



NAFDAC declares war on drug hawking, artificial fruit-ripening - Set to prosecute perpetrators

By Temitope Obayendo

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has vowed to arrest and prosecute anyone caught hawking drugs in any part of the country, declaring the practice as a criminal act. The agency has also decried the nefarious activities of traders **continued on page 16**



L-R: Dr Stephanie Oluyide, representative of the keynote speaker, Pharm. Azuka Okeke, executive officer, Africa Resource Centre for Excellence in Supply Chain Management, receiving a plaque from Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN, and Pharm. Ernest Okafor, national chairman, PWDAN, at the 2nd Annual National Conference of PWDAN, held at Marriot Hotel, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.



Accolades as Onyechi clocks 70

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PWDAN tasks FG on stronger pharma supply chain, medicine security

Nigerian-made drugs are of high quality, meet international standards - Verghese

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44 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED MONTHLY PUBLICATION (1979-2023)

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PHARM. OBIAGERI IKWU

Pharm. Obiageri Ethel Ikwu is the chief executive officer, Lopez Pharmacy and Stores Limited, Ojo, Lagos. She is a health information advocate, with a special interest in vaccination and point-of-care testing.

Ikwu was born into the royal family of Eze Ojinnaka, the Ezesinobi of Akah Land, Umuakah, Njaba Local Government Area of Imo State, on 20, January, 1973. She attended Army's Children School, Bonny Camp, Lagos, and later enrolled at Government College, Maroko, Sandfield, Lagos, where she obtained her Senior Secondary School Certificate.

She proceeded to the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State, in 1990 to study Pharmacy, and graduated in 1996. She had her internship with the Military Hospital, Lagos, during the ECOMOG era, under the tutelage of Dr (Mrs) Dere Awosika.

During her internship period, in her quest to add more value to herself and the pharmacy profession, she engaged as a locum pharmacist. She subsequently developed a passion for community pharmacy practice. Through her nature and nurture, she easily won the hearts of some of her clients in the neighbourhood, and this made her know that she was called to be a community pharmacist. She soon proceeded to Evans Medicals for her NYSC and worked directly with Pharm. Emma Ebere, who was the then sales director of the company.

Ikwu registered Lopez Pharmacy and Stores, a retail community pharmacy that has been involved in providing top-notch pharmaceutical care to the members of the community since 2000. She has also been involved in a number of health interventions and education programmes, such as school HIV/STI awareness programmes, to commemorate the World AIDS Day, every 1 December.

In 2018, in collaboration with Emzor Pharmaceuticals Plc, she trained over 40 pharmacists in Nigeria to be involved in Hepatitis B reduction, to reach the WHO goal of hepatitis eradication by 2030. She is passionate about teaching adults about STI/HIV prevention and believes in catching them young.

Pharm. Oby Ikwu, as she is fondly called, has served in various capacities for both the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) and the PSN. She was the pioneer zonal coordinator, ACPN Ori-Ade Zone; publicity secretary, ACPN-Lagos; financial secretary, ACPN-Lagos; member of DIC, ACPN-Lagos, and a host of others, both at the state and national levels.

Ikwu, an advocate of good pharmacy practice, with a track record of organising health awareness and sensitisation programmes for churches, mosques, women's organisations, and town unions, where different health issues are discussed and appropriated, has received several meritorious service awards to her credit. She is Merit Award Winner of the Association of Lady Pharmacists, (ALPs), national, and many others.

Pharm. Ikwu is happily married to her best friend and husband of her youth, Mr Emeka Ikwu, and they are blessed with five children.



Inspiration

Sometimes the biggest accomplishment in life is to find yourself. - **Luisa Fernanda Cicero**

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" - **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. - **C.S. Lewis**

The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why. - **Mark Twain**

Change equals self-improvement. Push yourself to places you haven't been before. - **Pat Summitt**

Know who you are, and be it. Know what you want, and go out and get it! - **Carroll Bryant**

"Don't allow yourself to be satisfied with your success. Critique what

you've achieved and ask what you can learn from others." - **Oscar Auliq-Ice**

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow." — **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

If you wish to achieve worthwhile things in your personal and career life, you must become a worthwhile person in your own self-development. — **Brian Tracy**

Unless you're continually improving your skills, you're quickly becoming irrelevant. **Stephen Covey**

By focusing on the qualities about yourself that are good, you can help yourself gain a high level of self-confidence. - **Ace McCloud**

Self-confidence is the first step toward success. If you believe it, you can achieve it. - **Tommy Lasorda**

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The ongoing strike action, recently embarked upon by the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD), has further highlighted the precarious levity with which the Nigerian government often handles issues relating to healthcare in the country. The strike, just like many others in the health sector, could have been avoided, if the grievances long expressed by the medics had been handled with more sensitivity and sincerity.

It is even more worrisome that successive governments have not been able to come to a mutually beneficial consensus with this very indispensable group. During the last administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, the NARD spent, at least, four months on strike, amid series of failed negotiations for the improvement of their welfare packages and working conditions. Some of their demands were payments of members' salaries and proper placement of members in state and federal tertiary hospitals across the nation.

In 2021, President Muhammadu Buhari, who had told Nigerians that he was committed to improving the health sector, spent over 200 days in London on medical trips, while Nigeria spent a whopping sum of \$3 billion on medical tourism, from 2020 to 2022, according to the Balance of Payments database of the Central Bank of Nigeria. His case was, perhaps, one of the worst paradoxes in leadership. Not

Perennial health workers' strike: Why FG must act now

all Nigerians were privileged financially and so, while Buhari and a few affluent officials enjoyed medical pilgrimages abroad, millions of Nigerians were denied access to quality healthcare at home.

In 2017, two years after Buhari took over from Goodluck Jonathan, the World Health Organisation, in its analysis of international health systems, ranked Nigeria 187 out of 191, ahead only of Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and Myanmar.

It is our expectation that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's government will take an exception to the usual lip service paid to the health sector by successive governments. Beginning with the president himself, government, at all levels, as well as other political office holders, must be mandated to work towards upgrading the health facilities in their domains to international standard. This must begin with prioritisation of healthcare in budgetary allocations, as well as formulation of policies that are decidedly aimed at revamping and repositioning the health sector for better service delivery.

One area such policies must target is restricting public officers from embarking on medical

tourism abroad. It is our view that unless such stringent measures are taken, the health sector in Nigeria will continue its free fall. As long as government officials, policy makers and other key stakeholders – especially those with access to public funds – believe that they can always find alternatives to the calamity that many public health institutions have become, issues plaguing the health sector will not be given the urgent and utmost attention they deserve.


One of the major issues NARD is contending with is the obviously embarrassing exodus of medical doctors that has become the norm in Nigeria. According to the NARD President, Dr Emeka Orji, over 2800 medical doctors have left Nigeria in two years, in search of green pastures. He said the statistics came from 2022 survey conducted by NARD. Going by this, it means that 100 medical doctors leave the country every other month, putting the country's doctor-patient ratio at an abysmally precarious level.

Presently, the healthcare delivery system is in an appalling state, with one doctor to attend about 10,000 patients. Worse still, the overburdened practitioners are not provided the necessary incentives or the enabling

environment to practice. In most Nigerian public hospitals, the facilities are ill-equipped and in very deplorable conditions. Only recently, the entire nation was jolted by the tragic news of Dr Vwaere Diaso, a young and brainy house officer, who was killed while using the faulty elevator at the Lagos State General Hospital, Odan. According to reports, Diaso was to conclude her horsemanship programme two weeks to the time she met her untimely death in the avoidable tragedy.

It is particularly disturbing that, in their tributes, colleagues of the deceased lamented how several complaints had been made to the hospital management about the parlous state of the elevator, to no avail. Such reckless neglect, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds that have turned most government hospitals to death traps for both patients and health workers must be checked forthwith.

It is imperative that the Federal Government attends to the demands of NARD, as well as the concerns of other healthcare professional groups, in order to forestall the total collapse of the country's healthcare delivery system. Already, in some states, patients have been discharged as a result of the ongoing strike, with many of them unable to afford treatment in private hospitals. The Federal Government must step up negotiation efforts – with compelling sincerity – to ensure that a devastating public health crisis is quickly averted.



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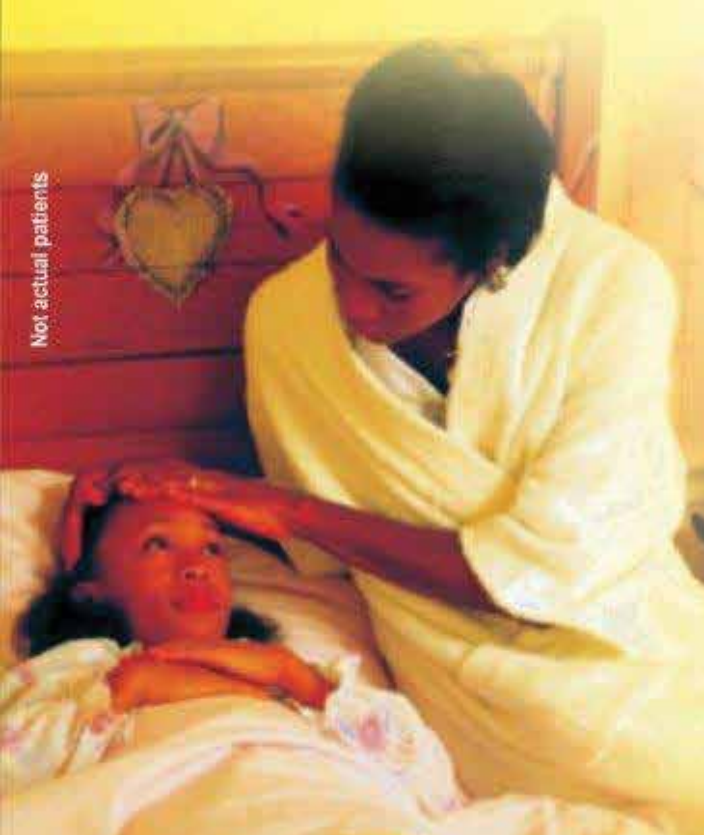
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Do you merit promotion?

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

Every worker looks forward to and appreciates promotion by the employer. Promotion is a reward, indicating that the worker has demonstrated greater responsibility, productivity and value to the employer. It is an incentive for workers to perform better.

In a work environment where there is no provision for promotion, resulting in improved salary, higher titles and added responsibilities, or even bigger offices, the workers are not motivated and the morale is low. This results in poor performance of the organisation. This is why the private sector is more productive than the public sector, where promotion is determined more by the length of service.

Personally, I was never promoted in all the places I worked because I did not stay long in any employment. In fact, in my 15 years of employment, I worked in eight organisations. Therefore, I worked on the average of less than two years for each organisation.

The only place I enjoyed promotion was in FGBMFI, where we voluntarily serve God in the marketplace. As an elected chapter president, I was very delighted the day I received my letter of promotion to the position of a field representative, with added responsibilities. A few years later, I received another letter, promoting me to the rank of national director, with even greater responsibilities. Promotion motivates one to perform better.

It was when I joined the FGBMFI in 1989 and started reading the spirit and not the letter of the Bible that I understood the spiritual implications of promotion. According to Psalm 75:6-7, **"For promotion cometh neither from the west, nor from the east, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another"**.

This implies that your promotion comes from God, using your manager or employer as an instrument. It is, therefore, a great mistake to think that your promotion has come from any human being. No man can promote any person. It is God who does.

Promotion goes with greater responsibilities. God promotes you to serve Him better. Whatever service you are rendering to people, bear in mind that you are serving God. And your reward or promotion comes from Him. Colossians 3:23-24 says, **"And whatever you do,**

do it heartily, as to the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

Some people ignorantly think that they are working for people and therefore do not do their work wholeheartedly and faithfully. Some believe that they can cheat or steal from their employers, not knowing that they are actually dealing with God, who placed them for a purpose.

I believe that being the publisher of **Pharmanews** today is a divine promotion for my meritorious services as the editor-in-chief of the PSN journal, from 1974 to 1978. I

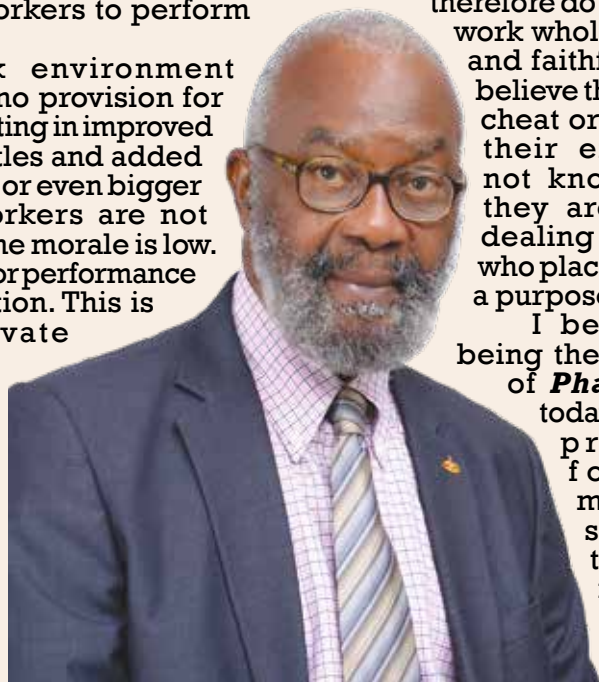
was so committed to the journal that I made permission to carry on with it a condition for accepting a job appointment in 1976.

Some people continue to struggle in their businesses because of their dishonest activities when they were in employment. Luke 16:12 (NKJV) says, **"And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"**

God promotes people to fulfil His own purpose. He promotes people so they can use their promotion to serve and bless others. They use their promotion to help other people fulfil their destiny and become who God wants them to be. You are blessed to be a blessing to others.

In 1 Samuel 16, Samuel was asked to go and anoint one of the 12 sons of Jesse in Bethlehem. Samuel had a high expectation of the one to be the future king of Israel and did not hesitate to pick Eliab, after looking at his physical appearance. But the Lord stopped him from anointing Eliab because He had not chosen him. The Lord said unto Samuel in verse 7, **"Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."**

For God to promote you, He examines your heart, to know how you will manage the promotion. God will never promote you if you cannot subject your will to His own, to do what pleases Him. He will not promote or bless you if you are not to be a blessing to others.



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Sales and selling price

By George O. Emetuche

**"Price is what you pay. Value is what you get."
- Warren Buffett**

The economic outlook, as we already know, is tough. Prices of products and services are going up. Naira is losing value. The purchasing power of buyers is becoming weaker, which has caused anxiety in the system. Where do we go from here? We must try to provide answers to the challenges of today.

As we tell ourselves the truth about the economic challenges, one thing remains certain and that is, sales professionals must continue to sell their products and services, no matter the situation.

Selling when prices go up

Sales professionals usually complain that the price of their product is high. This is usually the case. But the truth is that the company is in business to remain in business. No company prays to go out of business because of not meeting up with business obligations.

The company cannot sell below cost price to impress customers or the salesmen. Selling price is calculated as: total cost plus profit margin. You will go out of business if you don't recognise that business must sell at a profit. Selling at a profit ensures continuity of the business.

Show value and demystify selling price

People don't just buy products; they buy benefits and value. They buy what is in it for them! Don't bother so much about the selling price of your products; rather, find smart ways to communicate the unique selling propositions of your products and services. Find ways to show buyers the reasons to buy the products. When your reasons to sell and the benefits you show the buyer outweigh his or her sales objections, sales will happen naturally.

Price war is a wrong strategy

As a sales professional, never push for price war. Nobody wins a price war because you will continue to reduce price until you get exhausted. Once you can perform, you can fix your price. Once your product does what it says, price won't be an issue - when you have identified the right market.

The issue of selling price is usually a sensitive topic. Most sales professionals want a reduced selling price. But this is not feasible in today's marketplace. I teach that in handling sales objection of price, always use value and benefits in the product to attack the objection.

Performance is a determinant

Quality, high performance and positioning strategies are among the elements that

determine the price. Once your performance is below the expectations of your prospects or customers, they will complain that your price is high because they didn't get value in your offering.

On the other hand, when your product or service performance meets or exceeds the expectations of your prospects or customers, price won't be an issue because they are getting the right results in what they are buying.

Be in the right market

One factor that is important in this discussion is that you must sell the right product in the right market to the right prospect or customer. Once this factor

is addressed and the product performance meets or exceeds the expectations of the target market, price won't be an issue. This is a simple logic in the art of selling.

George O. Emetuche is a Brian Tracy endorsed serial bestselling author, accredited training consultant, sales and marketing expert, and convener of the Nigeria Sales Conference.

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VITABIOTICS



Inquest

with
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The decision of the federal government to reduce drug importation from 60 to 40 percent came as a welcome development to stakeholders in the health sector, especially because it would boost local production and open up the Nigerian pharmaceutical landscape to limitless opportunities for growth and innovation. However, in spite of the laudability of that decision, the federal government seemed not to have consulted with the real stakeholders – pharmacists, who, by the nature of their calling, remain the custodians of drugs all over the world.

The federal government must understand that there are technical intricacies involved in matters concerning drug manufacturing, importation and distribution within a given geographical space. As such, experts, in the persons of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists, and not politicians, should be saddled with the responsibility of developing a roadmap towards the actualisation of that goal. Unless things are done properly, the entire process could be hijacked by reckless politicians, as has always been the case with most great ideas in Nigeria.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu should have engaged with the

leadership of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD) and the National Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA). These real stakeholders can advise the president on how to execute and actualise the idea of import reduction in a way that it will boost local manufacturing, stimulate healthy competition among local manufacturers and make quality drugs available to the poorest and most vulnerable groups in Nigeria.

NAPPSA, populated by Nigerian pharmacists in the Americas, has a huge role to play, going by its contributions to the overall diaspora remittances to Nigeria. In fact, more remittances can come from this group, if the federal government makes the local business environment more conducive for investors. Many Nigerian pharmacists in the Americas wish to establish industries in Nigeria but are scared of the security and somewhat unstable business climate in Nigeria.

Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and CEO of Bloom

Drug import reduction: Recognising the real stakeholders

Public Health, Professor Chimezie Anyakora, who has been championing Nigeria's self-sufficiency in local manufacturing, in conjunction with different pharmaceutical groups in Nigeria and beyond,

expressed his optimism about government's decision, albeit with a caveat. According to Anyakora, unless government is sincerely committed to actualising the import reduction idea as a policy decision, not much should be expected.

"Government's decision will boost local manufacturing. The value-chain will also be impacted with more investments and with more gaps to fill. Government must also make some deliberate efforts towards protecting the interests of investors. Above all, their sincerity and commitment towards the workability of this policy remains paramount", he added.

Recently, precisely in June 2023, Bloom Public Health, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Health, the World Bank and NIPRD, hosted local manufacturers in a capacity-building workshop to equip them with the appropriate knowledge and skills required for the sustenance of the culture of excellence in pharmaceutical manufacturing in an era of high competitiveness and international best practice.

It is important to note here that in terms of preparedness, Nigerian pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists are ready to work with the federal government to better

the lot of local manufacturers. This is reflected in the level and quality of engagements and collaborations that have been going on in the Nigerian pharmaceutical landscape. The only challenge is that the federal government might end up surrounding itself with the wrong people due to political patronage. We hope President Tinubu's style will be a radical departure from the usual tea party in high places.

As the PSN President, Professor Cyril Usifoh, has recently observed during a television interview, Nigeria needs to produce its medicines; and there is no better way of expressing the readiness to do so than the decision of Tinubu's government to cut down drug importation. According to Usifoh, the COVID-19 experience has shown that without the capacity to produce our own drugs, the country can be overwhelmed by medical emergencies at any time. While harping on the need to ensure medicine security, Usifoh believes that the federal government should have first consulted with stakeholders before arriving at the decision to cut down on drug importation.

I will advise the PSN president and other pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists to take the bull by its horn and make the president see the reason he must have them driving the process of this policy decision. As the Holy Writ says, "...the kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent taketh it by force." (Mathew 11:12)

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Health awareness for men (2)

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor

Stress

Stress is a reaction of the body in its bid to adapt to a difficult or dangerous situation.

According to Dr Peter G. Hanson, author of the book "The Pleasure of Stress", 80 per cent of diseases are related to stress.

Stress does not exist by itself but is produced by humans according to the way they interpret their circumstances. The same event can affect two people in different ways, according to their reaction or attitude (interpretation) of the problem.

Common reactions to high stress situations include:

1. Pupil dilation
2. Mouth and throat dryness
3. Arteries and veins in the face, arms and hands close causing paleness.
4. Heart accelerates to send more oxygen to the whole body.
5. The suprarenal glands inject a certain amount of cortisone to reduce the inflammation in the body in case of an injury. This is the reason why a highly stressed person has a weak immune system. Cortisone and adrenalin block the T-cells which are produced by the immune system to defend the body from foreign germs.
6. The liver injects a blood coagulant into the bloodstream to prevent a haemorrhage, in case of a severe injury.
7. The bronchi are dilated to absorb more oxygen.
8. Glucose is injected by the liver to give muscles the necessary energy at that moment.
9. Intense sweating occurs in all parts of the body but mainly in the palms of the hands. This gets rid of the excess heat being generated in the body.
10. The whole body is set on a maximum alert status and gets ready to "fight" or "escape" (flight).

When stress is maintained at low intensity, it does not affect the body. On the contrary, it helps the person to be active. We all need a certain amount of stress! The problem comes when it is excessive and for extended periods of time. In this case, it consumes a person's vital energy and this is what wears away one's life and stability.

Common warning symptoms of stress

Frequent headaches, accelerated or strong heartbeats, hypertension, muscular aches in the neck, nape or back, anxiety, anguish or a desire to cry, tiredness, fatigue or weakness, insomnia,

nightmares, depression or sadness, gastritis, stomach ulcers caused by nerves, allergies or asthma caused by nerves, impotence and frigidity.

To eliminate stress, the following is recommended:

- a) **Handle thoughts and attitudes correctly.** Think positively, adopt positive attitudes. Watch how you interpret circumstances of life. We act and feel the way we think! Reject fear, anxiety, guilt, resentment, sadness, anger, depression etc.
- b) **An adequate diet rich in nutrients** like vitamins B1, B3 (niacin), B5, B6 and B12, C, E and D, folic acid (green vegetables),

biotin, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

- c) **Adequate rest** mainly through deep relaxation.
- d) **Daily exercise.** Brisk walks, running, aerobics, swimming at least 30 mins a day.
- e) **High quality nutritional supplements.** Royal Jelly (for more effectiveness, place under the tongue until it dissolves.), Bee Pollen, Aloe Vera Gel, Berry Nectar, Absorbent C, Lycium Plus.

References

1. Google
2. Guide to Natural Remedies



for Health and Well-Being by Enrique Garza Gutierrez

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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Bukola Salami: Accomplished nurse researcher and global change agent

By Ola Aboderin



Professor Bukola Oladunni Salami

On Saturday, 25 July 2020, Professor Bukola Oladunni Salami was announced as an inductee in the International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame - the highest research award in Nursing. The award, conferred by the Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing (Sigma), recognises nurses, "who have achieved significant and sustained recognition for their work and whose research has impacted the profession and the people it serves." Interestingly, not only was Salami the only African on the list of awardees for that year, she was also the only nominee from Canada, where she is based.

Regarded as one of the most influential nurse leaders, whose research efforts are not only helping to advance the profession but also driving social change around the world, Salami is a professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Canada. Prior to her academic career, she was a paediatric oncology nurse and subsequently an inter-professional educator at the New Immigrant Support Network of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Salami's research efforts focus on policies and practices shaping migrants' health. She is particularly interested in how the intersection of gender, race, class, nationality and immigration status influences the health of vulnerable migrant and racialised groups, as well as the policy and practice implications. She is the principal investigator for the Health and Immigration Policies and Practices (HIPP) Research

Programme, which seeks to address the decline in immigrant health, by focusing on the health of the most vulnerable groups of immigrants, including those with precarious migration status.

More importantly, Salami has an interest in global health research, especially in West Africa. She is particularly loved by the academic community of nurses in Nigeria, her home country. She has featured as a guest in numerous nursing academic conferences and workshops in the country. She was a guest speaker at the Institute of Nursing Research of Nigeria's International Scientific Conference, held in 2021, where she spoke on "Policy, Politics and the Nursing Profession: Positioning Nursing Research to Shape and Influence Policy." Participants at the conference recall her charging them: "We have to change our orientation to nursing leadership and administration in Nigeria to be able to position ourselves as influencers in the field and as leaders in the healthcare service."

Earlier, in November 2012, she presented a paper at the National Association of Nigerian Nurses in North America Conference, in Newark, New Jersey, on "Health human resource in Nigeria: Navigating challenges and opportunities."

Indefatigable researcher

Salami has been involved in over 90 funded research projects. She has led research projects on vaccine confidence among Black Canadians, COVID 19 disinformation among Black Canadians, African immigrant

child health, immigrant mental health, access to healthcare for immigrant children, Black youth mental health, strengthening intersectional research methodology, environmental scan of equity seeking organisations in Alberta, international nurse migration, immigrant child mental health, the experiences of live-in caregivers and care recipients, the experiences of temporary foreign workers, internally displaced people, and parenting practices of African immigrants.

As one of the most published Black health researchers in Canada, she has over 110 papers in peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, she is on the editorial board of Nursing Inquiry and Qualitative Health Research Journal. She is also a guest editor for the International Journal of Environmental and Public Health Research and the Regional Climate Change Journal. She is equally an editor for the Canadian Medical Association Journal and the Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, as well as being on the advisory board of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research Institutes for Human Development, Child and Youth Health.

Unstoppable change agent

Salami constantly engages with and presents her research efforts to policy makers (including twice to the Prime Minister of Canada and once to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health) for needed actions. Unsurprisingly, her research has led to several positive policy and programme initiatives, including contributing to the establishment of a Black mental health clinic by Africa Centre, the largest pan African non-profit organisation in western Canada.

Salami founded and currently leads the African Child and Youth Migration Network of 40 scholars from four continents, focused on improving the wellbeing of African children and youths globally. In 2020, she founded the Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Programme at the University of Alberta. It was the first university-based interdisciplinary mentorship programme for Black youths in Western Canada - the goal of which is to empower Black youths socially and economically so they can contribute meaningfully to Canadian society.

Earlier, in 2017, she organised the first research stakeholder engagement day for African immigrants in Alberta. Also, between 2015 and 2016, she was a collaborating researcher at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and has presented to international policy makers (including representatives of United Nations, International Organisation for Migration, World Health Organisation) on migration and precarity.

In addition to her research,

advocacy, and community engagement, Salami teaches courses on immigrant health, health policy, community health, global health and programme planning and evaluation. She has mentored or trained over 100 students as graduate students and research assistants, as well as over 100 high school students, many of whom have received prestigious awards.

Background and education

Salami was born and raised in Nigeria, where she had her early education, until the age of 16 (in 1997), when she migrated with her parents to Canada. She initially planned to study Medicine. However, while participating in the University of Toronto's Summer Mentorship Programme, she met a nurse who influenced her to follow what she has now come to realise as her true destiny path. According to her, once she got a glimpse of what Nursing entailed, "there was no turning back".

Salami obtained her bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in 2004. Four years later, she obtained a master's degree in Nursing Administration from the University of Toronto. She began her PhD in Nursing, soon after, in September 2008 and completed it in December 2013.

She also completed the Ontario Training Centre in Health Service and Policy Research Collaborative Programme, the International Nursing PhD programme, as well as the Critical Qualitative Health Research Certificate Programme. She joined the faculty of the University of Alberta, as an associate professor, in June 2014.

Awards and recognitions

Prof. Salami has received several awards for research excellence and community engagement. These include her recognition as one of the 100 Accomplished Black Women in Canada, as well as the Emerging Nurse Researcher of the Year Award, by the Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing.

Others are Award for Nursing Excellence by the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA); the Rosalind Smith Professional Award by the National Black Coalition of Canada - Edmonton Chapter; as well as her selection as one of Alberta Avenue Edmonton Top 40 under 40. In 2021, she became a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Nursing. That same year, she received the Killam Accelerator Award (a \$225,000 value for research) given to the best early career researcher at the University of Alberta.

In 2022, she was named among the Top 25 Canadian Immigrants. In 2023, she was a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal recipient and became a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

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Handling rejection

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)

One major reason many who have experienced rejection break down is because of the sense of guilt that accompanies it. The entire situation points accusing fingers at the victim as being the one responsible for his or her plight because some issues had been mismanaged.

The first question you ask yourself is, "What did I do wrong?" Or "Where did I miss it?" Therefore, there is a quest for the person affected to get closure on why he or she was rejected by the family, friend, fiancé, organisation or group. This can take decades to resolve.

The unfortunate part is that, at times, we can keep making the same mistakes, attracting the same set of wrong people along the journey, while we are trying to find answers to why we are experiencing what we are experiencing. Sometimes, we even try to justify or cover up the hidden insecurities in our lives, such as the need for validation and acceptance, by our benevolence and selfless demeanors. None of these will really help us get closure, until we deal with the root cause.

There is that feeling of inadequacy that makes you question the reason why it was you among everyone that got replaced. Even if there was a justifiable reason for that, you do not want to accept it.

By default, many, at such moments, blame themselves for their predicament. Their rational or logical minds cannot be said to be adequately in top gear to analyse issues; and so, without thinking twice, they shoulder the responsibility.

Unfortunately, many times, what we consider as rejection isn't actually rejection but two other options instead. These other options, which might be a better approach to handling this challenge, informed my decision to write this piece.

You are not alone

Everyone has experienced one form of rejection or the other before and there are myriads of examples or cases that can be cited. However, it is important for me to state clearly here that an offence is best defined by the offended, not the offender. In other words, that you call it rejection is still traceable to your own definition of the matter because to another person, it may just be an event. So, in the real sense of it, rejection is relative.

Triggers of rejection

One vivid example that readily comes to my mind among a number of cases I experienced what may be considered as rejection

happened some decades ago while I was in the primary school. It was the culture annually to have a Christmas celebration and as part of the activities lined up, there was usually a re-enactment of the Nativity story of how the baby Jesus was honoured as king, by the three wise men who brought him gifts. There were other crafted stories which were not necessarily in the Bible but somehow further added colour to the entire story.

In that year, I was meant to play the role of the "drummer boy" - a fictitious character who loved the baby Jesus so much that he gave him his most priceless possession — his drum. I had been told that, in the previous

year, a former pupil of the school interpreted the character so well that, were it not that he had graduated, the school authority would have asked him to come play that role again. So, already, there was a lot of pressure I was contending with as a youngster. I knew I needed to rehearse a lot and master the script so well.

The first few days of the rehearsals were a bit challenging because I was just trying to find my feet at the time and really fall into character but, without sounding exaggerative, some of the teachers started feeling confident in the fact that I might just be a good replacement for their star actor, who had graduated from the school...



To be continued in the next edition.



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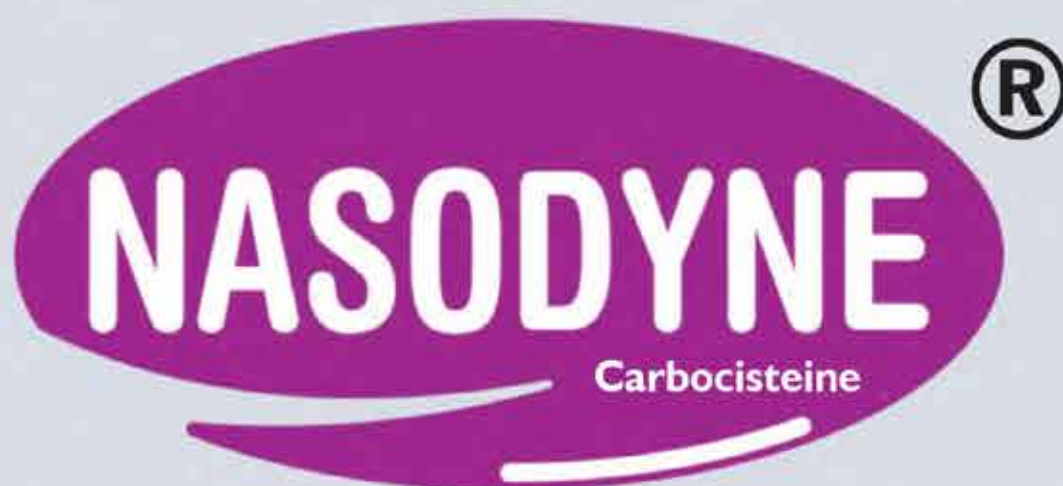
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Management of pain, rheumatism and arthritis



Pain is the result of tissue damage that allows the body to react to and prevent harm. It is usually referred to as physical sensation. It suggests a sudden sharp twinge. Indeed, pain, ache, agony, and anguish are terms usually used for sensations that cause suffering or torment.

Dr Mun Fei Yam of the Department of Human Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, and co-researchers, in their study titled, "General Pathways of Pain Sensation and the Major Neurotransmitters Involved in Pain Regulation", defined pain as a distressing sensation, as well as an emotional experience that is linked to actual or potential tissue damage, with the sole purpose of notifying the body's defence mechanism to react towards a stimulus, in order to avoid further tissue damage.

The United States National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke describes pain as an unpleasant signal that something hurts. According to the institute, pain is a complex experience that differs greatly from person to person, even between those with similar injuries and/or illnesses. It can also be very mild, almost unnoticeable, or explosive.

People feel pain when signals travel through nerve fibres to the

brain for interpretation and this is why pain is considered the sensation that we feel as a reaction to the stimulus of our surroundings. There are various ways to feel and describe pain. This variation can, in some cases, make it challenging to define and treat pain. Pain can be short- or long-term; it can stay in one place or spread around the body.

Causes of pain

Most pain comes from tissue damage - that is, when the body's tissues are injured. The injury can be to the bone, soft tissue, or organs. It can also come from a disease such as cancer. Or it can come from a physical injury, like a cut or a broken bone. According to Dr Kevin Martinez, a certified American family medicine physician, people feel pain when specific nerves called nociceptors detect tissue damage and transmit information about the damage along the spinal cord to the brain.

For example, touching a hot surface will send a message through a reflex arc in the spinal cord and cause an immediate contraction of the muscles. The contraction will pull the hand away from the hot surface, limiting further damage. This reflex occurs before the message reaches the brain. Once the pain message arrives, it causes an individual to feel an unpleasant sensation, which is pain.

The brain's interpretation of these signals and the efficiency of the communication channel between the nociceptors and the brain dictate how an individual experiences pain. The brain may also release feel-good chemicals, such as dopamine, to counter the unpleasant effects of pain.

Types of Pain

Pain can either be acute or chronic.

Acute pain

This type of pain is generally intense and short-lived. It is how the body alerts a person to an injury or localised tissue damage. Treating the underlying injury usually resolves acute pain. Acute pain triggers the body's fight-or-flight response, often resulting in faster heartbeats and breathing rates. There are different types of acute pain. **Somatic pain** happens when a person feels superficial pain on the skin or the soft tissues just below the skin; **referred pain** is one that originates in the internal organs and the linings of cavities in the body; **visceral pain** is felt at a location other than the source of tissue damage. For example, people often experience shoulder pain during a heart attack.

Chronic pain

This type of pain lasts far longer

than acute pain, and there is often no cure. Chronic pain can be mild or severe. It can also be continuous, such as in arthritis, or intermittent, as with a migraine episode. Intermittent pain occurs on repeated occasions but stops between flares. The fight-or-flight reactions eventually stops in people with chronic pain, as the sympathetic nervous system that triggers these reactions adapts to the pain stimulus.

There are other more specialised ways of describing pain. These include:

Neuropathic pain: This occurs following an injury to the peripheral nerves that connect the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body. It can feel like an electric shock or cause tenderness, numbness, tingling, or discomfort.

Phantom pain: This occurs after the amputation of a limb. It refers to painful sensations that feel as though they are coming from the missing limb.

Central pain: This often occurs due to infarction, abscesses, tumours, degeneration, or bleeding in the brain and spinal cord. Central pain is ongoing, ranging from mild to extremely severe. People with central pain report burning, aching, and pressing sensations. It is also important to know that the ability to describe pain can help a doctor provide a more specific diagnosis.

Diagnosis for pain

A patient's description of pain will help the doctor make a diagnosis. Since there is no objective scale for identifying the type of pain, the doctor will take a pain history. The doctor will also ask the patient to describe the character of the pain he is going through, such as burning, stinging, or stabbing; then the site, quality, and radiation of pain - that is, where a person feels the pain, what it feels like, and how far it seems to have

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PHARMANEWS IS BORN (2)

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

After some time, the National Executive Committee (NEC) decided that for the publication of the journal to continue, someone had to be assigned with the responsibility pending elections in November in Kaduna. It was then that Dr Femi Adebajo of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Ife, was appointed as the acting editor-in-chief.

Ironically, though, I had begun to again have the former feeling of emptiness that had been effaced by my devotedness to the journal. Still, I couldn't bring myself to return to service. It was as if the same power that had planted and tightly fastened the passion for the journal in me had become fully satisfied that the passion had achieved its purpose and, therefore, yanked it off with the same force with which it had planted it. And, so, the emptiness returned and remained, waiting for that precise preoccupation that would fill it up permanently.

Stronger Contractions

Shortly after, in my place of work, a greater storm began to gather. I already mentioned that it was Pharm. Ralph Mbagwu (RM), the manager

of the pharmaceutical department of R.T. Briscoe Pharmaceuticals, who had specifically invited me to join the company because he believed in my ability to stabilise the department

which had been experiencing a high turnover of pharmacists. And as I mentioned in the previous chapter, under him, I was able to attend various programmes of the Nigerian Institute

of Management (NIM) on sales, marketing, accounting and general management. As time went on, however, I observed that he refused to give me the opportunity of visiting our overseas principals in Denmark, Sweden, France, Italy and USA. Interestingly, on a number of occasions, he mentioned that I might visit Norwich Pharmaceuticals Inc. in New York. In fact, Pharm. Bade Adeniji, the national sales manager, used to joke with me on RM's promise of going to Norwich. Occasionally, RM would say, "Ifeanyi, if it becomes necessary, you just hop into the plane and go to New York."

Before now, I hadn't paid much attention to these shenanigans of my boss, but in this year, 1978, which had already begun to prove to be a momentous year in

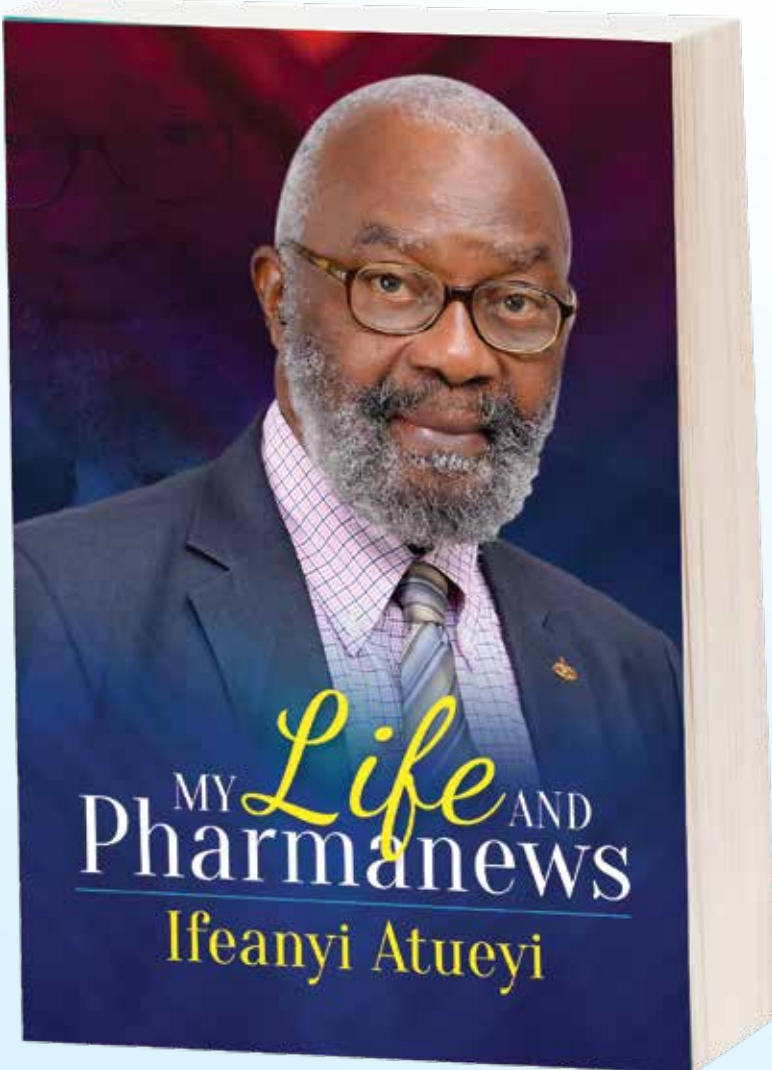
my life, things took a totally different turn. A friend and colleague of mine, Douglas Egbunu, who was the marketing manager of Pfizer

Products Ltd, introduced to me a six-week training programme on marketing management of the International Marketing Institute (IMI) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Douglas spoke highly of the potential benefits of this programme and I soon developed a great deal of interest in it.

Two other considerations fired up my interest in this programme. One was that I considered it a good opportunity for me to visit the US for the first time, having always known it as "God's own country". The other was that I saw it as a good opportunity to visit Norwich in New York, which RM had often promised me. So, without hesitation, I went ahead to apply for the course, which was to hold between June and July, and I received a reply that I had been accepted. What was left for me, therefore, was to meet the huge financial obligations, which comprised tuition and boarding expenses, as well as my flight ticket. The question that should naturally spring up in anyone's mind is, why did I apply for a programme that was going to cost so much without having any means of financing it? (Such overseas courses were usually sponsored by the employer).

All I can say in hindsight is that I was merely being propelled – and the very next step I took clearly confirms this. In a rather strange move, I wrote back to the organisers of the programme that I had no money to pay the tuition and needed their support. I wrote several letters, until I received a positive response that the institute had waived the tuition for me, which greatly gladdened me.

Continues next edition





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Management of pain, rheumatism and arthritis

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spread, what factors aggravate and relieve the pain, the times at which pain occurs throughout the day, its effect on the person's daily function and mood; simply put, the patient's understanding of their pain.

Several systems can identify and grade pain. However, the most important factor in getting an accurate diagnosis is clear communication between the individual and their doctor.

Measuring pain

Some of the pain measures that doctors use are:

Numerical rating scales: These measure pain on a scale of 0–10, where 0 means no pain at all, and 10 represents the worst pain imaginable. It is useful for gauging how pain levels change in response to treatment or a deteriorating condition.

Verbal descriptor scale: This scale may help a doctor measure pain levels in children with cognitive impairments, older adults, autistic people, and those with dyslexia. Instead of using numbers, the doctor asks different descriptive questions to narrow down the type of pain.

Faces scale: The doctor shows the person in pain a range of expressive faces from distressed to happy. Doctors mainly use this scale with children. The method has also shown effective responses in autistic people.

Brief pain inventory: This more detailed written questionnaire can help doctors gauge the effect of a person's pain on their mood, activity, sleep patterns, and interpersonal relationships. It also charts the timeline of the pain to detect any patterns.

McGill Pain Questionnaire (MPQ): The MPQ encourages people to choose words from 20-word groups to get an in-depth understanding of how the pain feels. Group 6, for example, is "tugging, pulling, wrenching," while group 9 is "dull, sore, hurting, aching, heavy."

Other indicators of pain

When people with cognitive impairments cannot accurately describe their pain, there can still be clear indicators. These include restlessness, crying, moaning and groaning, grimacing, resistance to care, reduced social interactions, increased wandering, not eating, and sleeping problems, among others. The doctor will either treat the underlying problem, if it is treatable, or prescribe pain-relieving treatment to manage the pain.

Treatment and management of pain

Doctors will treat different types of pain in different ways. A treatment that is effective against one type of pain may not relieve another.

Treatment for acute pain

Treating acute pain often involves taking medication. Oftentimes, this type of pain results from an underlying health issue, and treating it may relieve the pain without the need for pain management. For example, if a bacterial infection is causing a sore throat, antibiotics can treat the infection, easing the soreness as a result.

Using of acetaminophen: Acetaminophen is a type of analgesic, or pain reliever. It is an active ingredient in hundreds of medications, including over-the-counter and prescription drugs. Often known by the brand name Tylenol, acetaminophen can relieve pain and fever. Combined with other ingredients, it can help treat allergy symptoms, coughs, flu symptoms, and colds. Doctors often prescribe drugs that contain acetaminophen and other ingredients to treat moderate to severe pain. However, when taken

in higher doses, acetaminophen can cause serious liver damage. People should never exceed the recommended dosage.

Using Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): NSAIDs are another type of analgesic. They can reduce pain and help a person regain daily function. They are available over the counter or by prescription at a range of strengths. NSAIDs are suitable for minor acute pains, such as headaches, light sprains, and backaches. NSAIDs can relieve localised inflammation and pain that is due to swelling. These drugs may have side effects relating to the digestive system, including bleeding. Therefore, a doctor will monitor a person taking a high dosage. It is always important to read the packaging to check the maximum dosage and find out what is in an analgesic before taking it. People should never exceed the recommended dosage.

Opioids: Doctors prescribe these drugs for the most extreme acute pains, such as those that result from surgery, burns, cancer,

and bone fractures. Opioids are highly addictive, cause withdrawal symptoms, and lose effectiveness over time. They require a prescription. In situations involving severe trauma and pain, a doctor will carefully manage and administer the opioid dosage, gradually reducing the amount to minimise withdrawal symptoms. It is however advised that patients should discuss all medication options carefully with a doctor and disclose any health conditions and current medications. According to Dr Martinez, opioids may significantly affect the progression of several chronic diseases, which include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney disease, liver problems, previous substance use disorder, and dementia. Moreover, opioids can cause dangerous side-effects in people with certain chronic diseases. For instance, they can cause respiratory depression, which can exacerbate the symptoms of COPD.

Treatment for chronic pain

According to Dr Martinez, a range of non-drug therapies can help relieve the pain. These alternatives to

medication may be more suitable for people experiencing chronic pain. The therapies include:

Acupuncture: Inserting very fine needles at specific pressure points may reduce pain.

Nerve blocks: These injections can numb a group of nerves that act as a source of pain for a specific limb or body part.

Psychotherapy: Chronic pain often reduces the enjoyment of everyday activities and makes working difficult. Also, studies have found that chronic pain can lead to depression, and depression intensifies chronic pain. A psychotherapist can help a person implement changes to minimize the intensity of pain and build coping skills.

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS): TENS aims to stimulate the brain's opioid and pain gate systems, thus providing relief.

Surgery: Various surgeries on the nerves, brain, and spine are possible for treating chronic pain. These include rhizotomy, decompression, and electrical deep brain and spinal cord stimulation

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Management of pain, rheumatism and arthritis

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procedures.

Biofeedback: Through this mind-body technique, a person can learn to control their organs and automatic processes, such as their heart rate, with their thoughts more effectively. Virtual reality may now play a role in the use of biofeedback in pain management, according to 2019 research.

Relaxation therapies: These include a wide range of controlled relaxation techniques and exercises, mostly in the realm of alternative and complementary medicine. A person can try hypnosis, yoga, meditation, massage therapy, distraction techniques, tai chi, or a combination of these practices.

Physical manipulation: A physiotherapist or chiropractor can sometimes help relieve pain by manipulating the tension from a person's back.

Physical therapy: Physical therapy exercises can aid in mobility and may help relieve chronic pain.

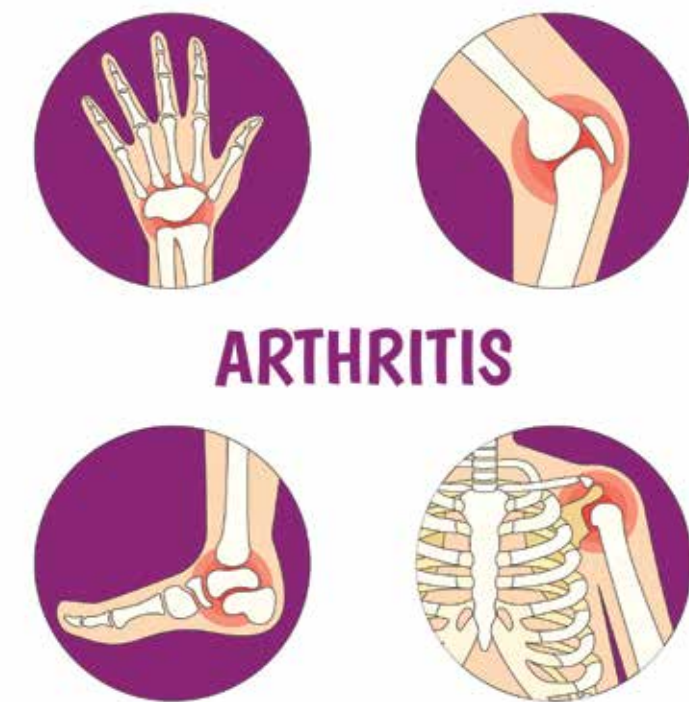
Heat and cold: Using hot and cold packs can help. People can alternate these or select them according to the type of injury or pain. Some topical medications have a warming effect when a person applies them to the affected area.

Rest: If pain occurs due to an injury or overworking a part of the body, rest may be the best option.

Rheumatism

The term rheumatism was used in historical contexts when referring to any of the vast array of inflammatory joint disorders. All medical practitioners however assert that the name is no longer in use in medical literature.

There are several diseases that are classified as rheumatic disorders. For instance, according to Dr Ananya



ARTHRITIS

Mandal, an associate professor at a Government Medical College in West Bengal, India, the term rheumatism is a loosely used layman term to describe rheumatoid arthritis and rheumatoid disorders and those conditions include those affecting muscles, joints, and bones. They are common and have a huge impact on the health of a vast population worldwide. People afflicted with rheumatic diseases are diagnosed and treated by rheumatologists who are trained in the field.

Rheumatoid disorders and symptoms

Rheumatoid disorders do not include osteoarthritis. Some of the disorders included are rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, gout,

scleroderma, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, Sjögren's syndrome, spondylarthritides, and polymyalgia rheumatic among others. Whereas, inflammatory joint disorders usually involve intense joint pain, swelling, stiffness, and fatigue experienced when the person is middle aged.

The National Health Institute of the U.S. noted that inflammatory rheumatic disorders affect over 7 million Americans and of these, 1.3 million adults have rheumatoid arthritis, and in Europe, more than 100 million people are estimated to be affected by

rheumatic diseases which is about one quarter of the whole population. The institute has also recorded that 322,000 adults have lupus and nearly 300,000 American children suffer from rheumatic diseases, the most common of which is juvenile idiopathic arthritis or juvenile rheumatoid

Arthritis

Arthritis is derived from the Greek word "arthro", meaning "joint," and "itis", meaning "inflammation." It is therefore generally referred to as "disease of the joints". Arthritis is a chronic or acute inflammation of joints, which is often accompanied by structural damage and pain. As earlier stated, medical literature does not generally use the term rheumatism

any longer. Instead, arthritis is commonly used to refer to such conditions. Arthritis is characterized by joint abnormalities, stiffness, and pain caused by inflammation.

According to the American Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, arthritis means inflammation or swelling of one or more joints and it describes more than 100 conditions that affect the joints, tissues around the joint, and other connective tissues. The US National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, on the other hand, describes arthritis to literally mean joint inflammation.

According to the Nigerian Orthopaedic Association (NOA), about 1.5 million Nigerians suffer from arthritis. Moreover, studies have also shown that while arthritis affects people of all ages, the likelihood increases with age. Nearly one in two people over 65 years have arthritis. People of working age are also affected by arthritis. Over half of the people with arthritis are under the age of 65.

Symptoms of Arthritis

Specific symptoms vary, depending on the type of arthritis, but usually include joint pain and stiffness. Due to the different types, symptoms experienced tend to vary. However, common symptoms include muscle weakness and wasting, limited mobility of the joints, joint stiffness, pain, sensitivity, inflammation of the joint and surrounding areas as well as warm skin covering the affected joint.

Diagnosis for Arthritis

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, an arm of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland USA, in addition to a complete medical history and physical examination, there are common laboratory tests that will help to detect arthritis which include:

continued on page 17

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Muscular Pain

Low Back Pain

Sprains & Strains

Osteoarthritis of Superficial Joints

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*Abbreviated Prescribing Information

VOLINI GEL (Diclofenac diethylamine, Linseed oil, Racemethol and Methyl Salicylate Gel)

INDICATIONS

VOLINI GEL is indicated for the local symptomatic relief of pain and inflammation in Trauma of the tendons, ligaments, muscles and joints, e.g. due to sprains, strains and bruises; Localized forms of soft tissue rheumatism; the treatment of osteoarthritis of superficial joints such as the knee.

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* Ref: Volini Gel prescribing information



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NAFDAC declares war on drug hawking, artificial fruit-ripening

continued from page 1

who use calcium carbide to ripen fruits, saying such practice exposes undiscerning consumers to different ailments, such as cancer, kidney problems, sleeping disorders, mouth ulcers, skin rashes, and many more.

Calcium carbide, also known as calcium acetylide, is a chemical compound, majorly for industrial use in the production of acetylene and calcium cyanamide. It is alkaline in nature and, when abused as a fruit-ripening agent, erodes the mucosal tissue in the abdominal region and disrupts intestinal functions.

Speaking in Lagos, at the flag-off of the recent media sensitisation workshop on the dangers of drug hawking and ripening of fruits with carbide, NAFDAC Director General, Prof. Moji Adeyeye, warned people in the illegal businesses to stop forthwith, as anyone caught henceforth will be prosecuted.

Adeyeye, who was represented by Dr Leonard Omokpariola, director, Chemical Evaluation and Research, said, "Drugs are sensitive, life-saving commodities, which should not be sold on the streets, motor parks or open markets just like any other article of trade. I wish to warn that any drug hawker arrested by NAFDAC will be prosecuted, will face a jail term, and our enforcement officers are currently carrying out synchronised, nationwide operation. No offender will be spared from facing the full wrath of the law.

The NAFDAC boss further described drug hawkers as merchants of death, who expose essential and life-saving medicines to the vagaries of inclement weather, which degrade their active ingredients and turn them to poisons, thus endangering human lives.

She stated that such unscrupulous individuals not only sell over-the-counter drugs but also prescription drugs, while also holding consultation, recommending and prescribing medicines to their gullible "patients".

Adeyeye equally described drug hawkers as a serious threat to national security, especially as many have been identified as major distributors and suppliers of narcotic medicines to criminal networks, such as bandits, insurgents, kidnappers and armed robbers.

On the menace of artificial ripening of fruits, Adeyeye urged the press, as well as members of the public, to collaborate with the agency by reporting such practice in their neighbourhood, in order to rid the nation of the menace.

Explaining further, Adeyeye said: "Fruits provide the body with micronutrients that improve immunity and prevent diseases among other benefits. Fruit ripening is a unique aspect of plant development, which makes the fruit edible, softer, sweeter, more palatable, nutritious, and attractive.

"However, the consumption of fruits ripened with calcium carbide is dangerous to health. You can identify such artificially ripened fruits if you notice that the fruits is all yellow, whereas the stem is dark. This is especially true for banana and plantain.

"In addition, naturally ripened



L-R: Dr Abubakar Jimoh, director, Public Affairs, NAFDAC; Dr Rametu O. Momodu, director, Pharmacovigilance and Post Marketing Surveillance, NAFDAC; Prof. Moji Adeyeye, DG, NAFDAC; and Dr Leonard Omokpariola, director, Chemical Evaluation and Research, NAFDAC, at the workshop.

fruits usually have brown or black spots, while those artificially ripened have traces of powdery substances and peel off quickly", she disclosed.

Disclosing the motive for the workshop, Director of Public Affairs, NAFDAC, Dr Abubakar Jimoh, noted that sanitising the food and drug

industries is significantly about attitudinal change, as it has to do with dismantling wrong orientation and culture imbibed for several years. He said this requires a consistent approach to overcome.

He implored all stakeholders to cooperate with NAFDAC to win

the battle against drug hawking and artificial ripening of fruits.

"In this regard, we solicit the co-operation and support of all other law enforcement agencies, Nigerian journalists and well-meaning Nigerians in ridding the country of this harmful and shameful practices", he pleaded.

Localise regulation of Nigerian pharma industry, Mopson boss charges NAFDAC

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



Pharm. (Dr) Michael Oyebanjo Paul MD, Mopson Pharmaceutical Ltd



Prof. Kunle Olobayo

Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT). We need to localise our regulations because the environment in Nigeria is different from that of Europe."

Corroborating Paul's position, Chairman of the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD)'s Committee on COVID-19, Prof. Kunle Olobayo, stated that any country can create its own standards, bearing in mind its peculiarities. He, however, said such standards must conform to global standards.

According to him, "It is in Africa that the World Health Organisation is receiving praise. It is in Africa that the WHO is being glorified. In Europe and other advanced

countries, nobody cares about the WHO. The reason Africa is praising and glorifying the WHO is because Africa always look for grants from the organisation.

"The WHO doesn't set specific standards for any country, and it doesn't have a 'standards body' that sets standards anywhere in the world. So, any country can set its own standards, based on its environment and peculiarities. The most important thing is that the standards any country sets must be in conformity with global standards."

Olobayo added that what the WHO usually does on any health or pharmaceutical matter is to provide guidelines. Such guidelines, he said, can be adapted by any country to set its own standards, as considered suitable.

The Managing Director, Mopson Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. (Dr) Michael Oyebanjo Paul, has called on the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to localise the regulation of the pharmaceutical industry, by setting standards that are suitable for the country.

Rather than regulating the industry based on the standards set in Western nations, the Mopson Pharma boss pointed out that the regulation in Nigeria needs to be localised because the local environment is different from those of other continents.

Speaking at a recent symposium, held at the University of Lagos, Paul lamented that the Nigerian pharma industry is over-regulated, adding

that it has become very difficult for manufacturers of pharma products to get their products registered.

The Mopson boss, who was also the event's chairman, spoke on the topic, "Pharmaceutical products development and commercialisation in Sub-Saharan Africa".

He said, "NAFDAC can set its own standard for the country so that the local industry will follow it. The DG of NAFDAC is a professor of Pharmacy, with several decades of experience in Pharmacy; so I believe she has what it takes,

"She has successfully taken NAFDAC to a level, where it is being recognised and certified by WHO as a well-functioning and integrated regulatory system maturity level 3 rating scale of the

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Management of pain, rheumatism and arthritis

continued from page 15

Antinuclear antibody: This test measures blood levels of various antibodies, which may be present in persons with some types of arthritis.

Arthrocentesis (also called joint aspiration): This is an examination of joint fluid. A thin needle is inserted into the joint. Synovial fluid is removed with a syringe and examined for cell counts, crystal analysis, culture, and other tests.

Complement tests: This test measures the level of complement, a group of proteins in the blood. It is used to help diagnose and monitor systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and rheumatoid arthritis.

Complete blood count: Measures the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets present in a sample of blood. A low white blood count (leukopenia), low red blood count (anemia), or low platelet count (thrombocytopenia) are associated with some forms of arthritis or the medications to treat them.

Creatinine: This is a blood test to monitor for underlying kidney disease.

C-reactive protein: This is a protein that is elevated when there is inflammation in the body as in some types of arthritis.

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (also called ESR or sed rate): This measures how quickly red blood cells fall to the bottom of a test tube. It is also elevated when there is inflammation in the body. This occurs in some types of arthritis.

Haematocrit (PCV, packed cell volume): Measures the number of red blood cells present in a sample of blood. Low levels of red blood cells (anemia) are common in people with some types of arthritis.

Rheumatoid factor: Checks for an antibody that is present in most people with rheumatoid arthritis.

Urinalysis: Laboratory examination of urine to check for kidney disease that may be associated with several types of arthritis.

Uric acid: It is elevated in gout.

Imaging techniques to diagnose arthritis

Imaging techniques may give healthcare providers a clearer picture of what is happening to the joint(s). The common and useful imaging techniques may include the following

X-ray: X-rays may show joint changes and bone damage found in some types of arthritis. Other imaging tests may also be done.

Ultrasound: Ultrasound uses sound waves (not radiation) to see the quality of synovial tissue, tendons, ligaments, and bones.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI): MRI images are more detailed than X-rays. They may show damage to joints, including muscles, ligaments, and cartilage.

Arthroscopy. This procedure uses a thin tube containing a light and camera (arthroscope) to look inside the joint. The arthroscope is inserted into the joint through a small incision. Images of the inside of the joint are projected onto a screen. It is used to evaluate any degenerative and/or arthritic changes in the joint; to detect bone diseases and tumors; to determine the cause of bone pain and inflammation, and to treat certain conditions.

Types of arthritis

There are different types of arthritis. The US National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases identifies several types of arthritis. The common ones include **spondylitis** - a type of arthritis that causes inflammation in the joints and ligaments of the spine; **Gout** occurs as flares, typically in your big toe or a lower limb; **juvenile idiopathic arthritis** is the most common type of chronic arthritis that affects children;



osteoarthritis - common type of arthritis and is more common in older people; **psoriatic arthritis** - occurs in people who have psoriasis (scaly red and white skin patches). It affects the skin, joints, and areas where tissues attach to bone; **reactive arthritis** - caused by an infection in the body. Symptoms often clear up on their own within a few weeks or months; **Rheumatoid arthritis** is an autoimmune form of arthritis where the immune system attacks the healthy joint tissues.

The U.S CDC has identified six major types of arthritis. They are osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis (ra), gout, childhood arthritis, and lupus

Osteoarthritis (OA): Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It is caused by damage or breakdown of joint cartilage between bones. Some people call it a degenerative joint disease or "wear and tear" arthritis. It occurs most frequently in the hands, hips, and knees; the cartilage within a joint begins to break down and the underlying bone begins to change. These changes usually develop slowly and get worse over time. OA can cause pain, stiffness, and swelling. In some cases, it also causes reduced function and disability such that some people are no longer able to do daily tasks or work. The signs and symptoms of OA include pain or aching, stiffness, decreased range of motion (or flexibility), and swelling. According to the U.S. CDC, osteoarthritis affects over 32.5 million U.S. adults.

Fibromyalgia: Fibromyalgia is a condition that causes pain all over the body (also referred to as widespread pain), sleep problems, fatigue, and often emotional and mental distress. People with fibromyalgia may be more sensitive to pain than people without fibromyalgia. This is called abnormal pain perception processing.

The most common symptoms of fibromyalgia are pain and stiffness all over the body, fatigue and tiredness, depression and anxiety, sleep problems, problems with thinking, memory, and concentration, and headaches, including migraines. Other symptoms may include tingling or numbness in hands and feet, pain in the face or jaw, including disorders of the jaw, known as temporomandibular joint syndrome (also known as TMJ), Digestive problems, such as abdominal pain, bloating, constipation, and even irritable bowel syndrome (also known as IBS).

The cause of fibromyalgia is not known, but it can be effectively treated and managed. Fibromyalgia can be effectively treated and managed with medication and self-management strategies. Meanwhile, doctors usually treat fibromyalgia with a combination of treatments, which may include: medications, including prescription drugs and over-the-counter pain relievers, Aerobic exercise and muscle-strengthening exercise may also help.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA): Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune and inflammatory

disease, which means that your immune system attacks healthy cells in your body by mistake, causing inflammation (painful swelling) in the affected parts of the body. RA mainly attacks the joints, usually many joints at once. RA commonly affects joints in the hands, wrists, and knees. In a joint with RA, the lining of the joint becomes inflamed, causing damage to joint tissue. This tissue damage can cause long-lasting or chronic pain, unsteadiness (lack of balance), and deformity (misshapeness). It can also affect other tissues throughout the body and cause problems in organs such as the lungs, heart, and eyes.

Basically, the signs and symptoms of Rheumatoid arthritis include: Pain or aching in more than one joint, stiffness in more than one joint, tenderness and swelling in more than one joint, the same symptoms on both sides of the body (such as in both hands or both knees), weight loss, fever, fatigue or tiredness and weakness. With RA, there are times when symptoms get worse, known as flares, and times when symptoms get better, known as remission.

Diagnosis for RA: RA is diagnosed by reviewing symptoms, conducting a physical examination, and doing X-rays and lab tests. It's best to diagnose RA within 6 months of the onset of symptoms so that people with the disease can begin treatment to slow or stop disease progression (for example, damage to joints). Diagnosis and effective treatments, particularly treatment to suppress or control inflammation, can help reduce the damaging effects of RA.

Treatment for RA: RA can be effectively treated and managed with medication(s) and self-management strategies. Treatment for RA usually includes the use of medications that slow the disease and prevent joint deformity, called disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs); biological response modifiers (biologics) are medications that are an effective second-line treatment. In addition to medications, people can manage their RA with self-management strategies proven to reduce pain and disability, allowing them to pursue the activities important to them. People with RA can relieve pain and improve joint function by learning to use five simple and effective arthritis management strategies.

Gout: Gout is a common form of inflammatory arthritis that is very painful. It usually affects one joint at a time (often the big toe joint). There are times when symptoms get worse, known as flares, and times when there are no symptoms, known as remission. Repeated bouts of gout can lead to gouty arthritis, a worsening form of arthritis. There is no cure for gout, but you can effectively treat and manage the condition with medication and self-management strategies. Gout is caused by a condition known as hyperuricemia, where there is too much uric acid in the body. The body makes uric acid when it breaks down purines, which are found in your body and the foods you eat.

Symptoms: The signs and symptoms of gout may be easy to identify and this is because gout flares start suddenly and can last days or weeks. These flares are followed

by long periods without symptoms before another flare begins. Gout usually occurs in only one joint at a time. It is often found in the big toe. Along with the big toe, joints that are commonly affected are the lesser toe joints, the ankle, and the knee. Symptoms in the affected joint(s) may include pain, usually intense, swelling, redness, and heat.

Diagnosis and treatment: A medical doctor diagnoses gout by assessing symptoms and the results of physical examination, X-rays, and lab tests. Gout can only be diagnosed during a flare when a joint is hot, swollen, and painful and when a lab test finds uric acid crystals in the affected joint.

Treatment: Gout can be effectively treated and managed with medical treatment and self-management strategies. Your healthcare provider may recommend a medical treatment plan to manage the pain of a flare. Treatment for flares consists of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen, steroids, and the anti-inflammatory drug colchicine.

Childhood Arthritis: Arthritis in children is called childhood arthritis or juvenile arthritis. The most common type of childhood arthritis is juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), also known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Childhood arthritis can cause permanent physical damage to joints. This damage can make it hard for the child to do everyday things like walking or dressing and can result in disability. Although there is no cure, some children with arthritis achieve permanent remission, which means the disease is no longer active. Any physical damage to the joint will remain.

Signs and symptoms: Symptoms may come and go over time. There may be times when symptoms get worse, known as flares, and times when symptoms get better, known as remission. Signs and symptoms include joint pain, swelling, fever, stiffness, rash, fatigue (tiredness), loss of appetite, inflammation of the eye, and difficulty with daily living activities such as walking, dressing, and playing. Childhood arthritis is diagnosed through a physical examination and review of symptoms, X-rays, and lab tests.

Lupus: Lupus is another type of arthritis that can affect people of all ages, races, and ethnicities. The signs and symptoms mimic those of other diseases, making it hard to diagnose. It is a chronic, autoimmune disease that affects many different parts of the body. An autoimmune disease occurs when the body's immune system attacks itself because it cannot tell the difference between healthy tissue and foreign invaders, such as bacteria and viruses.

Symptoms and treatment: Lupus symptoms can show up in many different ways and are often mistaken for symptoms of other diseases. This is why it can be hard to diagnose and is often called "the great imitator." Lupus symptoms can range from mild to life threatening, so early diagnosis and treatment by a rheumatologist are important. Although there is no cure for lupus, it can be managed with proper treatment, and people with lupus can go on to live long, happy lives. The goals of treatment are to manage current symptoms, prevent future flares, and prevent damage to joints and organs by calming the immune system.

Report compiled by Ranmilowo Ojalumo, with additional report from News Medical lifescience, National Library of Medicine, the United States National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Medical News Today, Arthritis Foundation of America, Business Day, Nigeria Ministry of health, The U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The U. S. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and Nigerian Orthopaedic Association.

Anthrax prevention and control: A socio-economic perspective

By Patrick Iwelunmor

The recent outbreak of anthrax in West Africa has once again reminded health workers in the sub-region of the fact that infectious diseases can often spring up like bolts out of the blue. While the disease was reported in Ghana in June 2023, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has also confirmed one case with mixed livestock in Niger State. What this portends for Nigeria is that, going by its contagiousness, the disease could spread to other states, if the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders do not swing into action to put in place stringent preventive measures.

Interestingly, Nigeria is undergoing some socio-economic challenges, especially with the removal of subsidy from premium motor spirit (PMS). This singular development is impacting lives and livelihoods in very harsh and unpredictable ways. Prices of food and transportation have spiked in a matter of days, with filling stations now selling fuel for N617.

Without mincing words, food insecurity is one of the outcomes of this development, as farmers now pay more to move their harvests from one point to another. Thus, only the very affluent can afford most of the food items in the market. For the poor masses, they have to keep improvising. Many Nigerians who cannot afford beef or chicken often resort to the consumption of cowhide popularly known as *ponmo* in southwestern Nigeria, *ganda* in northern Nigeria, and *akpupko* in eastern Nigeria.

With experts in the health sector warning against the indiscriminate consumption of bush meat and cowhide because of anthrax's propensity to infect humans, the Nigerian masses must apply extra caution or better still tame their appetite for the aforementioned animal products. It is important to state here that Nigeria could be in for a very tough campaign, if the economic status of most of its citizens is anything to go by. With hunger and starvation staring a larger chunk of the nation's population in the face, any campaign against the indiscriminate consumption of bush meat and cowhide may not make the desired impact and the consequences could be catastrophic.

Moreover, the fact that cowhide is more popular with the lower class in Nigeria makes the matter even more complicated. How can one convince an illiterate bricklayer or carpenter not to eat this animal product because of the need to prevent the spread of anthrax when it is the most affordable option available to him? Going by their

psychographics, this class of Nigerians are usually opinionated and fixated on myths and assumptions, rather than on facts and reality. They are also the same reason peddlers of fake and substandard medical products are having a field day in the Nigerian drug market.

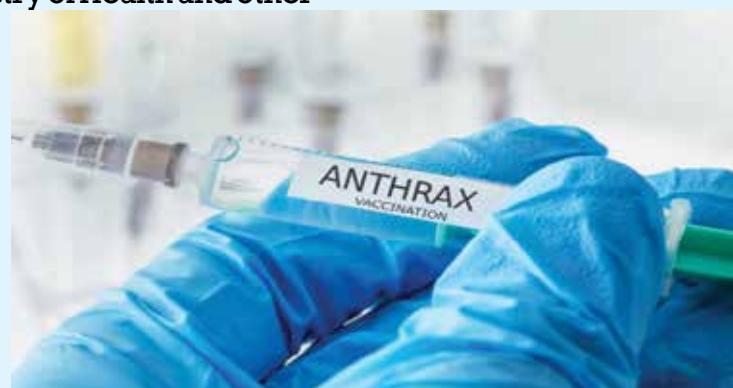
One of the highlights of the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index survey, released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), is that, in Nigeria, 40.1 per cent of the people are poor, according to the

2018/19 national monetary poverty line, and 63 per cent are multidimensionally poor, according to the National MPI 2022. According to the survey, multidimensional poverty is higher in rural areas, where 72 per cent of people are poor, compared to 4 per cent of people in urban areas. These startling indicators therefore call for urgent intervention from government in the form of making efforts to improve the standard of living of its citizens, especially those in the lower rungs of its socio-economic ladder.

Beyond anthrax, government must realise that it cannot win the battle against any infectious disease in a season of anomie, when the primary focus of most citizens is survival. Most families are more interested in what they will eat and not the whole heck of guarding themselves against the spread of one infectious disease that many of them believe is a scam, just as COVID-19 was tagged, despite the many deaths it caused in Nigeria and abroad.

All those directly involved in ensuring that anthrax does not spread in Nigeria must think out of the box this time around and answer the following pertinent questions. How do they expect to reach their target audiences with their message? What level of impact will the message make in the minds of these audiences? Is this the right time to tell people not to eat a class of food in order to safeguard their wellbeing? Is Nigeria prepared to respond to another infectious disease pandemic, if it turns out?

Finally, this writer wishes to use this medium to appeal to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to bring strategic changes in the Nigerian health ecosystem. Let technocrats of international repute be saddled with the task of driving the affairs of this sector. There are certain sectors that you don't play politics with. Health is one of them.



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Dance off stress and Parkinson's disease

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



Dancing is an activity with immense health benefits that are too good to ignore. Researchers have found that dancing helps to improve aerobic capacity, enhance higher muscular endurance, aid higher flexibility, and ensure better agility.

It has also been established that dancing will improve the condition of people with Parkinson's disease. Dancing has also been linked with the enhancement of the condition of the heart and lungs, which makes it an irresistible activity.

Dance is an art form, consisting of sequences of body movements, with aesthetic and often symbolic value, either improvised or purposefully selected. It can also be categorised and described by its composition, its repertoire of movements, or by its historical period or place of origin.

Contrary to the impression of frivolity that dancing may evoke, it is, in fact, an athletic activity because it requires skill and can be competitive. Experts have also argued that many athletes who participate in other sports take dance classes to enhance flexibility and agility. Moreover, dancing requires a strong mental capacity in order to remember composition and transition from movement to movement.

Sports require rules, equipment, and referees to ensure fair play. Dancing contests therefore readily fit into this description as they also require the stipulations.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has actually recognised dancing as a sport. Thus, there is presently what is known as dancesport. Indeed, there is an international body known as the World DanceSport Federation that now has 89-member national federations around the world, with 71 countries participating in the most recent World Championships. DanceSport was granted full recognition by the 106th Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on 4 September 1997, with all the rights and obligations that it entails.

DanceSport was part of the events for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in meBuenos Aires. The IOC has also confirmed that

DanceSport has officially been added to the medal events programme at the 2024 Paris Games.

Beyond sport

However, much more significant than the categorisation of dancing as a sport are the numerous health benefits associated with it. According to Danielle Hildreth, a certified nurse in New York, dancing is a great way to improve fitness and burn calories. In fact, research shows that dancing burns around 300 calories per hour. This makes it a great workout option for busy individuals.

Meanwhile, a study conducted in Sweden and published in 2021 has revealed that dancing improves the condition of people with Parkinson's disease. The study is titled, "The Impact of Dance Activities on the Health of Persons with Parkinson's Disease in Sweden".

Three researchers, namely Gyrling T., Ljunggren M., and Karlsson S., observed that Parkinson's disease (PD) is associated with motor and non-motor symptoms that negatively influence a person's quality of life. Therefore, the purpose of the study, according to the researchers, was to reduce illness and increase quality of life and to find out if alternative treatments for Parkinson's disease, such as dance, might be beneficial. The study also sought to explore experiences of how a dance programme in Sweden influenced perceived physical, social, and emotional wellbeing in persons with Parkinson's disease.

In the study, interviews were conducted with persons with Parkinson's, who participated in a dance programme in the south of Sweden. The inclusion criteria were persons with Parkinson's, who participated in a dance programme once a week, with variations in age, sex, and duration of disease. Of the participating people, there were one man and nine women between the ages of 59 and 81 years. The duration of their diagnosis varied between four and 18 years.

At the end of the study, the results showed that dancing improved the health of people with Parkinson's. The study showed

that the people, after dancing, felt relaxed and excited, getting better sleep, and being able to move with more focus and freedom. The researchers therefore concluded that to reduce illness and increase the quality of life of persons with Parkinson's disease, it is important to investigate alternative treatment methods.

In addition, according to an agency in the Victorian Government's Department of Health of Australia, identified as "Better Health Channel", dancing is an enjoyable way to be more physically active and stay fit. The agency added that

dancing can be a way to stay fit for people of all ages, shapes, and sizes, adding that dancing has a wide range of physical and mental benefits.

Dancing, according to the agency, improves the condition of the heart and lungs; increases muscular strength, endurance, and motor fitness; increases aerobic fitness; improves muscle tone and strength; helps in weight management; enhances stronger bones; reduces the risk of osteoporosis; and enhances better coordination, agility and

flexibility.

The Australian agency also disclosed that dancing improves balance and spatial awareness; increases physical confidence; improves mental functioning; improves general and psychological wellbeing; enhances greater self-confidence and self-esteem, and also aids better social skills.

Personalise your pace

While one can dance at a competitive level, it is even easier to take advantage of the benefits derivable from dancing at an individual level. Interestingly, there are many styles of dance to choose from, each with its own attractions. However, popular dance styles that are proven to give optimum benefit include hip-hop dance, which is performed mostly to hip-hop music. This urban dance style can involve breaking, popping, locking and freestyling. Jazz dance, on its part, is a high energy dance style, involving kicks, leaps, and turns, to the beat of the music. Nevertheless, irrespective of the dance style and steps, the health benefits will always be yours, provided you dance; and the more you dance, the more benefits you derive.

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Revitalise Drug Revolving Fund system, COMHPFHI charges federal health institutions

By Temitope Obayendo

For constant medicines availability to patients in an unstable economy like Nigeria, the management of Federal Government hospitals must revive the Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) system, the Committee of Heads of Pharmacy in Federal Health Institutions (COMHPFHI) has said.

The Committee made the submission in a communique issued at the end of its 10th Peer Review Meeting, held recently at the Royal Birds Hotel, Alagbaka; Akure, Ondo State, with the theme, "Medicines availability: A compulsory component of healthcare service delivery in an unstable economy".

According to the statement, which was jointly signed by the Chairman, Pharm. (Dr) Adeyinka Ishola; and the Secretary, Pharm. (Dr) Mrs Funmilayo Oluwatimilehin, COMHPFHI equally deplored the huge debt being owed local pharma manufacturers by the Federal Government, while also calling for the urgent payment of all pending bills of pharmaceutical companies. This, they said, will enhance provision of utmost care to all citizens across the country.

DRF is a system in which revenue generated from the sales of drugs to patients is reinvested in the procurement of new drugs to ensure continued availability of drugs, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the hospital system.



COMHPFHI Chairman, Dr Ishola Adeyinka, (middle) flanked by executives of the association, receiving the dummy cheque, presented by Elbe Pharmaceutical to the pharmacy department of four federal health institutions, after their presentations at the conference.

COMHPFHI further posited that provision of good, efficacious and cost-effective medicines is a fundamental right of all citizens, emphasising the need for all hospitals to institute compounding services, as a means of meeting peculiar patients' needs.

The communique read in part: "Peer review meeting called for revitalisation of the Drug Revolving Fund system in Federal Government hospitals and payment of all outstanding debts to pharmaceutical companies/suppliers to the various hospital managements.

"All hospitals should institute compounding services to address

peculiar patients' needs, while specialisation in pharmacy clinical services should be adopted and encouraged for better patients care.

"The meeting also canvassed for uniform harmonisation of pharmacy practice among tertiary health Institutions."

Other resolutions reached by the veteran pharmacists include adoption of electronic management records by all hospital managements, for effective pharmaceutical service delivery; reconstitution of cytotoxic drugs to be strictly handled by pharmacists; and development of managerial skills

by all heads of pharmacy in federal health institutions.

They also contested the system of appointing leadership of hospitals, which has been restricted to physicians, for a long while, arguing that headship of hospitals should be by the best available hands from any professional group in the hospital.

The federal hospital pharmacy heads also encouraged pharmacists to acquire relevant knowledge and skills in procurement procedures, which requires varied professional and technical skills, to make medicines available in all hospitals, even in an unstable economy.

According to the communique, the conference

which witnessed the send-off of eight retired members, also saw the presentation of sub-themes, which were, "The roles of National Health Insurance Authority in effective healthcare delivery system", by Dr Adeniyi Adebisi; "The procurement act - A tool in ensuring medicines availability in an unstable economy", by PCN Registrar, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, represented by Pharm Ilupeju; as well as "Managerial skills for heads of Pharmacy on drugs supply chain management", by Pharm. (Dr) Mrs Margaret Obono.

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Wellness

with

Dr Patrick Ijewere

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This piece is about the journey of the wellness tree and how it came to be. As is common with most trees, the wellness tree has roots, branches, and a trunk.

The roots

The tree has five roots - spirituality, mindset, nutrition, lifestyle and environment. We call these the five pillars of wellness. This implies that if there's balance in the root, it's a very healthy tree. However, if there is a deficiency or if there are chemical pollutants in the soil, it makes the soil unhealthy, inadequate and imbalanced. Simply put, if the soil is not well nourished, 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.

On the other hand, when the tree is unhealthy, due to unhealthy roots and deficient

soil, the branches give rise to leaves that are yellow, orange, or red. And these branches have been labelled with the different chronic degenerative inflammatory medical conditions or diseases.

Hence, it is Imperative that we take care of the root system. Failure to do so could make these PILLARS or ROOTS of wellness could easily and rapidly become the ROOTS of all our illnesses. The red, orange, yellow leaves represent illnesses - starting with neurological and neurodegenerative ailments, including ocular or eye diseases, as well as memory impairments leading to dementia. There are also 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. These range from sinus conditions to pharyngitis, to bronchitis, pneumonia, and recurrent pneumonia. There are also diseases of the cardiovascular

system, from high blood pressure to ischemic heart disease and cardiomyopathies.

Indeed, these ailments could degenerate further into our musculoskeletal system - causing joint issues, arthritis, muscle issues, myositis, myalgia and arthralgia, to more complex issues, such as gout, osteopenia and osteoporosis. Of course, there could also be auto immune disorders, ranging from lupus and multiple sclerosis to psoriasis. Gastrointestinal and hepatic conditions, irritable bowel, inflammatory bowel could also present; so also are skin disorders from eczema and acne to severe dermatitis.

Other ailments I have not mentioned include ailments of reproduction - infertility, fibroids, low sperm count, endometriosis, erectile dysfunction; as well as ailments of the neurological system. So nurturing the root system is paramount.

The point here is that all diseases have a cause that is linked to the roots - our spirituality, our mindset, our nutrition, our lifestyle and our environment. Moreover, the most powerful message from this tree is that disease is reversible. Fix the underlying cause in the soil and roots, and the body will bounce back.

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It's easier to find your purpose in Nigeria than overseas - Uwubanmwun

By Temitope Obayendo

Pharm. Osak Uwubanmwun is a versatile professional and founder/CEO of several companies locally and internationally. These include Bio-Generics Nigeria Limited; Zonlitch Sante Nigeria Limited; Mega Pharm. Limited, Canada; Eureka Prescriptions Inc., Canada; Mega Pharm Holding Corp, Canada; Eureka Prescriptions Holding Corp, Canada; and Globacities International. In this interesting interview with **TEMITOPE OBAYENDO**, he reveals the secrets of his success as a mega entrepreneur. He also highlights the critical roles of community pharmacists in improving the nation's healthcare delivery system, while equally advocating the establishment of petrochemical factories for the attainment of medicine security in the country. Excerpts:

Tell us a little about yourself, particularly your professional background and area of practice.

Osak Uwubanmwun is my name. I am a pharmacist by training, and I live in Calgary, in the province of Alberta, in Canada. I have lived in Canada for 18 years. I have had an interesting career path. I did my internship at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital and was a locum pharmacist during my internship at the popular Oskajay Pharmacy, in Benin City. I was also a part-time lecturer of Pharmacology at the Post-Basic School of Nursing, at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

It was providence that changed my career path. I was supposed to be one of the first set of pharmacy graduates of the University of Benin that were selected to become graduate assistants to do internship with the university. But as fate would have it, the Senate of the university did not approve it for over three months and, after waiting that long, I went to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital to take my internship space, which was waiting.

I did my National Youth Service in the north of Nigeria, at the Hajiya Gambo Sawaba General Hospital, Kofan Gaya, Zaria. I cut my teeth in pharmaceutical marketing, working for Sandoz Pharmaceuticals. I was based in Kano, as a medical sales representative, and later joined Janssen, where I worked as a product manager for close to five years. It was at Janssen I learnt the ropes of how to run a successful pharmaceutical sales and marketing company, as I was virtually responsible for all the new products launched in Janssen in those five years.

I moved to Canada in 2005 and I got licenced to work as a community pharmacist within one year of moving to Canada. The practice of pharmacy in Canada, especially in my province of Alberta, is one of the most advanced in the world. I am also an industrial pharmacist, by virtue of running my Nigerian pharmaceutical enterprise, Bio-Generics Nigeria Limited, from Canada.

Bio-Generics was launched in Nigeria in 2011. Bio-Generics Nigeria provides Nigerians with high-value prescription medications across many diseases' specialty areas. Our purpose is to always provide world-class quality medications that are very affordable to Nigerians.

Having been into community practice for a while, how would you describe the roles of community pharmacists in healthcare delivery system?

The community pharmacist is an indispensable partner in the healthcare delivery system of any nation. The community pharmacy is the first port of call for many citizens when they have a healthcare challenge; the reason is that the community pharmacist is very available and highly accessible.



Pharm. Osak Uwubanmwun

Any nation that refuses to recognise this role and its importance is losing out a great deal in providing quality healthcare opportunities to its citizens.

In Canada, where I practise as a community pharmacist, I prescribe prescription drugs for my patients in many disease areas and order lab tests for them. I have my injection certification; so, I do lots of vaccination against many diseases and can administer many injections, like vitamin B12, methotrexate injection, Depo-Provera, and some depot psychiatry medications, to my patients within my community.

During the COVID crisis, most of the COVID vaccinations that were given in Canada were administered by Canadian pharmacists. The government developed a robust system where COVID vaccines were shipped daily to the pharmacies to be administered by pharmacists. And they reported electronically daily on how many vaccines were used up and what supply they would need as replacement the next day.

In Canada, pharmacists have fully transitioned from being dispensers of medications to more clinical roles, by spending time with the patients to manage their clinical problems. The new compensation model, where pharmacists are paid for the clinical services they provide to the patient, is being supported by the government.

Pharmacists now provide point-of-care clinical services and help reduce the high healthcare wage bills. Some of the services provided by physicians can also be provided by pharmacists and may cost the government less.

From your experience in overseeing the West African

pharmaceutical market, what do you perceive as the best means of combating the circulation of fake and substandard drugs in the region?

The counterfeit, fake, and substandard drug market is valued at over 200 billion dollars. It is an international problem and crisis that affects almost all the nations of the world. But the developed nations are better able to tackle it since they have more robust regulatory mechanisms in place and sophisticated technologies at their disposal.

There are many ways to help reduce this menace, like better regulation of pharmaceuticals manufacturing and deploying modern technologies in product manufacture and fake products detection. It would be almost impossible to eliminate the problem, as the criminal elements that thrive on these illegalities are also developing means daily to evade arrest and detection.

In Nigeria and West Africa, elimination of the open drug markets can help curb the distribution of fake and substandard medicines, since the manufacturers of such fake and substandard medicines rely on these open markets to easily distribute these bad medicines. These agents of death also rely on poor regulation in many West African countries to perpetrate their trade.

The ECOWAS regulators should attempt to have a more collaborative approach to this problem, as each market is easily accessible to citizens of the nations under this union. What this means is that once fake and substandard medications enter one nation, the other nations are also at a grave risk of the medications

circulating in other countries.

Pharmacists can help develop supply chains that have integrity that can help counter the distribution chains of fake and substandard medicines. I think what the government of Kano State is trying to do now with their purpose-built drug distribution centre is close to this approach.

As a founder of many healthcare enterprises, what are the challenges peculiar to people in your category and how would you advise Nigerian pharmacists grappling with such to succeed?

There will always be challenges in anything you chose to do. That is the reason many people choose not to own a business. As many successful people would say, there is never a good time to start any enterprise, but the key is just to start, and you will begin to figure out things as the journey progresses. No one ever started an enterprise and could hazard a guess on all the challenges that they would encounter. Tenacity is one of the most important skills you need to develop, and you must decide to be focused and consistent.

The Nigerian environment can be a great challenge to do business, as you need to pay for or provide many things that are taken for granted in developed countries. The exchange rate instability and continued currency devaluation is one recurring decimal, as you rely on dollars or euros to source your products from the nations you buy from. So, you need to make the needed devaluation allowance in your pricing mechanism, since you cannot change your price all the time or probably charge a new price per import, as this would be very unprofessional.

The other common challenge is getting highly skilled staff to work with me, as the now *japa* syndrome has created some skill set drain in many enterprises like mine. It costs good money to get good staff and it also takes some time to train them to become productive. But once you get them productive, the next thing you get is a resignation letter, stating that they are moving to Canada or the UK. In my time, many of us migrated for a different reason but now migration has been driven by survival and this is becoming an increasing challenge to businesses in Nigeria.

Achieving medicine security has been a tall order for the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry over the years. With the new decision of the government to reduce drug importation from 60 to 40 per cent, do you see the nation actualising this dream?

No nation can become self-sufficient in medicine production without having a petrochemical factory to supply the ingredients to make the active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) and excipients used in making medicines. The Eleme petrochemical factory failed us in Nigeria in a big way. Now that we have the Dangote refinery, hopefully, he will also key into building a petrochemical facility. Then we can make basic ingredients needed for medicines manufacture.

Medicine security is a very important part of every nation's security. Look at what happened during the COVID outbreak, when

continued on page 34



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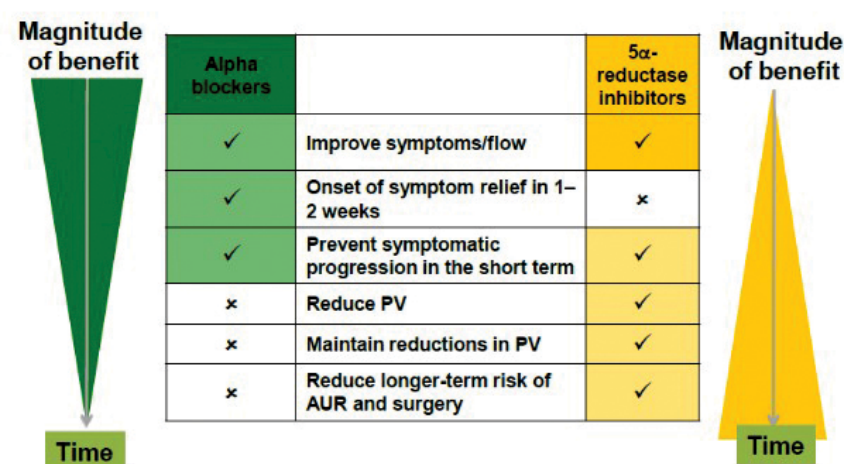
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DEANS' Corner

PROF. CHIBUEZE IHEKWEREME

Prof. Chibueze Peter Ihekwereme is the dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. He took over from Prof. Festus Basden Chinedu Okoye.

Born and raised in Enugu, Enugu State, the professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology attended the prestigious National Grammar School, Nike. He subsequently obtained his bachelor's degree in Pharmacy in December 1998, as well as a master's degree in Pharmacy, in Pharmacology & Toxicology, in January 2002, both from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He later bagged a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

Ihekwereme proceeded to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, in 2009, where he bagged his PhD in Pharmacology & Toxicology in February 2014. He is the pioneer doctorate degree graduate of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Nnamdi Azikiwe University with the current VC of the university, Professor Charles Okechukwu Esimone, as one

of his supervisors.

His research interest is on tropical diseases. He believes that affordable and sustainable healthcare for the poor African population should leverage Africa's vast medicinal biodiversity – which, packaged with minimal processing, will offer effective remedy.

Ihekwereme is a recipient of the prestigious Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship Program (CCSP). A Fellow of the Poverty Related Disease College, he conducted his PhD research at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The research was a process engineering of Calu-3 cell viability model for respiratory mucosal irritation and toxicity

screening of drugs and pharmaceutical excipients.

As a scholar, the UNIZIK faculty of pharmacy dean has visited Istituto di Tecnologie Biomediche, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Pisa, Italy; the International Centre for Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology, Cape Town, South Africa; Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, among others. He has also attended many conferences, locally and internationally.

Ihekwereme has over 50 publications to his credit, which

comprise self-authored and co-authored books, as well as contributions to many local and international journals and still counting. One of the books he co-authored, "Advances in acute toxicity testing: Strengths, weaknesses and regulatory acceptance", which was published in 2018, has been cited by many researchers and scholars.

Professor Ihekwereme is happily married and blessed with four children.



He is the pioneer doctorate degree graduate of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Nnamdi Azikiwe University with the current VC of the university, Professor Charles Okechukwu Esimone, as one of his supervisors.

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Agent of choice over co-amoxiclav for empirical treatment of Community Acquired RTIs and Otitis media in Children

Sunderland R et al. (1994)
Cefixime versus co-amoxiclav

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South Africa J. Epidemiol Infect
page 103 2011: 26(3)

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Leveraging the power of AI tools

The benefits of utilising AI tools are vast and impactful. By incorporating these tools into your small business operations, you can unlock significant advantages that will propel your productivity and decision-making capabilities to new heights.

- **Minimising time and increasing productivity:** AI tools excel at automating repetitive tasks, liberating your valuable time and resources for more critical work. By delegating mundane responsibilities to AI-powered systems, you can focus on high-value activities that drive your business forward.
- **Making informed decisions:** AI tools provide you with invaluable insights and data analysis, enabling you to make well-informed decisions. By leveraging advanced algorithms, these tools sift through vast amounts of information, identifying patterns and trends that may not be immediately apparent to the human eye.
- **Enhancing accuracy and quality:** Human error can be a persistent challenge in various business processes. However, AI tools eliminate this concern by ensuring consistent accuracy and high-quality outputs. By relying on AI algorithms, you can reduce the likelihood of errors and maintain a higher standard of work across your organisation.

Now, let's explore some of the key categories of free and cost-effective AI tools available to small business owners:

1. AI-powered chatbots: Chatbots have emerged as a popular application of AI, automating customer service, sales, and support tasks. Notable free

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

AI-powered chatbot platforms include Tars, Landbot, and Botsify.

2. AI marketing tools: Marketing tools, equipped with AI capabilities, streamline tasks, such as email marketing campaigns, social media management, and lead generation. Prominent examples in this category include Contlo, HubSpot, Hootsuite, and Mailchimp.

3. AI-powered sales tools: AI-powered sales software simplifies lead scoring, contact management, and sales forecasting. Leading tools in this space include Pipedrive, Zoho CRM, and Salesforce.

4. AI finance and accounting tools: These tools automate tasks, such as expense tracking, invoice processing, and financial reporting. Noteworthy free AI-powered finance and accounting services include Wave, Mint, and QuickBooks.

5. AI-Powered HR tools: HR tools enable automation of candidate screening, employee onboarding, and performance management. Notable free platforms in this category include BambooHR, Workable, and Zoho People.

6. Recruitment tools: Recruitment tools automate tasks like resume screening, candidate matching, and interview scheduling. Leading free recruitment software includes Recruiterflow, JobAdder, and SmartRecruiters.

7. Legal tools: Legal tools automate contract review, legal research, and case analysis. Noteworthy free legal platforms include ROSS Intelligence, LexisNexis, and Westlaw.

8. AI for education and e-learning tools: Education and e-learning software

utilise AI to personalise learning experiences, analyse progress, and provide recommendations for improvement. Prominent free platforms in this category include EdX, Coursera, and Udacity.

9. AI-powered project management tools: Project management software equipped with AI capabilities automate task allocation, project scheduling, and resource management. Noteworthy AI-powered project management software includes Notion.ai and Taskade.

10. AI-powered customer support tools: Customer support software automates tasks like ticket routing, chatbot support, and customer feedback analysis. Leading free AI-powered customer support services include Zendesk, Freshdesk, and Help Scout.

11. AI-powered analytics tools: Analytics tools enable you to analyse data and gain valuable insights into your business performance. Prominent free analytics tools include Google Analytics, Mixpanel, and Kissmetrics.

12. Content creation tools: AI-powered content creation software assists in generating content at scale by utilising natural language processing algorithms. Noteworthy platforms in this category include Articoolo, Textio, and Copysmith.

13. AI-powered SEO tools: SEO tools optimise your website for search engines by analysing content and providing improvement recommendations. Leading free AI-powered SEO software includes SurferSEO and SEMrush.



For questions or comments, mail or text sesankareem2@gmail.com/08072983163

14. AI-Powered cybersecurity tools: Cybersecurity tools protect your business from cyber threats through automated threat detection and intrusion prevention. Notable free cybersecurity platforms include Malwarebytes, Bitdefender, and Avira.

15. Image and video recognition tools: These tools automate image tagging, facial recognition, and object detection. Prominent free AI-powered platforms in this category include Clarifai, Google Cloud Vision API, and Microsoft Azure Computer Vision.

(Culled from the book, *Unlock the Power of AI* by Sesan Kareem)

ACTION PLAN: Learn more about how to use AI tools to improve your productivity and entrepreneurship. 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 favored.

Sesan Kareem is the founder of HubPharm Africa, a digital pharmacy that provides medicine delivery and extraordinary care, www.hubpharmfrica.com, and the principal consultant of SK Institute, www.sesankareem.com.ng.

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Spectrum of Activity	Gram +ve, Gram -ve & Anaerobes	Gram +ve, Gram -ve & Anaerobes
Beta-Lactamase Stability	Unaffected by Beta-Lactamases	Unaffected by Beta-Lactamases

Reference:
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Accolades as Onyechi clocks 70

- Relaunches Clement Okonkwo Onyechi Foundation

By Moses Dike

The expansive events hall of Marriot Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos, was filled to the brim and reverberated with accolades, as dignitaries from all walks of life paid glowing tributes to Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi, managing director of Alpha Pharmacy and Stores, as he marked his 70th birthday.

The colourful event, which began with praise and worship, was chaired by former Minister of Health and Chairman of Juli Plc, Pharm. (Prince) Julius Adelusi-Adeluyi.

Also in attendance were guests drawn from the pharmaceutical industry, the Abatete community, Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship international (FGBMFI), as well as friends, associates and family members of the celebrant from different parts of the world.

In his exhortation and opening remarks, Adelusi-Adeluyi, paid glowing tributes to the celebrant for his outstanding achievements in life, which, he said, had been made possible by dint of hard work and the special grace of God.

The chairman noted that, while the average life expectancy in Nigeria is 55, the celebrant had been able to attain 70 years, in good health, by the special grace of God.

Addressing the celebrant, he said, "Of course, we know that the Nigerian situation is far from the desirable. A country like Japan has 85; even Kenya down there has 67.

"Out of 193 countries, Nigerian ranks 190 in global life expectancy. So, we congratulate you. May that grace of God continue to reside with you."

Stressing that a good life is better than a long one, the former health minister charged the celebrant to continue to live a good life. He also advised him not to rest on his oars but continue to set new goals for himself that will benefit not only his immediate community but the rest of humanity.

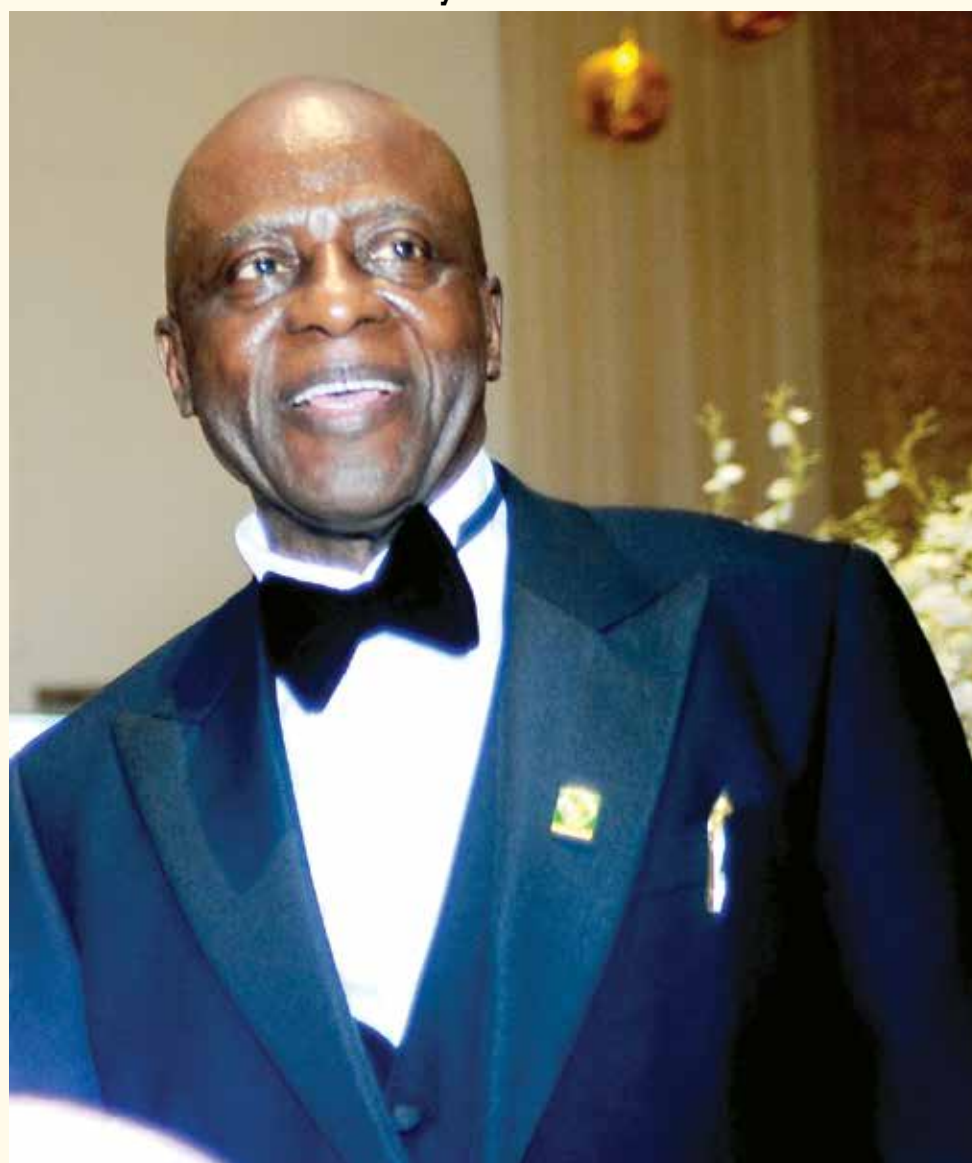
Adelusi-Adeluyi, who noted that the celebrant had blessed many people, prayed for more blessings of God upon him, his family and his business.

The founder of ST & T Regency International Schools, Lagos, Pharm. (Dr) Margret Ibru, in her remarks, paid glowing tribute to Onyechi for his integrity and consistency in business and religious life. She added that the celebrant was enjoying the grace of God which had led to success in every aspect of his life.

Also speaking at the event, a close associate of the celebrant and former president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, quoting from the biblical book of Proverbs 22:29 described Onyechi as a quintessential diligent man, who believes in the dignity of honest labour and the ensuing rewards.

The former PSN helmsman particularly extolled Onyechi's humility and willingness to learn at every stage of his life. This, he said, combined with the grace of God to make him excel in his personal and business life.

Speaking further, Ohuabunwa said, "Ike is faithful to God. He is one man who is not presumptuous



Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi

about his standing with God. He wants to review and renew himself every day and be sure he is standing strong. He is constantly mirroring himself to be sure runs this race faithfully to the end."

In his speech at the event, the celebrant, Pharm. (Sir) Onyechi appreciated all who came to identify and celebrate with him. He recalled, with nostalgia, his humble beginning in the rural community of Abatete, in Anambra State, and how the

opportunity of attending a good school as a child helped him to identify his path in life.

He recalled the story behind Alpha Pharmacy and explained that the company was established during a period of national healthcare challenge, triggered by the scarcity of some ethical drugs.

This challenge, he said, motivated him to go as far as possible in search of the much needed drugs. This, according to

him, made Alpha grow to become the leading supplier of rare ethical drugs in Nigeria, providing the much needed solution for patients and healthcare practitioners.

"We did this with a heart of empathy because our purpose was to meet people at the point of their need, while embracing best practices," he added.

Onyechi also noted that the opportunity of working with a German company, Hoesch, provided him the privilege of linkage with some parent companies abroad. He revealed that this, coupled with the grace of God and the commitment of his team, helped him to grow the company and achieve things which were seemingly above the company's capacity.

He highlighted the important roles which Alpha Pharmacy played during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the supply of ventilators and incubators. He added that, apart from rare ethical pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, the company has also diversified into farming and real estate, in order to meet the needs of Nigerians and further stabilise Alpha's operations.

Aside from the cutting of the glamorous birthday cake and the presentation of a video documentary in honour of the celebrant, a major highlight of the events was the introduction of the Clement Okonkwo Onyechi (COO) Foundation to the audience by Pharm. Chidi Okoro.

The Foundation, which was revealed to have been established by the celebrant, in honour of his father, started in 1989 as an unregistered company, called COET, before metamorphosing into COO, in 2009.

Okoro announced that, amongst other so many other achievements, the COO had provided scholarship to all cadre of students and had built a vocational centre, in Abatete, to empower residents through skill acquisition programmes and other forms of charity.

Diaspora

It's easier to find your purpose in Nigeria than overseas - Uwubanmwun

continued from page 27

the entire world was closed and no movement or travel. If that had lasted more than a few years, many nations would have run out of prescription and basic medicines and people would die because they cannot get the medicines they need as they cannot be imported or locally manufactured.

Incentives should also be given to companies like ours to transition from importing to local manufacturing. In the last few years, we have written some proposals and made contacts on building a world-class GMP-certified local manufacturing facility in Nigeria. This is still top on my rolling plan, as we hope to overcome the major challenge of currency devaluation.

With the recent global recession which has crippled many businesses, how have you managed to sustain your companies nationally and internationally?

The person I admire the most in the African business cycle is Aliko

Dangote. I try to understudy him and learn from him the way he does business and runs his many enterprises. I have never met him but maybe someday I will.

From him, I learnt to focus and dominate any market I choose to play in. So, when I launched Bio-Generics Nigeria, in 2011, we started with only five products, all in psychiatry. Many were surprised but within one year, we became the leading Nigerian pharmaceutical company in psychiatry, because our value proposition was based on the availability of world-class quality medicines and very affordable prices.

It was the psychiatric hospitals that were calling and asking us to come to do business with them because they trusted our products and were getting great results with them. From that success, we spread our wings to pain and ophthalmology.

Since I am responsible for

the research and development of any new product selections to be launched in Nigeria, my focus is that our projected product entry must have clear-cut clinical advantages over the products that currently exist in that disease market segment in Nigeria, if any. If this is the case, price and utility become secondary considerations and can propel the product launch to an early success.

The other thing is that I have learnt to take money from Canada and invest it in Nigeria, thereby creating a win-win situation for both nations. The reason is simple, the Canadian banks loan their money at low, single-digit interest rates, compared to Nigeria where the interest rate is very high, double-digits. But the return on investment is far better in Nigeria. For every dollar I invest in the Nigerian economy, I can get about three dollars back, sometimes even after all expenses; whereas, in Canada, for every dollar I invest, I get only about

continued on page 46

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PWDAN tasks FG on stronger pharma supply chain, medicine security

- Holds 2nd annual conference

By Adebayo Oladejo

The leadership of the Pharmaceutical Wholesalers and Distributors Association of Nigeria (PWDAN) and other eminent pharmacists in the country have charged the Federal Government to strengthen the fragmented pharmaceutical supply chain in the country.

This, they said, will ensure an efficient and effective drug management system, adding that a well-ordered pharmaceutical wholesale distribution system is indispensable to the growth of the industry.

Speaking at the 2nd Annual National Conference of PWDAN, with the theme, "Strengthening the pharma supply chain: Panacea to good distribution and medicine security", held at Marriot Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, the National Chairman of the Association, Pharm. Ernest Okafor, noted that contrary to the expectation of a formidable supply value chain, the segment is now harbouring a great percentage of infractions.

The PWDAN boss further disclosed that the theme of the conference was specially chosen to continue the discourse on how effective, good distribution practices in both private and public sectors of healthcare can promote efficacious, quality and safe drugs in the country.

According to him, "One of the cardinal objectives of PWDAN is to change the narrative, by bringing the pharma supply chain in Nigeria to a new era of global best practice through good distribution practice, benchmarking and collaborating with value chain stakeholders and regulators."

In his speech, Pharm. Olumide Akintayo, former president, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), and chairman of the event, stated that the theme revolved around two major areas, namely, regularising the value chain of core drug distribution and attaining national medicine security.

The value chain of drug distribution, Akintayo said, had always been chaotic in the country, adding that stakeholders had talked about the problem for over 60 years, to no avail.

"We have always said this problem is caused by the peculiar nature of drug distribution, which is through the open drug market. And one of the things we fashioned out about eight years ago was the National Drug Distribution Guideline (NDDG), which was meant to facilitate the relocation of operators in the open market to what will serve as National Coordinated Wholesale Centres."

He continued, "We started with the four most prominent markets – Idumota, Lagos; Head bridge, Onitsha; Sabon-gari in Kano; and Ariara, in Aba - but today, I can put it on record that Kano has come up with their Coordinated Wholesale Centre. Lagos is a work in progress. Onitsha has a location but not yet started, but Ariara has not taken off the ground at all. The government needs to enforce these things as we cannot continue our various policy somersaults because it is key to the survival of our people".

Akintayo warned against the leaving the distribution and manufacturing chain of the country's drug needs in the hands of foreigners, adding that one of the fallouts of the



Mr Oladepo Lawal-Solarin, a speaker at the event, receiving a plaque from Pharm. Olumide Akintayo, chairman of the occasion, and Pharm. Ernest Okafor, chairman, PWDAN.

mega wholesaling arrangement is that some foreign companies have hijacked the process.

"So, our regulators have to come alive. Empowering foreign companies, at the expense of the local manufacturers, is detrimental to Universal Health Coverage. These guys make all the money and ship it to their countries, and we keep talking about capital flights. There is nowhere else in the world that this happens."

Speaking in the same vein, the National Chairman, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, averred that without an association like PWDAN, whatever pharma products the citizens are getting through the supply chain would not be credible, saying pharmaceuticals are not ordinary items of trade.

According to him, "Without a body like PWDAN, we cannot be saying we are getting the structure of pharmaceutical distribution right, and linking it to medicine security, it means we should be sure of the source of every commodity that Nigerians are consuming. And, if that structure is not clear, we cannot say we have the security of medicines in Nigeria."

The ACPN boss, who described the NDDG as a good but poorly implemented policy, said this has been a recurring decimal in the country.

In his goodwill message, the Registrar, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, who was represented at the event by Solomon Shihii, deputy director, Inspection, Monitoring and Quality Assurance Unit, Lagos Zonal Office, commented on the pertinence of the conference theme.

He stated that Nigeria and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing challenges in the pharmaceutical supply chain, especially with the global sourcing of active and inactive pharmaceutical ingredients, in addition to the



Pharm. Ernest Okafor, national chairman, PWDAN

emergence of biopharmaceuticals.

Speaking on the achievement of the PCN, Babashehu said it was worth repeating that the PCN had established a stable and well-functioning integrated regulatory system, as well as improving capacity for efficiency and effectiveness.

He added that it was also worthy of note that the PCN was working assiduously toward attaining maturity level 4, which, he said, is the advance level of performance and continuous improvement.

"PCN has gained ISO certification and is now a Quality Management System (QMS) driven organisation for regulatory systems strengthening. We now have DG NAFDAC as a council member. This will foster more collaboration between the PCN and NAFDAC in addressing drug distribution issues," he said.

Babashehu continued, "The registrar is no longer just a secretary to the Council but a member of the Council. This empowers the registrar to contribute to discussions during the Council meeting, educating the Council members better, for informed decisions.

"There is also legal backing for the revocation of licences. Stakeholders that have chosen to do things the wrong way may have their licences revoked by the registrar.

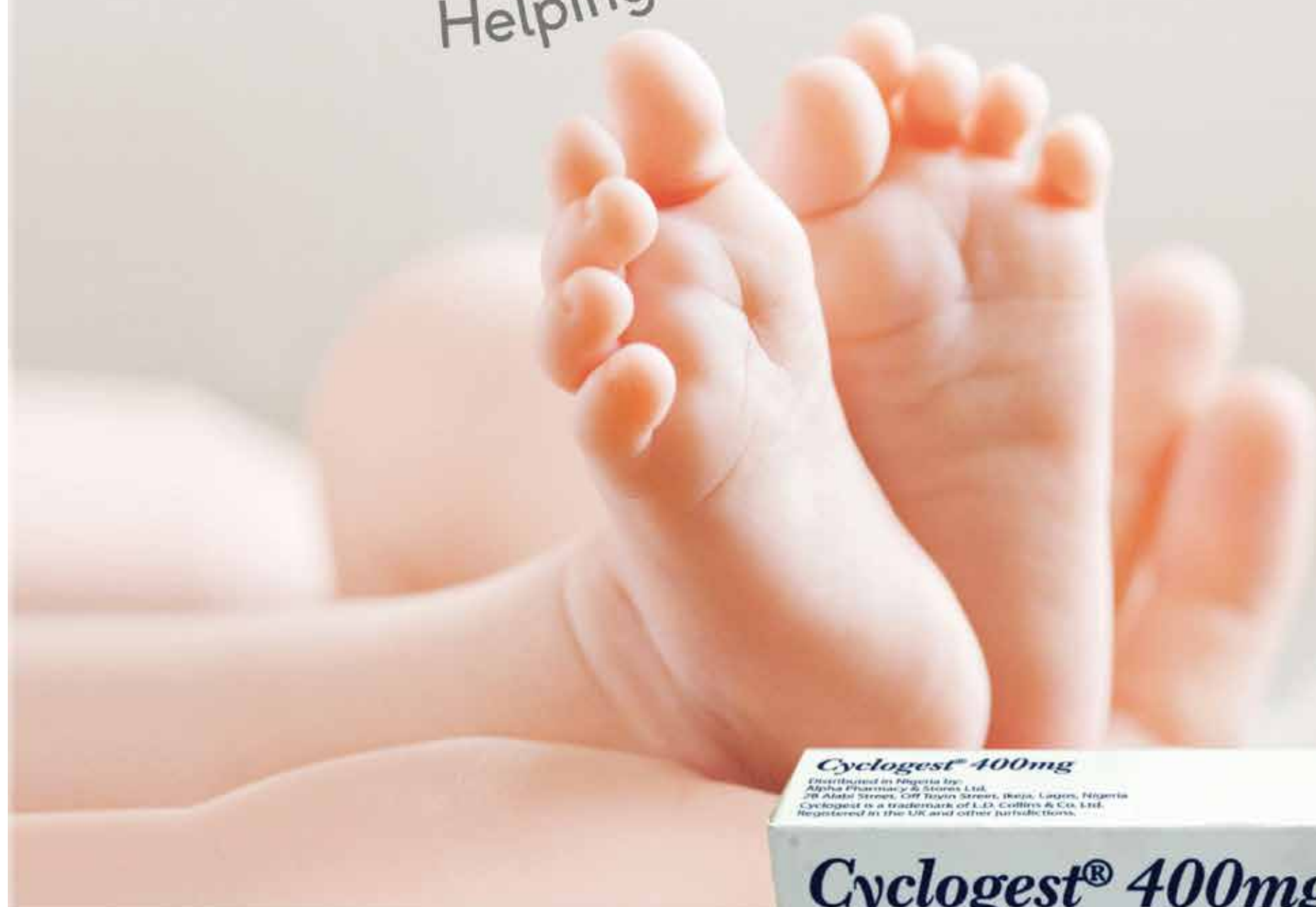
"I wish to inform you that the Federal High Court, on 30 June, 2023, in Kano, dismissed the suit challenging the directives of the PCN to the owners of all drug shops in the open market to close down their operations and relocate to the newly commissioned Coordinated Wholesale Centres (CWC)."

Other stakeholders at the event included Pharm. Okey Akpa, managing director, SKG; Mr Oladepo Lawal-Solarin; Pharm. (Mrs) Fadeke Adeyemi; Pharm. Ukagha Igwe; Pharm. (Mrs) Bunmi Olugbeja; Pharm Azuka Okeke, executive officer, Africa Resource Centre for Excellence in Supply Chain Management, who was represented by Dr Stephaine Oluyide; Mr Femi Soremekun, managing director, Biofern; Pharm. Bode Ogunjemiyo, chairman, AHAPN; Pharm. Victor Adekanye, WWCVL; Pharm. Chris Ehimen, Nett Pharmacy; and Pharm. Olufemi Ismail Adebayo, former national chairman, ACPN.

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Baphia nitida

Camwood, scientifically known as *Baphia nitida* Lodd, is a shrubby, erect, small, hard-wooded forest tree, belonging to Fabaceae/Leguminosae (Pea family). It is more common within the coastal region of central West Africa and Asia, where it is used for managing a wide range of disorders.

Also known as barwood, Dolo, Doro, shiny camwood and African sandalwood (although not a true sandalwood), camwood is commonly called majigi in Hausa, uhie in Igbo, osun in Yoruba and pp in Cross Rivers State. It is normally grown as an ornamental shade tree or hedge.

Constituents

Camwood contains carbohydrate, crude protein, crude lipid, crude fibre, ash and moisture. Phytochemical screening in some studies have revealed the presence of alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins, tannins, phlobatannins, terpenes, terpenoids, cardiac glycosides, hydrogen cyanides and steroids.

Preparations

Camwood may be available as pellets or powder. The powder or leaves may be used as ointment, infusion or decoction.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

When mixed with the appropriate solvent or with other appropriate herbs, camwood can be used to cure enteritis and other gastrointestinal problems, like diarrhoea. When an infusion is made, it can be used to treat venereal diseases (with palm wine), asthma (with *Senna occidentalis* or finely ground root bark are mixed with honey), female sterility and painful menstruation (with the leaves of *Morinda lucida*), epilepsy, cardiac pain, jaundice and diabetes (decoction of the leaves), constipation (as an enema), parasitic skin diseases (leaves or leaf juice used externally), bone fractures (with Veld Grape) headache (extract of young leaves with some salt and red pepper used as nose drops), sprains, swollen joints, and rheumatic pains (with shea butter).

A study revealed that *B. nitida* is a suitable counter stain for haematoxylin stains especially on liver and kidney tissues and may be a potential alternative to eosin in the demonstration of tissue pathology.

Camwood powder has

exfoliative, anti-aging, wrinkle-smoothing, rejuvenating, astringent and emollient effect on the skin. It can be used to achieve these effects when mixed with a suitable solvent like honey, coconut oil, almond oil, rosewater, glycerin or even

warm water. When mixed with turmeric and coconut oil, camwood powder will clear dark spots and give the skin a healthy glow. Application of

any of these as masks should be followed by a light rinse off with black soap. Camwood has the natural ability to treat sunburn, restore skin elasticity, even out skin tone, and refine skin texture among others. Camwood powder is very beneficial in the management of pimples, acne and eczema.

Camwood powder contains powerful antioxidants and is also an anti-inflammatory agent that helps to improve blood circulation to the face, remove toxins and fight the formation of wrinkle-causing free radicals.

The dye from camwood has the ability to prevent bee-stings when rubbed on the body. It can be used to treat insect bites, swelling, sores and wounds.

Camwood, when mixed with almond oil and coconut oil, helps to tighten the skin.

Camwood powder consist of powerful antioxidants and is also an anti-inflammatory agent that helps to improve blood circulation to your face, remove toxins and fight the formation of wrinkle-causing free radicals.

Adverse effects

There are no known cases of an adverse reaction to camwood powder.

Economic uses and potentials
100g pure camwood powder costs between N1,500- N3,000. Camwood has potentials in the pharmaceutical, cosmetic, textile and carpentry industries.

References

Healthbenefits (2021). Health benefits of Camwood. [Healthbenefits.com](https://www.healthbenefitstimes.com/camwood/). Available at: <https://www.healthbenefitstimes.com/camwood/>. Accessed 28/6/23.

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INDICATIONS

- ▶ UTI INFECTIONS ▶ OSTEOMYELITIS ▶ CHRONIC SUPPURATIVE BACTERIAL OTITIS MEDIA ▶ GONORRHEA ▶ MENINGITIS
- ▶ CHOLECYSTITIS ▶ NOSOCOMIAL INFECTIONS CAUSED BY SUSCEPTIBLE BACTERIA ▶ SKIN AND SOFT TISSUE INFECTION

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Events in Pictures



L-R: Prof. Nnamdi Onuora Oguno, 1st vice-president, DOBA Worldwide; Pharm. Tunde Enemmo; Mr Dozie Atueyi; and Barr. Akor Okoli, president, DOBA Lagos and legal adviser Worldwide at the DMGS Old Boys Association Convention Banquet, held in Onitsha, Anambra State, recently.



Professor Ikenna M. Alumona, keynote speaker and wife, at the DMGS Old Boys Association Convention Banquet, held in Onitsha, Anambra State, recently.



L-R: Immediate Past National Chairman, ALPs, Pharm. (Mrs) Victoria Ukwu; Chairman, BOF-PSN, Pharm. (Dr) Joel E.B. Adagadzu; CEO, Netherlands Business School Nigeria and Guest Speaker, Prof. Lere Baale; and Prof. (Mrs) S. Sodipo, UNIMAID, at the BOF-PSN 5th Public Lecture, held recently, in Lagos.



L-R: National Chairman, ALPs, Pharm. (Mrs) Scholastica Ian; South-West Vice -Chairman, ALPs, Pharm. (Mrs) Omobolanle Ajao; Former PSN Deputy President, Pharm. (Mrs) Ejio Foyibo; and Immediate Past Registrar, PCN, Pharm. (Dr) N.A.E. Mohammed, at the BOF-PSN 5th Public Lecture, held recently, in Lagos.

Coming Events

NAPA 21st Annual Scientific Conference

Date: 14th -18th August, 2023
Venue: University of Ilorin, Kwara State
Phone No: 08036548975

24th AHAPN Annual Scientific Conference

Date: 21st -25th August, 2023
Venue: Welcome Centre Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos
Phone: 08053031627

17th NAPPSA Scientific Conference

Date: 21st - 24th September, 2023
Venue: Hilton Columbus Polaris, USA
Phone No. 1-614-885-1600

81st FIP World Congress

Date: 24th -28th September, 2023
Venue: Brisbane
Email: fip@fip.org

5th NAF'Traph Conference

Date: 12th - 14th October, 2023
Venue: Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Ikeja, Lagos

96th Annual National Conference of PSN

Date: 30th Oct -4th November, 2023
Venue: Gombe Intel Conference Centre, Bauchi Road, Gombe
Phone: 08034000841



Pharm. Jimi Agbaje, MD, Jay Kay Pharmacy; Lady Chinelo Onyechi, executive director, Alpha Pharmacy; and Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi, Alpha Pharmacy MD, during the 70th birthday ceremony of Pharm. (Sir) Ike Onyechi, held recently, at Marriott Hotel, Ikeja.



L-R: Pharm. Buddah Yaro, former PSN president; Pharm. (Barr.) Chiedu Mordi, former chairman, BOF-PSN; Prof. Bona Obiora, formerly of UNIBEN; and Pharm. Bruno Nwankwo, former chairman, BOF-PSN, at the 5th Public Lecture of the BOF-PSN, held recently, in Lagos.

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THE JOURNEY OF AGILE ORGANISATION

Leadership: Yesterday, today and the future (5)

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

The growing importance of grit to leadership success

Grit is a concept that has gained widespread recognition in recent years as a critical predictor of success in a range of domains. In the context of leadership, grit is an essential attribute for those who aspire to achieve their goals and positively impact their organisations and communities. In this piece, we will explore the importance of grit to leadership success.

Grit is a multifaceted concept, encompassing several vital attributes: perseverance, passion, resilience, and a growth mindset. Leaders with these attributes are better equipped to navigate challenges and obstacles. They are more likely to persist in the face of setbacks, remain committed to their goals, and bounce back from adversity.

Perseverance is a critical component of grit, as it involves the ability to persist in facing challenges and setbacks. Leaders with this attribute are likelier to stay focused on their goals, even in adversity. They can maintain their motivation and drive and keep moving forward even when the path is complex or uncertain.

Passion is another critical component of grit, as it involves a deep sense of purpose and meaning in one's work. Leaders who are passionate about what they do are more likely to be resilient and to stay committed to their goals, even in the face of setbacks. They can maintain their energy and enthusiasm and inspire and motivate others to do the same.

Resilience is also an essential aspect of grit, as it involves the ability to bounce back from adversity and adapt to changing circumstances. Leaders with this attribute are better equipped to navigate leadership's ups and downs and learn from their experiences. They can stay focused on their goals and remain optimistic, even facing challenges.

Also, a growth mindset is an essential attribute of grit, as it involves a belief that one's abilities and skills can be developed through effort and persistence. Leaders who possess this attribute are more likely to embrace challenges and view failure as an opportunity for growth and learning. They can continuously improve their skills and develop new strategies for success.

In conclusion, the importance of grit to leadership success cannot be overstated. Leaders who possess this attribute are better equipped to navigate the challenges and obstacles they encounter and remain committed to their goals and vision. Leaders

Another trend likely to shape the future of leadership is the increasing importance of emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness. As the pace of change and complexity of work continue to increase, leaders who can remain calm, centred, and aware of their own emotions and those of their team members will be better equipped to navigate uncertainty and manage conflict more effectively. This requires deeper self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to develop strong relationships, based on trust and respect.

can build the GRIT essential for success in their work and lives by cultivating perseverance, passion, resilience, and a growth mindset.

The future of leadership

The future of leadership is an ever-evolving concept, shaped by social, political, and economic changes, as well as technological advancements and shifts in cultural values. One of the most significant shifts in leadership we are seeing is moving away from top-down, hierarchical leadership models towards more collaborative and decentralised approaches.

As organisations become more complex and diverse, leaders recognise the importance of building trust, fostering open communication, and empowering their teams to take more ownership and responsibility for their work. This requires shifting from traditional command and control leadership styles towards more facilitative, coaching-oriented leadership.

Another trend likely to shape the future of leadership is the increasing importance of emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness. As the pace of change and complexity of work continue to increase, leaders who can remain calm, centred, and aware of their own emotions and those of their team members will be better equipped to navigate uncertainty and manage conflict more effectively. This requires deeper self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to develop strong relationships, based on trust and respect.

Technology is also likely to play an increasingly important role in the future of leadership. With the rise of automation and artificial intelligence, leaders will need to harness the power of technology to streamline operations, reduce costs, and drive innovation. This requires a strong understanding of emerging technologies and

the ability to balance the potential benefits of technology with the potential risks and unintended consequences.

In addition, diversity and inclusion will continue to be critical focuses for future leaders. As society becomes more diverse, leaders who can create inclusive and equitable workplaces that celebrate differences and foster a sense of belonging will be better equipped to attract and retain top talent. This requires a commitment to continuous learning and self-reflection, as well as a willingness to challenge and dismantle systemic barriers and biases.

Finally, the future of leadership will require a greater focus on social responsibility and sustainability. As businesses and organisations become more aware of their impact on the environment and society, leaders who can create a culture of ethical decision-making and sustainable practices will be better positioned to build trust and create long-term value for all stakeholders. This requires



a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental systems and a commitment to creating shared value for all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the future of leadership will likely be characterised by a move towards more collaborative, emotionally intelligent, technologically savvy, diverse, and socially responsible leadership. As the world continues to change at an unprecedented pace, those who can adapt and evolve their leadership styles to meet these challenges will be better equipped to thrive and create a positive impact in the years to come.

Continues next edition

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...Championing Healthy Living

Workplace anxiety: Symptoms, causes and coping tips

By Pharm. Onyinye Chiekwe, B.Pharm, PharmD, MScPH

Early symptoms of workplace anxiety do not always feel abnormal or unusual. Often, it starts with worrying about something specific about work or work generally, like worrying about a deadline you need to meet or your work performance. These seem like legitimate causes of concern, do they not?

Then often, it progresses to racing or pounding heart (palpitations) when you get a call or message notification from a specific colleague or any work-related call; overreacting to situations on the job; focusing too hard on the negative aspects of the job; having an irrational feeling of dread; obsessing over actions or comments that you would otherwise not think too hard about, or constantly feeling tired.

Workplace anxiety causes poor outcomes for employees and leads to more worrying. It is like a mental trap you cannot escape from because, a large percentage of the time, you do not realise you are trapped.

What workplace anxiety means

Workplace anxiety involves feeling nervous, stressed, uneasy, or tense about work. It could include anxiety about job performance, interactions with colleagues, or public speaking. It refers to stress caused by work that leads to apprehension or the impact of an anxiety disorder at work.

How do I know I have workplace anxiety?

Generally, symptoms appear in the following ways:

- Constant or irrational worrying about work performance
- Trouble falling or staying

- asleep
- Exaggerated reactions or overreacting to situations on the job
- Sustained fatigue or tiredness
- Focusing too much on the negative aspects of one's job
- Excessive worry over mistakes and feeling the need to be perfect all the time
- Eating too much or too little
- Apathy or indifference toward the job
- Feeling irritable or tense
- An unnecessary rush of emotions and crying spells
- Avoiding friends and family
- Having trouble concentrating at work
- Feeling jittery, jumpy, with a racing heartbeat

For healthcare providers, it could include:

- Reduced patience/empathy with patients
- Poor concentration that leads to frequent medication/prescription errors
- Negative attitude toward other members of the healthcare team
- Lack of confidence when among other HCPs
- Diminished passion (questioning one's career choices)

Causes of workplace anxiety What causes workplace anxiety varies among individuals. It is also

peculiar to the characteristics of the workplace. For example, leaving an old job for a new one will make anyone anxious. If you are an introvert and an important part of your job is giving presentations, public speaking, or socialising at a high level, bouts of anxiety may set in when it's time to engage in such activities.

Causes of workplace anxiety could include:

- Excessive workload, leading to working long hours
- Fear of not meeting deadlines or performing poorly
- Dealing with workplace bullying or conflicts
- Having a lack of direction in tasks
- Having a demanding boss
- Feeling a lack of control over the work environment
- Low remuneration
- Maintaining relationships with co-workers
- Experiencing a lack of perception of fairness
- For healthcare providers, it could include losing a patient or fear of losing a patient and a feeling of being overused and undervalued.

How to cope with workplace anxiety

Workplace anxiety can have negative effects on other things that are not work-related, transcending to other aspects of life. It goes without saying that coping with, or efficiently managing workplace anxiety is crucial

- Have a clearly defined job expectation
- Include time for resting while



making daily plans

- Maintain proper diet
- Take outdoor walks during breaks
- Create time for yourself away from work
- Change scenery from time to time
- Identify triggers (difficult patient or colleague) and avoid them if possible
- Know when you need time off.
- Deliberately create time for loved ones

If it does not improve,

- Change job roles (seek transfer to another department, ward or branch)
- Change jobs completely
- Explore the option of changing careers
- Seek professional assistance

To properly manage workplace anxiety, it is necessary to identify specific triggers and learn how to avoid them. In the next edition we will take a deep dive into identifying factors that trigger workplace anxiety.

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BP: Blood pressure.

1. Cardiovasc J Afr. 2010 Feb; 21(1): 61–62.; 2. Drugs. 2006;66(1):51-83.;
3. Expert Opinion on Pharmacotherapy 2011;12(17):2719-2735



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CVD: Cardiovascular disease | LDL-C: Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol

1. Clin Med Insights Cardiol. 2012; 6: 17–33.; 2. JAMA 2007 Mar 28;297(12):1344-53.;
3. Journal of the American College of Cardiology 2017;69(22).;
4. ACC/AHA CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE; Circulation 2019; 140(11): e596-e646.



Establish mentorship programme for young pharmacists' growth, national development, BOF charged

The Chief Executive Officer of Business School Netherlands in Nigeria, Professor Lere Baale, has called on the Board of Fellows of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (BOF-PSN) to institute a mentorship programme that will accelerate the professional growth of young pharmacists and enhance their contributions to national development.

Baale reiterated to the pharmacy elders that investing in the mentorship of the younger pharmacists is crucial to the advancement of their skills and career, as well as being critical to their emergence as transformational leaders.

He averred that the younger generation needs a circle of mentors, role models and coaches, who offer guidance, wisdom and expertise that help to shape the path of success for others. He added that mentors in Pharmacy "provide valuable advice, support, and encouragement along the way, for the overall benefit of the profession and the nation as a whole."

The erudite professor, who was the keynote speaker at the recent BOF-PSN 5th Public Lecture, held at Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, recently, urged the Board, as well as public and private organisations, to embrace mentorship to raise leaders, who will be equipped to accelerate the progress of their different professions and the country at large in the nearest future.

The public lecture was part of the three-day programme organised for the 2023 Mid-Year Meeting (MYM). The event featured a seminar and workshop, the 5th Public Lecture, as well as the Mid-Year Meeting/Award Night.

The Award Night, which was graced by the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, saw the decoration of five notable Nigerians with award of excellence, for their significant contributions to national development.

In Baale's words, "A mentorship programme for young pharmacists can be crucial to their professional development and contribute to national progress. By pairing experienced pharmacy professionals with enthusiastic beginners, we can create a supportive environment that fosters learning, skill enhancement, and career advancement."

"Let us outline the steps to implement an executive mentorship programme for young pharmacists, focusing on their professional growth and its broader impact on national development."

For effective implementation of the mentorship programme, Baale gave a step-by-step guide as follows: "Define programme objectives, by articulating the objectives of the mentorship programme, which is crucial for its success; establish programme structure and resources, by assigning necessary resources to ensure the programme runs smoothly; recruit mentors and mentees; conduct mentor and mentee training; facilitate meaningful mentorship relationships; other educational and networking opportunities; and evaluate the programme's impact."

The seasoned lecturer further highlighted the benefits of mentorship to individuals, saying it helps to identify the core SHAPE of different personalities, where "S" stands for special gifts of mentees, like talents, time management,



Prince Julius Adeluyi-Adeluyi, presenting an award plaque to Prof. Lere Baale, keynote speaker at the 5th BOF-PSN Public Lecture, as the BOF Chairman, Pharm. (Dr) Joel Adagadzu, looks on.

and hidden treasures. "H" stands for heart, which is the seat of the passion of mentees. "A" stands for abilities; "P" stands for personality, and "E" stands for exploration and deployment of both positive and negative historical experiences of mentees for a better future.

He also said that the SHAPE helps mentees to take "D", which stands for decisions, stressing that, as decisions determine destiny, mentorship helps mentees in their journey of destiny.

SHAPE apart, Baale listed other impacts of mentorship on individuals and organisations to include personal growth and development, professional advancement, skill enhancement, expanded network, enhanced organisational culture, social impact and giving back, as well as offering educational and networking opportunities.

In his address earlier at the

programme, the Chairman, BOF-PSN, Pharm. (Dr) Joel Adagadzu, appreciated all Fellows for their contributions towards the success of the programme, which, he said, was his second MYM since assumption of office.

He explained the aptness of the theme "Leveraging mentorship for professional growth and national development" and its crucial role in facilitating a robust relationship between older, vastly experienced pharmacists and younger pharmacists.

Adagadzu said it is important for professional associations to adopt the concept of mentorship as a pathway to fostering positive relationships and to guide the younger professionals effectively towards a prosperous future.

Planning Committee Chairman, 2023 MYM, Pharm. (Mrs) Joke Bakare,

also expressed the gratitude of the Board to all guests at the programme, particularly the Chairman of the occasion, Mr Manason G. Rubianu, president, Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria; the Father of the Day, Prince Julius Adeluyi-Adeluyi, president, Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy; and Chief Host, Prof. Cyril Usifoh, president, PSN.

The award recipients were: Mallam Yusuf O. Ali, SAN, founder and sole financier, Yusuf Olaolu Ali Foundation, and principal partner, Yusuf Ali & Co (Ghalib Chambers); Mr Adetunji Doherty, managing director, Medheight Group of Companies; Alhaji Yusuf Haliru Binji, managing director, BUA Cement; Chief Oluwale Awotuyi, chairman/managing director, Tuyil Pharm. Ind. Ltd, Ilorin; and Mallam Farouk A. Salim, director general/chief executive, Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

Diaspora

It's easier to find your purpose in Nigeria than overseas - Uwubanmwun

continued from page 34

20 per cent back. Nonetheless, I still invest in Canada for the rainy day.

How would you advise younger pharmacists who wish to excel like you?

My advice to young pharmacists that aspire to be like me is to first find their purpose or calling. Once they find their purpose, their destination goal is to give it away to better the world. This is only when the reward can come and come in a good and consistent manner.

