



## Oborevwo, Usifoh, others advocate collaboration to drive universal health coverage

- As over 800 community pharmacists attend ACPN 42<sup>nd</sup> annual conference

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. (Chief) Sheriff Oborevwo, has led other stakeholders in the healthcare sector to charge pharmacists

By Adebayo Oladejo

to forge a harmonious relationship with other healthcare professionals, in order to build a qualitative

healthcare system that caters to the need of every Nigerian.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the recent 42<sup>nd</sup> continued on page 16



L-R: Pharm George Friday (MAW), director, Sales & Marketing, Phamatex Nig. Ltd; Nollywood actor, Chigozie Atuanya, Luter brand ambassador; Nollywood actress, Rachel Okonkwo, Luter brand ambassador; and Chief Joseph Ebowusim, MD/CEO, Phamatex Nig. Ltd, during the launch of Luter, an antimalarial drug, held recently at Phamatex head office, Festac, Lagos.

**Compelling evidence that bitter leaf reduces blood sugar in humans** page 46

**Wellness and cholesterol: A misunderstood friendship** page 25

**How CBN intervention fund boosted capacity of pharma manufacturers - Ayebae** page 34





## pharmanews

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All correspondence on editorial matters should be directed to:  
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8 Akinwunmi Street, Mende,  
Maryland, Lagos  
P.O. Box 2213, Ikeja  
Tel: 08057235128, 08055212962.

E-mail: [pharmanews@yahoo.com](mailto:pharmanews@yahoo.com),  
[info@pharmanewsonline.com](mailto:info@pharmanewsonline.com)  
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### PHARM. SEGUN ONAKOYA

Pharm. Segun Onakoya is the director of Pharmaceutical Services, Health Service Commission, Lagos State.

He attended Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where he bagged his Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. He also obtained a master's degree (MSc) in Pharmaceutical Chemistry from the University of Lagos.

Onakoya joined the services of the Lagos State Government in 1992 as Grade 1 Pharmacist, under the defunct Hospital Management Board, and was posted to General Hospital, Ikorodu.

In 1994, he was deployed to Ayinke House, at the General Hospital, Ikeja. While there, his skillful leadership led to the development of a sustainable Drugs Revolving Fund Scheme from a N2 million seed money to over N1 million daily prescriptive value.

With his expertise in strategic management, he was posted to Ijede General Hospital in 1996, where he was mandated to set up the Department of Pharmacy. He also served at the Onikan Health Centre and Apapa General Hospital, from 1998 to 2003.

As a very resourceful practitioner, Onakoya was again transferred to Hospital Management Board in 2003, where he became an integral part of the transition to the Health Service Commission.

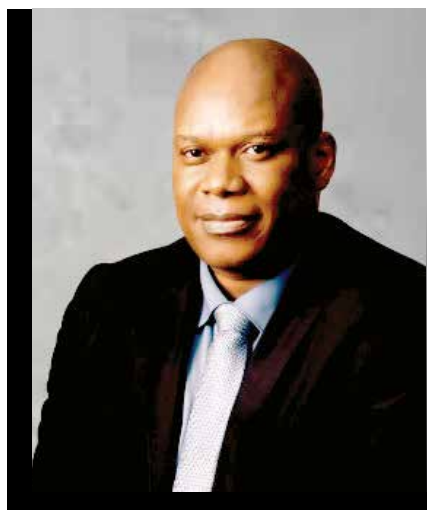
Following his posting to the General Hospital, Ikorodu, in 2008, he was part of the dedicated few that contributed immensely to the dynamic transformation of the hospital, with the Department of Pharmacy being adjudged one of the best. This culminated in the hospital carting away all the available awards in 2015.

Onakoya's quest for best practice propelled his determination to ensure that an unwholesome medication was recalled and removed from the Nigeria Drug Index. This was duly acknowledged by NAFDAC and consequently earned him a Letter of Commendation from the Ministry of Health.

Onakoya is a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria. He bagged the prestigious Merit Award of the Lagos State Branch (MAW). He is also a member of the Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in Americas (NAPSSA), where he actively engages the Diasporas on the need to entrench international best practice and enhance the capacity of pharmacists.

He was appointed director of Pharmaceutical Services, Health Service Commission, in 2020, while serving at General Hospital, Epe.

Onakoya, a Christian, is married, with children.



## Inspiration

"The greatest pleasure in life is in doing what people say you cannot do".  
- **Walther Bageholt**

"I don't think anything is unrealistic if you believe you can do it. I think if you are determined enough and willