role in the progression of preventing blood clots from forming. An abnormal heartbeat is associated with considerable morbidity, including an increased risk of cognitive impairment, a three-fold increase in the risk of heart failure, and a five-fold increase in the risk of stroke.

"However, anticoagulants are prescribed for people at a high risk of getting clots, to reduce their chances of developing serious conditions such as strokes and heart attacks. In Nigeria and most of the world, this is still more male-dominated than female, with a ratio of about 60 to 40 per cent. Women start to catch up with men after menopause, with about 70 to 80 per cent of heart diseases being preventable."

To prevent stroke naturally, Mbakwem urged Nigerians to control their risk factors for the condition, which are hypertension, diabetes and obesity. She also recommends regular exercise and avoidance of alcohol and cigarettes.

She, however added that these are factors that can be controlled, noting that "there are ailments

humans are born with, but with early diagnosis, there are a lot of things that can be changed, which will reduce the occurrence of atrial fibrillation."

The erudite specialist further mentioned Universal Health Coverage as one of the unmet needs in stroke management. The other, she said, is continuous training of medical professionals to be updated on recent trends in healthcare sector.

"Universal Health Coverage, is also crucial for the prevention of stroke, as most patients cannot afford the treatment, but if we get the Universal Health

Coverage in place, and people are paying in bits, then people will get help, because what would happen is that anyone diagnosed will be given attention before it becomes late," she said.

In his speech at the occasion, Pharm. Olayinka Subair, cluster lead (West Africa) at Pfizer, reiterated the company's commitment to healthcare for more than 150 years ago and its engagements in the sector as a leader with persistent commitment to health challenges in Nigeria and across the globe.

He said, "For more than 150 years globally, Pfizer has been a leader in tackling some of the most persistent healthcare challenges through the breakthrough medicines and



Prof. Amam Chinyere Mbakwem

vaccines we discover, develop, and bring to market. Our medical breakthroughs change people's lives as we focus on the areas of greatest need, tackling the diseases that present the biggest challenge across countries and regions.

"While advocacy on the management of heart conditions like atrial fibrillation and blood glucose level are gaining ground, there is still a lot to be done to create necessary awareness among patients and practitioners because knowledge and experience have shown that complications from heart conditions are preventable and reversible when identified early".



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CONTRA-INDICATIONS:

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Held in Lagos, on May 25th 2023.

Below are the pictures taken at the event.



L-R: Executive Director Finance M&B, Ayodeji Aboderin, Managing Director, M&B Plc, Patrick Ajah, Executive Director, Pharma Sales & Marketing M&B Plc, Vincent Okelu, exchanging warm pleasantries with the MD, Audion PX



Managing Director, May & Baker Nig Plc, Patrick Ajah, delivering welcome address



Executive Director, Pharma Sales & Marketing M&B Plc, Vincent Okelu, on the the 2022 business review and 2023 business expectations.



The Head of Sales of M&B Nig Plc, Mr. Chiagozie Maduneme on heart-to-heart engagement with the customers



L-R: The Manager, Kuka Medicals and MD, Latnac PX, admiring the brand new Samsung Galaxy tablet, gifted to each customer by M&B Nig Plc



MD, Latnas Pharmacy Kano, Mr. Lawal Ahmed, receiving an award for emerging as the 3rd Best National Customer for the 2022 business year



MD, Fulfilled Dream Pharmacy, Mr. Chidiebere Maduka, received an award for emerging as the best national customer for the specialist product during the 2022 business year.



MD, Audion Pharmacy, Mrs. Edith Nwachukwu, awarded for being the overall 2nd Best National Customer and Best Customer for Healthcare products during the 2022 business years



MD, Chuphil Pharmacy, Mr. Chukwudi Diji, awarded for starting the performance as the overall Best National Customer for the 2022 business years



The management of M&B Nig Plc with the awardees for the 2022 business year



L-R: The Head of Plant Operations Mr. Silva Ajalaye, MD of Latnas Pharmaceuticals Ltd Mr. Lawal Ahmed, Head of Human Capital Development Mrs. Essien Emem, MD/CEO Mr. Patric Ajah, Mrs. Edith Nwachukwu of Audion Pharmacy, Mr. Chukwudi Diji of Chuphil Pharmacy (Best Overall Customer 2022) Executive Director Finance Mr. Ayodeji Aboderin, Executive Director Pharma Sales and Marketing Mr. Valentine Okelu.



The MD, Newhealth Pharmacy, Abuja, Mr. Steve Ozioko, was awarded for his starting performance as the best customer on specialist products for North District.



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Cardiologist raises hope of stroke prevention in high risk patients

By Temitope Obayendo

A Professor of Medicine and Consultant Cardiologist at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos (LUTH), Amam Chinyere Mbakwem, has assured Nigerian physicians treating patients with a high risk of stroke that there is a sure procedure to prevent the condition.

This is as she disclosed that only about one-third of 10 million Nigerians suffering from hypertension are on effective treatment. The effect of this, according to her, is that there is a continuous rise in the number of diagnoses, thereby placing unnecessary pressure on the few physicians attending to patients whenever there is an attack.

Noting that stroke can be life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention, she said the use of anticoagulants or blood thinners - medicines that prevent blood clots from forming - can be of significant help.

According to her, "They do not



L-R: National Treasurer, PSN, Pharm. Gafar Madehin; Managing Director, SamTad Pharmacy, Ikire Osun State, Pharm. Taiwo Odewoye; PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh; and Pharm. Bambo Akinbile, at the Coronation Anniversary of HRH Oba Pharm. Olatunde Falabi, Olambeloye III and the father of PSN National Secretary, Pharm. Prince Gbenga Falabi in Ikire, Osun State, recently.

continued on page 60

Usifoh calls for more investment in pharma industry, as Alpha unveils cold room

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Professor Cyril Usifoh, has called for increased investment in the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector, stressing that this will not only boost its capabilities but also enhance its profitability.

Usifoh made the call in a chat with Pharmanews, shortly after the recent commissioning of the premium pharmaceutical cold room built by Alpha Pharmacy

& Stores Limited, in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Describing the facility as the biggest he had seen so far in Nigeria, the PSN leader stated that more investments of such magnitude are needed in the entire pharmaceutical industry.

According to him, "Alpha has taken a giant stride with the facility that was commissioned.

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