I am lucky I found my love and passion early in my career and, through this, I aligned to find my higher purpose or higher calling. As people say, if you do what you love, it never seems like work.

When recent graduates of Pharmacy just seek to finish their internship and then relocate through migration to Canada or

the UK, I try to advise them to first get a few years of work experience in Nigeria, as it is easier to find your purpose in a nation like Nigeria than finding it in the West. It is not impossible in the West to find your purpose but just easier in Nigeria because of the way things work or are structured in Nigeria.

I tell you a secret, if I never worked in Janssen, there would never have been Bio-Generics Nigeria. Even if it was created, it would not have done as well as it is doing, dominating many disease segments market and growing an average of 25 per cent per, year in and out in the last five years in an industry where single-digit growth is the order of the day.

Many people are carried away

just focusing on money. Once this is the target, you lose sight of your purpose, and work becomes a chore.



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Negotiation skills

Good negotiation skill is the ability to engage in discussions with stakeholders to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. It involves effective communication, persuasive arguments, and the art of finding common ground to resolve conflicts and build positive relationships. Potential outcomes of negotiation include reaching agreements, settling disputes, and finding win-win solutions.

Key elements involved in negotiation include:

- **BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement):** BATNA refers to the best option available to a party, if negotiations fail. Knowing one's BATNA empowers negotiators to make informed decisions during the process.
- **Reservation Point:** This is the minimum acceptable outcome for a negotiator. It represents the point beyond which the party is unwilling to continue negotiations.
- **ZOPA (Zone of Possible Agreement):** ZOPA is the range where both parties' acceptable outcomes overlap. Identifying the ZOPA is crucial for finding potential areas of agreement.

The negotiation process typically follows these steps:

1. **Preparation:** Each party assesses their interests, needs, and potential concessions. Understanding the other party's objectives and BATNA is vital for effective preparation.

2. **Opening:** Negotiators present their initial offers and positions, stating their goals and expectations for the negotiation.

3. **Bargaining and dialogue:** Parties engage in back-and-forth exchanges of proposals, counteroffers, and concessions. Active listening and effective communication are essential during this phase.

4. **Exploration of options:** Creative problem-solving is used to explore potential solutions that satisfy both parties' interests and objectives.

5. **Reaching agreement:** When both parties find a mutually acceptable outcome within the ZOPA, an agreement is reached, and terms are formalised.

6. **Closure:** The negotiation concludes with a clear understanding of the agreed-upon terms, followed by implementation and monitoring, if applicable.

In negotiation, you should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- **Reaching agreements:** The primary objective of negotiation is to reach agreements that satisfy the

needs and interests of both parties involved. It involves finding a middle ground where both sides feel they have gained value.

- **Creating value:** Effective negotiation aims to create value for all parties involved. It should go beyond mere compromise but seeking to identify opportunities for mutual benefit.
- **Preserving relationships:** Negotiation is often conducted with stakeholders, with whom the sales leader maintains an ongoing business relationship. Preserving these relationships is crucial, even during conflicts, to ensure long-term collaboration.
- **Resolving Conflicts:** Another key objective of negotiation is to resolve conflicts and disagreements in a constructive and respectful manner. It aims to find resolutions that address the root cause of the conflict.
- **Maximising outcomes:** Negotiation seeks to maximize outcomes for both parties, ensuring that each side gains as much as possible while being mindful of the other's interests.

However, the most desired outcome for the negotiator is achieving a "win-win" situation, where both parties feel satisfied with the agreement reached. In this scenario, the negotiator has successfully advocated for their interests, while also considering the needs and concerns of the other party. A win-win outcome strengthens relationships, promotes trust, and fosters a positive business environment for future collaborations.

The following are examples of things that can be negotiated in pharmaceutical sales management:

1. **Product pricing:** Negotiating with purchasing departments or distributors to determine competitive and mutually beneficial product pricing.

2. **Promotional opportunities:** Negotiating with healthcare facilities to secure opportunities for product presentations and medical education sessions.

3. **Contract terms:** Negotiating favourable contract terms with healthcare providers, distributors, or partners to ensure a balanced and beneficial working relationship.

It is no over-emphasis to state that negotiation skills are vital in pharmaceutical sales management, as they enable sales leaders to navigate complex business relationships, secure favourable deals, and maintain strong partnerships. Whether negotiating with healthcare

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providers, distributors, or internal stakeholders, effective negotiation fosters trust and promotes a win-win approach, leading to sustainable business growth.

Potential benefits of having excellent negotiation skills:

- **Negotiation skills** allow sales leaders to secure agreements and partnerships that benefit both parties, such as gaining formulary inclusion for medications or collaborating on educational events.
- **Conflict resolution:** By adeptly negotiating conflicts, sales leaders can address challenges and maintain positive relationships with customers, sales-team, co-workers, superior ensuring ongoing support and brand loyalty.
- **Effective negotiation** establishes trust and credibility, leading to long-term partnerships and increased customer retention.
- **Negotiation enables**

sales leaders to optimize resource allocation, ensuring the team focuses on high-impact activities that drive results.

- **Strong negotiation skills** provide a competitive edge, allowing pharmaceutical companies to outperform rivals in securing valuable contracts and market opportunities.

By mastering negotiation skills in pharmaceutical sales leadership, sales leaders can drive successful collaborations, maximise market opportunities, and achieve sustainable growth for their teams and organisations.

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No evidence bitter leaf reduces blood sugar – Consultant endocrinologist

With over four decades of practice, the Chief Medical Director of AB Specialist Hospital, Surulere, Lagos, Dr Akiniyi Akinmokun, is one of the most experienced endocrinologists and diabetologists in Nigeria. The University of Lagos and University of Newcastle-trained medical doctor speaks on issues relating to the management and complications of diabetes, in this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**. Excerpts:



Dr Akiniyi Akinmokun

As an endocrinologist and diabetologist, what would you say is the biggest risk factor for diabetes, especially in Nigeria?

Changing lifestyle is a serious issue. Lifestyle has changed negatively in Nigeria in favour of the development of diabetes. We have deviated from consuming more health-friendly traditional food items and graduated to eating junk – burger, soft drinks, and so on. People started becoming overweight. Excess weight is the number one risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. Sedentary lifestyle is the biggest challenge we have. Obesity, lack of exercise and uncomplimentary eating habits all contribute.

The traditional medicine industry is populated by people who claim to have a cure for diabetes. Would you say that the activities of these practitioners are helping in the fight against diabetes?

Unfortunately, I only believe in science. Once there is no science behind any claim, you will regard it as a scam because the only authentic claim is the one that emanates through science. When I see people claiming to cure diabetes, I just laugh and walk away. Diabetes has no cure. It can only be managed.

Is it possible for a diabetic to still live a normal life, sexually speaking, especially for men, bearing in mind the incidence of erectile dysfunction among diabetics?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects virtually everything in the body, from the heart to the genito-urinary system. Erectile dysfunction, blindness, heart

attack and blockage of the arteries are all complications of uncontrolled diabetes.

When you talk about living a normal life, it is relative. The average lifespan in Nigeria today is about 57. So, what is a normal life? If you are talking of a normal life, then the average American should live a normal life in Nigeria.

Generally speaking, a diabetic can still live a normal life if he or she pays attention to the care of diabetes. If you listen to your doctor, take appropriate instructions, eat right, do exercise and take your medication, you will a normal life. From my own experience of managing diabetes in the last 40 years, people can live normal lives. I have very young and very old patients, who I have been managing and they are living normal lives.

However, about five per cent of people, no matter what they do, develop the complications of diabetes. That tells us that there could be a genetic basis for the development of the complications of diabetes, which has nothing to do with sugar control. In the last two decades, we have been talking about glucose toxicity, which shows that focus has shifted from the blood sugar being high to the glucose itself being toxic. Even when you are controlling the sugar, you must also realise that the glucose can also be toxic.

Is there any connection between alcohol consumption and the onset of diabetes?

When you talk about alcohol, it depends on the volume. The regular one or two bottles a day would not harm anybody. Excessive consumption of alcohol has an effect on the development of diabetes. Excessive alcohol consumption may

have an effect on the pancreas, which is the organ that produces insulin and regulates glucose. You may have toxic effects of alcohol on the pancreas in the form of pancreatitis.

Secondarily, this may also affect the liver. This is because the liver is the storage organ for glucose. Excess glucose that is not used by the body is converted to glycogen and stored in the liver. When the body needs glucose, it mobilises the glucose in the liver. For people who consume excess alcohol and suffer cirrhosis, they will have serious problems.

On diabetics, the effect of alcohol is excess calories. A bottle of beer contains about six hundred calories. If you consume four

to five bottles of beer a day, that means you have consumed between 2000 and 3000 calories in a day. The average diabetic is allowed 2000 calories per day but if he or she is obese, the calories should be halved.

Moreover, alcohol is excess calories and can make you put on more weight or depress the pancreas. We advise our patients to drink within the normal range. When a diabetic begins to drink three, four, five bottles, he or she is looking for trouble.

Smoking is a no-go area for diabetics. It is absolutely contraindicated. Cigarette smoking increases the risk of heart attack, peripheral vascular disease and amputation.

There is the myth that bitter leaf is useful in the management of diabetes. Can you expatiate?

It is because people think that the opposite of sweet is bitter. They believe that since sugar is linked with diabetes, bitter leaf will lead to not having the disease. It is falsehood. However, I know that in our part of the world, especially eastern Nigeria, people consume a lot of bitter leaf soup. You can consume it as a vegetable, if you like it but it has no correlation with diabetes. I have not seen any publication that says bitter leaf offers any benefits to diabetics. I tell my patients that the assumption that bitter leaf lowers blood sugar is a myth.

With particular reference to diabetes, can you say that sugar-sweetened beverages or ultra-processed foods trigger the onset of diabetes?

The only relationship between diabetes and these drinks and foods

is that the latter constitute easily available sugars and make you put on weight. Once you put on weight, you develop insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. It is only when you have become diabetic that we advise you not to consume such drinks/foods because of their very high glycaemic index. They also enable the body to accumulate fat.

Can male diabetics maintain sexual fitness even with high blood sugar?

There is no doubt that diabetes is a major cause of erectile dysfunction and this is because the disease causes accelerated vascular aging and promotes the formation of atheromatous plaques and therefore causes impairment of blood flow to the penis.

Secondarily, long-standing diabetes causes autonomic neuropathy. If you have autonomic neuropathy and vascular problem together, you are in double trouble with erectile dysfunction. If you don't want to have diabetes-related erectile dysfunction, then you must manage your diabetes well. However, when you have been diabetic for a long time, you would necessarily suffer the effect of glucose toxicity which is accelerated vascular aging and autonomic neuropathy.

Can we conclude that diabetes is an urban disease?

We can only say that there is a preponderance of diabetes in urban areas because of the lifestyle there. In the village, people trek very long distances and burn off calories. The farmers eat natural foods and spend many hours on their farms – no room for sedentary lifestyle, as seen in urban areas.

In my village, you can hardly see obese people. The fuel subsidy removal is also a blessing in disguise, as it will help many people keep fit by trekking in the wake of hike in transportation fares.

What is the economic burden of diabetes in Nigeria?

In the last two decades, I have been delivering lectures at different forums about the economic burden of diabetes. From the moment you tell a person that he or she is diabetic till death, it is an economic problem.

In our environment, the moment you tell some people that they are diabetic, they become so devastated. Some of them will tell you they reject it and they do so for the next two years, instead of accepting and living with the reality. They inadvertently neglect the disease; it becomes complicated and because the disease affects everywhere, it can cause increase in the incidence of blood pressure, damage the kidneys, cause heart attack and is the commonest reason for amputation. All these things are very difficult to manage and cost-intensive.

Apart from the morbidity associated with the disease, it also leads to man-hour loss. It is a big economic problem, both for the individual and the society. You can imagine if someone like Dangote has complicated diabetes. How do you think that would affect Nigerians?

In the United Kingdom, the budget for diabetes management is twice the budget for health in Nigeria. An average diabetic is hypertensive, has vascular peripheral disease and eye problem. The prescription of a diabetic sometimes involves about ten different tablets. An average diabetic spends, at least N60,000 for drugs, in a country where the minimum wage is N30,000.



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ACPN vows to crush register-and-go syndrome with technology

- As Ikeja Zone takes free health screening to traders

By Adebayo Oladejo

Community Pharmacists, under the auspices of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Lagos State Chapter, have pledged to leave no stone unturned in curbing the menace of "register-and-go" (R&G), especially with effective deployment of necessary technology.

Register-and-go is an unethical practice whereby a registered pharmacist loans his or her certificate of registration to an unregistered individual, usually a charlatan, in exchange for money.

Speaking at the free health outreach programme, organised by the Ikeja Zone of ACPN-Lagos, at the popular Alade Market, in Ikeja, Chairman of the association, Pharm. Lawrence Ekhator, noted that there are bad eggs among the practitioners who perpetrate R&G and thereby allowing the influx of charlatans into the respected profession.

According to Ekhator, who was the guest of honour at the programme, R&G has become more rampant, especially at a time that the country is faced with a shortage of healthcare practitioners, due to brain drain.

Speaking further, Ekhator noted that R&G that has become a seemingly insurmountable embarrassment to the profession can be curbed with technology. He said this would involve all registered pharmacists in the state being



Some members of ACPN, Ikeja Zone, posing with Pharm. (Mrs) Abiola Paul-Ozieh, chairman, HCPAN, Lagos State (3rd from left); Pharm. Lawrence Ekhator, chairman, ACPN, Lagos State, and Pharm. (Mrs) Vivian Ibeh, coordinator, ACPN, Ikeja Zone, at the free healthcare outreach, held at Alade Market, Lagos.

biometrically captured, such that, at the click of a button, the location and identity of the owner of every pharmacy outlet in the state can be known.

According to him, "We have tried several means in the past. We engaged the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) to assist us in this regard, but all to no avail. So, we have decided to stop putting the blame at the doorstep of the PCN and take the bull by the horn in our little way. We believe that if the data of all

registered community pharmacists is biometrically captured, there won't be room for R&G any longer."

Speaking on the free health screening, which also featured distribution of free drugs to participants, the number one community pharmacist in the state lauded the programme, noting that it was in fulfilment of the motto of the association, which is to empower the pharmacist and protect the people. He added that the best way to protect the people is to safeguard their

health.

Speaking in the same vein, the Chairman, Healthcare Providers Association of Nigeria (HCPAN), Lagos State Branch, Pharm. Abiola

Paul-Ozieh, asserted that the biometric data capturing of community pharmacists is a right step in the right direction, adding that the pharmacy profession is not for traders but experts, who are expected to do things professionally.

According to Paul-Ozieh, who is a former chairman of ACPN-Lagos, the step taken by the association was self-regulation, targeted at reducing or possibly eliminating R&G, saying the practice of dropping one's certificate in exchange for an agreed monetary

compensation and walking away is absurd and should stop.

She said, "We have engaged the government on this issue severally and the question they keep asking us is, what has been our effort as an association? So, this step by the current administration is a commendable decision, and we hope it serves the purpose it intended."

continued on page 57

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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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Nigerian-made drugs are of high quality, meet international standards - Verghese

Mr Varkey Verghese is the managing director and chief executive officer, Jawa International. In this interview with **RANMILOWO OJALUMO**, he recounts Jawa's success story, so far, as well as its immediate future plans. He also dismisses the notion that locally made drugs cannot favourably compete in the international market. Excerpts:



Mr Varkey Verghese

Jawa has recorded some achievements in the past few years. Can you briefly share with us the success story of the company, so far?

Well, we started Jawa International 24 years ago. We had a humble beginning, with five products in our basket; but today, we have been able to expand our activities, and we now have more than 120 products.

We have also divided these products into three divisions. The first comprises OTC products. The second consists of ethical products - which are prescription products, managed by Annie Pharma Limited. Some of the products are manufactured locally and some are from overseas. The third division deals with animal care - that is, veterinary drugs. It is handled by Kattle Care Limited. These are the areas that we have grown into in the last 24 years.

What is the company's next move?

Our next move is to upgrade our manufacturing facilities, so as to meet the standard set by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). We are embarking on capital intensive projects in our existing plant and we are also setting up a new plant of beta-lactam manufacturing. These are the things we are doing now.

In addition to that, we are adding more products to our basket because we have created a good marketing network in Nigeria. We have six branches in Nigeria to cover all the geopolitical zones. We have one in the northwest that is based in Kano; we have one in the northeast that is based in Yola; we have one in Suleja that covers the middle-belt, and we have one in Enugu to covers southeast; so also in Aba. We have in Ibadan, as well

as in Lagos.

In all these places, we have warehouses that are being managed by a manager and medical representatives. So, we need more quality products to fill the market and sustain our operation.

What is the current state of the Beta-lactam factory?

The factory is 85 per cent completed. The remaining 15 per cent will be completed, hopefully, before December, this year, because some consignments are already on the way and, as soon as they arrive, technicians will come to do the necessary installation.

By the grace of God, the remaining work in the factory will be completed before the end of December this year. By 2024, Beta-lactam products from the factory will hit the market.

As the CEO of a manufacturing company in Nigeria, how would you describe the past seven months of the year 2023?

The past seven months have been a great disappointment and I am sure this is not just for us at Jawa International but also for other companies in the country. The naira redesign, or change of colour, and the non-availability of cash really crippled the purchasing power of many Nigerians. This was preceded by fuel scarcity and then the elections came. The last seven months have really been tough.

Is there anything at all you consider good within the past seven months?

Well, the good thing that I think has happened in the course of the years is the new government that came on board and then made some radical changes. Though it may be bitter to start with, I am sure that, in the long run, it will help the country.

The fuel subsidy that was removed is a necessity. Within the period, fuel consumption has reduced by about 30 per cent, according to information in the public domain, which is a big saving to the country. We will all get used to it.

Many people are moving around with luxury cars and SUVs, but with this increase in the price of fuel, people will find it a bit difficult to do so. If you ask me, to be frank, the government should encourage people to start using two-wheelers. People should start using two-wheelers to the office. In countries like the UK, people go to the office by public transport. 90 per cent of people don't take their cars to work.

Cycling is another

way to go to the office; it is a healthy endeavour. I think it is high time we changed our mentality and orientation in the country.

What is your take on the forex unification policy?

It is also a good policy because a lot of corruption is taking place through the forex exchange. Although it will increase the price of products now, I think it will be a good move in the long run.

As the CEO of Jawa, what is the key thing that has been helping you to move on over the years?

It is passion; passion to succeed. Whatever you are doing, you must have passion for it. It is passion that will help you to excel. The desire to excel in whatever you are doing is also key.

What do you think stakeholders in the Nigerian pharmaceutical space need to do to move the industry to greater heights?

Stakeholders, especially those in manufacturing, need to raise their standard in terms of their production facilities; that is the only way they will be able to come up with quality products. Stakeholders have to look

inward and then develop modern facilities so that we can compete favourably with imported products.

The importers, on the other hand, should look inward and start manufacturing locally. They should not just be importing but they should invest in local manufacturing. This is very important and this is why I must commend the 5+5 policy of NAFDAC, which is meant to encourage local manufacturing.

What do you think the Nigerian government needs to do to also move the industry forward?

The Nigerian government needs to, as a matter of urgency, encourage local manufacturers in different ways. Many foreign donors are coming to support the Nigerian health sector. One way they do this is through the provision of drugs to hospitals and health centres. While this is a good move, the donors should buy those drugs locally. For instance, if they want to help in fighting malaria in Nigeria, they will provide antimalarial drugs to the hospitals and health centres. Those antimalarial drugs should not be imported. They should be bought from local manufacturers.

The notion that the drugs manufactured locally are not up to standard is not true. Drugs manufactured in Nigeria are of good quality and they meet international standards. Patronising the local manufacturers will help to create more jobs.

Another important thing is the health intervention fund. The Buhari administration provided the health intervention fund, through the Central Bank, and I am sure some companies in Nigeria benefited from it. The current government should make such funds available.

To set up a pharmaceutical plant today that will be in NAFDAC standard, even if it is a small one, you will spend nothing less than N1.5 to N2 billion. To set up such a facility, you need a low-interest fund for a long period and this is what many countries are doing to be self-sufficient.

What is your advice to upcoming CEOs?

They should look inward, especially in some areas where we don't have too many players - like the injectables. Upcoming investors in the pharma sector can set up an injectable factory, which will help to meet the demand of the citizens

And your professional message to the players in the industry?

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Atueyi wins Chike Okonyia Award 2022

By Temitope Obayendo

It was a historic moment for Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, publisher of **Pharmanews**, at the conference hall of Dolly Hills Hotel, Onitsha, venue of the 2023 Dennis Old Boys Association (DOBA) Convention Banquet, as he was declared winner of the prestigious Chike Okonyia Award 2022. This, according to the organisers, was in appreciation of his dedicated and meritorious service towards the advancement of the association that comprises alumni of Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), Onitsha.

The banquet, which was well-attended by many distinguished Dengramites and their guests, had, in attendance, Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo; President General, DOBA Worldwide, Dr (Sir) Eric Anazodo; DOBA Trustee, Rt. Revd. Prof. Emmanuel Uchechukwu Iheagwam; Chairman, DMGS Management Board, Prof. (Sir) Ilochi Okafor (SAN); Principal, DMGS, Ven. Chigozie Emeka Anieto; 1st Vice-President, Prof. Nnamdi Onuora-Oguno, among others.

Atueyi, who was represented by his eldest son, who is the Executive Editor, **Pharmanews**, Mr Dozie Atueyi, expressed gratitude to DOBA for the "special recognition".

In his remarks, the younger Atueyi disclosed that DMGS holds a very special position in their family for instilling in his father the exceptional training, knowledge and discipline that have contributed to his remarkable life.

He said, "Today, we are so grateful for this award. We have over 30 goodwill messages in the convention programme booklet as support from our friends. My father has also donated 210 copies of his books to the school, as well as his personal contribution of N500,000, to support the convention."

"This is just to say thank you to DMGS, for being an inspiration. Thank you for blessing our family; and thank you for instilling values in the leaders of tomorrow."

The **Pharmanews** executive director further revealed how he, too, desired to have his secondary education at DMGS, saying even though his ambition did not materialise, as he ended up attending Federal Government Enugu, he was still privileged to benefit from the special training given to DMGS students from the then Principal of FGC, Enugu, Mr S. Abia, also a Dengramite.

Also speaking at the event, the keynote speaker, Professor Ikenna M. Alumona, challenged the old boys to improve on their passion and care for one another, saying the current gaps in relationship among them needed to be bridged.

Addressing the theme of the convention, "DOBA in the political landscape: infinite possibilities", Alumona said while it is undeniable that massive changes are taking place globally, the old boys must strive to maintain the cherished norms, values and traditions they are known for. These, he said, constitute the essence of their identity as Dengramites.

Further challenging the DOBA members, the keynote speaker said, "Why does it appear that DOBA has not been able to leave its footprint in the realms of politics, just as we have done excellently in other areas of human endeavour, such as Law, Medicine, History, Theology, Engineering, Education, Political Science, etc.? What are the forces behind this development and how can we remedy the situation?"

"In the other areas of public life, it appears that our fortunes and achievements as a group are declining. There used to be an aura, prestige and graceful carriage associated with Dengramites. This is why we are envied by the rest of the society. Some persons, out of envy, have even claimed that we are members of a secret cult. The bond and love that characterise relations between old boys appears to be disappearing fast. The desire to be our brother's keeper is no longer alive as it used to be. The DMGS affinity and bond is no longer strong and a thing of joy."

Continuing, Alumona said: "Gone are the days when having the DMGS sticker on your car would attract help and sympathy if you encounter any difficulty while travelling? We heard stories of how old boys helped to secure employment for the younger ones, who were in search of employment. This was our glorious past. It was the past in which the likes of the late Justice Anomnachi willed part of his estate to our association, just to ensure that old boys who were in transit around Owerri could find a place to stay."

"It was also in the past in which the likes of Chike Okonyia and Dr Walter Eze, of blessed memory, laboured so much to contribute to the rebuilding of our *alma mater*, after the Nigerian Civil War. That was the DMGS spirit. Some of us benefitted from it and, in our own little way, are trying to replicate the same gesture to the younger generation."

"Agreed that times have changed as a result of the forces of modernisation, globalisation and increasing insecurity, but we still need to hold unto our cherished norms, values and traditions."

Established in 1974, with Pharm. (Sir) Chris U. Efobi, as the first recipient, the Chike Okonyia Award was instituted in honour of Michael Chike Okonyia, a member of the Class of 1939 of DMGS, who was a district/divisional officer in eastern Nigeria, in the 50s. He was also a teacher, author, music composer, artist, and a civil servant. He died in November, 1969.

The award is presented annually to the most illustrious old boy of DMGS.



College

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Glitz, glamour, as Safco boss, Afon, marks 50th birthday

By Adebayo Oladejo



The celebrant, Pharm. Bayo Afon (middle), with his pharmacist colleagues and friends at the event.

In a show of love and solidarity, several pharmacist colleagues, notable personalities, top government officials, friends and family members turned up for the 50th birthday ceremony of Pharm. Adebayo Afon, chief executive officer, Safco Mega Solutions Limited, and managing director, Afonchies Pharmacy.

At the glitzy ceremony, which recently took place at the Empressa Hotel, Ajah, Lagos, friends and family took turns to felicitate with the celebrant, while listing the various ways he had affected their lives positively.

The visibly elated Afon, decked in white native attire, like that of his friends, could not hide his feelings as he moved around the auditorium exchanging pleasantries with guests.

Speaking at the event, Pharm. Ogenechuko Omaruaye, managing director of Newheight Pharmaceuticals Limited, and vice-president of the Pharmaceutical Wholesalers and Distributors Association of Nigeria, (PWDAN), noted that Afon had been a good and dependable colleague and brother to him. He added that their relationship spanned close to 20 years, having graduated from the same school, the University of Benin, Edo State.

He further described the celebrant as a philanthropic soul, who had helped many with his generosity. He revealed that their relationship became more solidified, when the need to form an association that would represent the interest of the pharmaceutical wholesalers and distributors in the country arose, saying he became a founding member and a dedicated stakeholder.

Said Omaruaye, "The celebrant and I share a lot of things in common, from attending the same university, doing the same business to practising in the state; but, I must be sincere, Afon is a very interesting personality, who is always passionate about whatever cause he believes in and he offers value wherever he is."

Expressing a similar view, Pharm. Laide Soetan, managing director of NHC Pharma Limited lauded Afon's achievements in the pharmaceutical field as well as in life, describing him as a hardworking and dependable person.

According to Soetan, who is also the secretary of PWDAN, Afon's astuteness in the business world is the reason the branches of his pharmacy keep increasing.

Disclosing that she got to know the Afonchies' boss closely about

10 years ago, Soetan said she had found him to be a very selfless person who is ready to assist and offer value, both in personal relationship and professionally.

"If Pharm. Afon is convinced about something, he is ready to spend all his money on it, and he has been exhibiting this, even at the level of PWDAN. He has done a lot of things selflessly without asking to be paid back. He is a committed and passionate colleague, and he is a socialite that likes to enjoy life. So I wish him well in his business and personal life," she said.

Also speaking, Pharm. George Okon, managing director of Dlightsom Mount Pharmacy Limited, and former coordinator of ACPN, Eti-Osa Zone, remarked that his relationship with the celebrant dated back to their internship days, adding that they were also fortunate to serve in the same ACPN, as coordinator and assistant coordinator respectively.

He continued, "Pharm. Afon is a very industrious and focus-driven person, and in every endeavour, he knows what he wants to achieve. As they say, the look does not determine who a person is, but it is when you get closer that one would know that he knows what he is doing. I wish him more life in good health and I pray his desires will come to pass."

An in-law to the celebrant, Dr Ide Onah, as well as other loved ones and friends also attested to Afon's tenacity of purpose, professionalism, dedication, kindness, cheerful giving, and cool-headedness, among other virtues.

In his reaction, the celebrant appreciated God for allowing him to witness the Golden Jubilee adding that not everyone enjoys such a privilege.

Recalling his earlier years, he said growing up was a bit tough, especially after the demise of his dad, Pharm. Adegboyega Afon, who he said taught him so many things. He added that the effort of his mum, coupled with a good upbringing, saw him and his siblings through till today.

He said: "I never wanted to study Pharmacy, even though it was the wish of my mother and the family. When I eventually did, I preferred to finish from the school of pharmacy and leave the country for greener pastures abroad, not minding the desires of the family. But, as fate would have it, I left Benin, Edo State, for Lagos for internship, and in 2004, I set up my own pharmacy, Afonchies, which has grown to over 10 branches today."

ACPN vows to crush register-and-go syndrome with technology

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Also speaking on the essence of regular check-ups, exercise and healthy diets in the prevention of diseases, Pharm. Vivian Ibeh, coordinator, ACPN, Ikeja Zone, noted that, driven by the popular saying that "health is wealth", pharmacists in Ikeja and its axis had decided to make the process easier by bringing healthcare, checkups, consultation and others closer to the people and making it free of charge.

In Ibeh's words, "As a follow-up to our outreaches in the past, we have decided to settle for Alade Market, knowing well that the environment is much more neutral and diversified. So, we have come to showcase what we do and represent in the healthcare space, so that they will know that we are the closest to the people and that we care for them."

"Our members here today conducted free health screening on about 200 traders in this market, and we also counselled them on the importance of disease-prevention and why they should avoid self-medication and drug abuse."

In her reaction, an octogenarian trader in the market, Alhaja Abibat Balogun, appreciated ACPN, Ikeja Zone, for bringing the free health screening to their doorsteps. She called for more support to enable average Nigerians live a meaningful life.

Adepoju- Bello takes a bow, as Ayoola emerges dean of pharmacy faculty, UNILAG

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos (UNILAG), has elected Professor Gloria Abiodun Ayoola to pilot its affairs for the next two years.

Ayoola replaces Professor Ronke Adepoju-Bello, whose tenure ended on 31 July, 2023.

The new dean was elected alongside Dr Foluke Ayeni as the sub-dean, on 20 June.

Prior to her election, Ayoola had presented a seven-point agenda in her manifesto. The agenda includes prioritising staff welfare, training and development; providing an alternative source of electricity to improve staff productivity; creating a conducive teaching and learning environment for lecturers and students; and improving staff-students' interaction.

Others are: improving the relationship between the faculty and alumni, especially those in diaspora; establishment of, at least, one ISO certificate laboratory within the faculty; as well as adopting a leadership style that is open and transparent, enabling the faculty to adapt to change as and when needed.

"My area of focus is to create a conducive environment for



Prof. Gloria Abiodun Ayoola

told *Pharmanews* in an interview.

The new dean also called on all alumni of the faculty to partner with her administration. "We are calling on all our alumni, home and abroad, to partner with us in this regard so we can all have a faculty that we can be proud of," Ayoola said.

Until she assumed the deanship position, Ayoola had held various positions in the faculty. She has been a member of the Publication Vetting Committee since 2022. She was the Chairman of the 2nd Faculty of Pharmacy Scientific Conference (2021-2023).

Ayoola had also served as head of the Department of Pharmaceutical

learning, by initiating the development of a new faculty building and ensuring constant power supply, so that research activities can thrive", Ayoola

Chemistry for two terms, which ran from August 2009 to July 2011 and August 2016 to 2018. She was also the chairman of the Departmental Curriculum Review Committee from 2014 to 2017.

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OAU inaugural lecture: Akanmu advocates funding for indigenous herbal products

By Adebayo Oladejo

A Professor of Pharmacology at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Prof. Moses Atanda Akanmu, has charged government and wealthy Nigerians to invest in the industrial manufacturing of the country's indigenous herbal products.

Akanmu gave the charge while delivering the 373rd Inaugural Lecture of the university, with the topic, "Pharmacology unravels nature: paradoxical effects of endogenous natural substances", at the prestigious Oduduwa Hall, of the over 60-year-old institution.

The don noted that such investment will ensure that the products are prepared and packaged according to international standards, saying this comes with several benefits.

According to him, aside from helping to improve the health of Nigerians, such a gesture will also help to provide outlets for research efforts, create wealth for medicinal plant researchers, and provide job opportunities for the citizens.

He also stated that government needs to help the researchers in sourcing for foreign exchange directly from the Central Bank, in order to purchase the needed items, consumables and equipment.

Akanmu further noted that pharmaceutical industries should fund herbal research and manufacturing, adding that there is need for large scale cultivation of herbal plants, as the country has vast lands in the universities.

He said, "We need to maintain a very strong connection with traditional knowledge, regarding



Prof. Moses Atanda Akanmu, delivering his inaugural lecture

collection and processing of herbal medicines, so that the greatest majority of herbal medicines that are produced are consistent with those used historically. This will ensure optimum harvest times, drying times, and processing conditions for producing high-quality herbal medicines."

Akanmu, who was the immediate past dean of the pharmacy faculty, said there is need to also waive taxes on the items being imported directly, adding that it is essential to work with regulatory agencies, such as NAFDAC, NDLEA, and the Federal Ministry of Health, for the smooth importation of controlled drugs needed for research.

"For example, at the peak of one of my research works, we ordered for a drug to be imported from the UK

and the company was unable to deliver because it was not allowed to leave the UK at the airport," he said.

Speaking further on the importance of collaboration in research, the don explained that all research works are multidisciplinary in nature, emanating from collaboration with colleagues within and outside the university, including international collaborators.

He said that he acknowledged the contributions of his collaborators, as well as past undergraduate, master's and PhD students, who, under his supervision, worked diligently to produce some of the results presented in the lecture.

Akanmu, who is also the chairman, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Osun State Branch, explained that natural products have played significant roles throughout the world in treating and preventing human diseases for thousands of years, adding that natural product medicines come from various source materials, including, terrestrial plants, microorganisms, marine organisms, vertebrates and invertebrates.

Speaking on his research findings on honey, Akanmu disclosed that after the investigation on the effects of honey administration on rats,

following electrodes implantation for electroencephalogram (EEG) and electromyogram (EMG) recordings with simultaneous locomotor activity evaluation, it was discovered that honey can improve sleep and therefore may be useful in the alleviation or treatment of insomnia and possibly other related central nervous system disorders, depending on the source and constituents.

According to him, "These findings suggest that honey can improve sleep by promoting NREM sleep and REM sleep. Honey may be useful in the alleviation or treatment of insomnia and possibly other related CNS disorders."

He however noted that there is need to exercise caution in taking natural products as medicinal agents, until the scientific evidences in relation to their pharmacological and toxicological effects have been established.

In his opening remarks, Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Professor Adebayo Simeon Bamire, congratulated the inaugural lecturer, noting that inaugural lecture is an academic tradition that is often considered a rite of passage for professors. He added that it is an opportunity for the inaugural lecturer to showcase his expertise, research interests, and academic achievements.

Speaking with pressmen after the lecture, the duo of Prof. Cyril Usifoh, president, PSN, and Prof. Margaret Olubunmi Afolabi, dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, OAU, described Akanmu as an erudite and hardworking scholar and go-getter, who has weathered the storm to become what he is today.

They added that the lecturer blazed the trail in so many aspects, particularly in pursuing his interest in pharmacology, not minding the not-so-favourable environment of research in academia.

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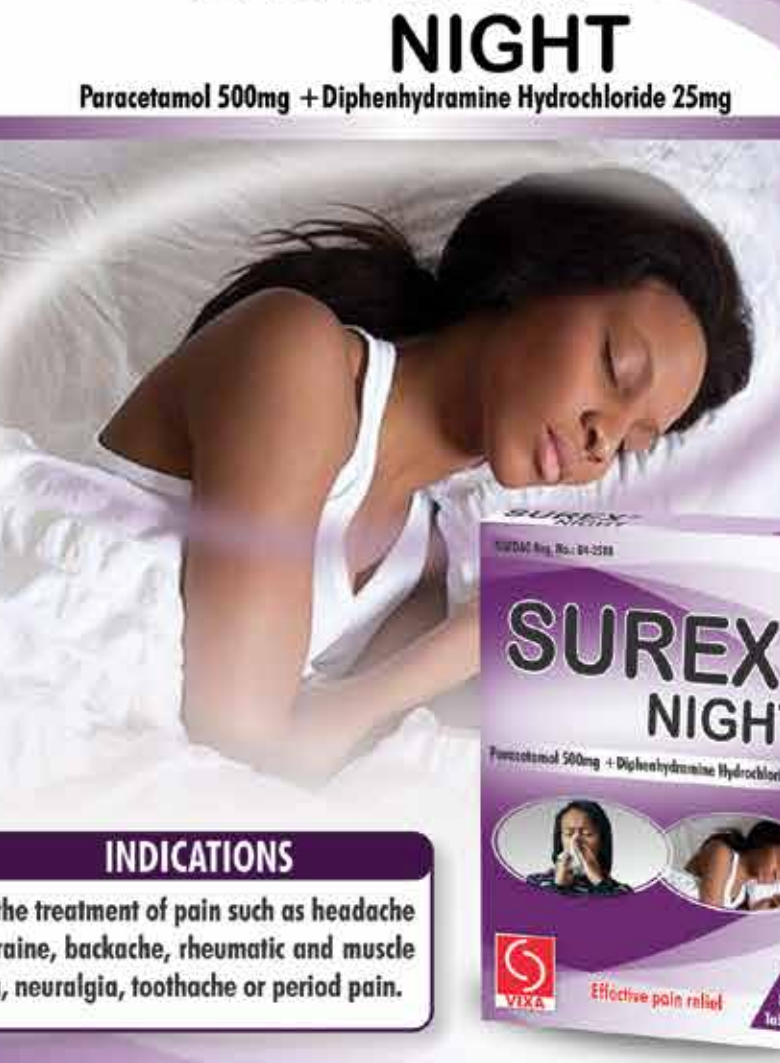
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Pharma manufacturers task FG, banks on financial support, better policies

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recent disclosure by the Federal Government, through the Special Adviser to the President on Health, Salma Anas-Ibrahim, of plans to reduce drug importation from 60 to 40 per cent, not much can be achieved unless there is provision of flexible loans, single digit interest rate, and a smooth transition to a possible 30 to 50 per cent of local manufacturing.

They also harped on the importance of favourable policies from government, as well as financial institutions, noting that these will go a long way in cushioning the effects of the harsh economy on their activities, while improving the health of the nation and the GDP.

Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun, CEO of St. Racheal's Pharma, in his address at the forum, lamented the continuous dependence of Nigeria on other countries for its pharmaceutical supplies, saying the industry's growth will continue to be hampered, except there is a drastic change. A key part of this change, he said, is getting huge financial support to boost local manufacturers' capacity.

Identifying the important role that financial institutions play in the economy, especially in assisting businesses and the various sectors to grow, Adeosun said banks need to do more to support the pharmaceutical industry.

According to him, "Challenging areas, such as access to loan facilities, need to be looked into. Alongside, there has to be flexibility when it comes to loans and collaterals.

"There is also need to network with government to better have a good grasp of policies and have a smooth transition into aligning with policies."



L-R : Mr Ahmed Kagara, divisional head, Bank Of Industry(BOI); Pharm.Akinjide Adeosun, chairman, St.Racheal's Pharma; Pharm. Olanike Kolawole, deputy general manager, Ecobank and Pharm.Lekan Asuni, CEO, Lefas Pharmaceuticals, at the forum.

The St. Racheal's boss also called for a reduction of CRR of DMBs, from 32.5 per cent to 10.0 per cent, similar to what is obtainable in merchant banks.

He said, "Nationally and sub-nationally, governments must support pharmaceutical industries through PPP models. There is need for free medical management palliative for indigent patients and assured national security, through improved and large scale local manufacturing."

In his presentation at the forum, titled, "Renaissance: The size of the pharmaceutical opportunities in Nigeria", Pharm. Ayodeji Alaran, MD of PBR Life Sciences, reiterated the strategic position of the pharma industry in providing medications and other services to strengthen the health of the citizens and the nation's

security.

He stressed that the state of the health sector is reflective of how healthy and secure, in terms of access to healthcare, a country is.

He also called for immediate intervention to support local pharma industries, citing that the COVID-19 outbreak had further revealed the health sector's vulnerability, with its high import dependency.

Also speaking at the programme, Pharm. Lekan Asuni, MD, Lefas, and former MD of GSK, identified paucity of data as another challenge in the pharma industry, and called for aggregation of data to help the players in their businesses.

In her presentation on "The renaissance of Nigeria's manufacturing sector and the role of financial institutions", Mrs

Ijeoma Ozulumba, ED/ chief finance officer of Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN), explained that only about 17 per cent of loans and advances had been made to the manufacturing sector in the country in recent years.

She highlighted some of the contributions of the sector to the nation to include economic growth, employment, forex, earnings, technology transfer and innovation, value chain development and import substitution.

On the roles of financial institutions in helping to grow the pharma manufacturing industry, she said they include providing access to capital, investing and financing specialty,

infrastructure development, power supply, transport and logistics enablement, risk management and insurance, export financing, especially as share of export had been low, trade facilitation, support to SMEs, among others.

Ozulumba also noted that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) also provides opportunities for the local pharma manufacturing industries to integrate and bloom.

She assured that her organisation would increase funding opportunities and access for improved economic control and development.

Mr Dimeji Abolade, representing Sanofi, also stressed the need for full capacity utilisation of factories and human resources in the pharma manufacturing industry.

Drug import reduction: Right decision, wrong process, says Usifoh

continued from back page

these pharmaceutical manufacturers to produce these drugs, so how will they cope?"

"By reducing importation and increasing local manufacturing, it will create massive job opportunities and reduce the rate of fake drugs in the country. But what have we put in place to ensure that companies like Bond Chemical Industries Limited have good roads to move their goods, and also have enough credit facility to expand and meet up with the 60 per cent?"

He added: "I am saying this, without any doubt, that most of the fake and substandard drugs come through our borders, due to medicine insecurity. So, the reduction is a positive decision, but I hope it's not too late for the government to do the right thing by involving the stakeholders and do other things are necessary to truly reduce the importation of drugs from 60 per cent to 40 per cent."

While commending the 87-year-old Chairman of Bond, Chief Theophilus Adebawale Omotosho, the Asiwaju of Afijio Land, Oyo State, Usifoh averred that the deployment of technology in the running of the ultramodern factory is a welcome development.

The PSN boss, who went round the factory, along with the Bond's team, described it a world-class industry, equipped with hi-tech facilities for the production of tablets, capsules, dry powder, liquids, and other products.



Pharm. Remi Omotosho, managing director, Bond Chemical and Industries Limited, and Prof. Cyril Usifoh, president, PSN (middle) in a group photograph with Bond's staff at the end of the tour.

Usifoh also seized the occasion to charge the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to review what he described as its unnecessary billing system on registration of drugs, adding that the agency's attempts at being a fund-generating body make drug unaffordable in most cases.

While welcoming the PSN president, Pharm. Clement Adeboye, general manager, Bond Chemical,

expressed delight at the visit, stating that the company appreciated his efforts towards repositioning pharmaceutical practice in Nigeria.

Addressing Usifoh, Adeboye said: "At this time that we have the opportunity of meeting you, we would urge you to please put in your effort to ensure that government patronises our products and other locally manufactured products, as they are the biggest buyer of pharmaceuticals.

With their consistent patronage, it will help us to solve so many challenges."

Adeboye, who stood in for Omotosho, said Bond is a local manufacturer of high-quality, safe and affordable pharmaceutical products, adding that the company had started as a retail pharmacy called Bond Chemists Limited, in 1977.

"The factory of Bond Chemical Industries Limited, situated in Awe, Oyo State, Nigeria was officially commissioned in 1988. So, the company has been in the manufacturing

business for the past 35 years. We have progressed and we have recorded some remarkable achievements, as we have expanded from the initial small factory to the old factory, and in line with the recent prompting by NAFDAC that there should be a minimum requirement, especially as regards the WHO standard, we felt the need to also upgrade. That's what led to this new factory that we started using about two years ago," he said.

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Drug import reduction: Right decision, wrong process, says Usifoh

-Visits Bond's ultramodern facility

By Adebayo Oladejo

Following the recent move by the Federal Government to reduce the country's drug importation from 60 to 40 per cent, President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Prof. Cyril Usifoh, has disclosed that, as laudable as the decision was, it was taken without vital inputs from stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry.

Usifoh, who made the disclosure during a recent visit to the state-of-the-art manufacturing factory of Bond Chemical Industries Limited, in Awe, Oyo State, stressed that, without putting the necessary measures in place to ensure that local manufacturers meet up with the 60 per cent allotted to them, the import reduction may become counterproductive.

According to him, "There are manufacturing companies situated in parts of the country where they don't have good road infrastructure to get their products to the end users. How will they meet up? Also, there are no credit facilities for the majority of

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Sir (Dr) Eric Anazodo, president general, DOBA Worldwide, presenting the Chike Okonyia Award plaque to the representative of Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, Dozie Atueyi, at the DMGS Old Boys Association Convention Banquet, held in Onitsha, Anambra State, recently .

Pharma manufacturers task FG, banks on financial support, better policies

By Temitope Obayendo

Pharmaceutical manufacturers in Nigeria have stated that for the country to adequately boost its pharmaceutical production capacity and ultimately attain medicine security, both the government and private entities, especially financial institutions, must be willing to render necessary assistance through financial support and enabling policies.

The stakeholders gave the charge at the recent St. Racheal's

Pharma Finance Forum, which had the theme: "Manufacturing renaissance in Nigeria".

Recounting their ordeals and survival strategies during the COVID-19 era, the manufacturers said they managed to perform at their peak, despite hurdles encountered, saying this proves that they can do much better, if given the necessary wherewithal.

They added that, even with the

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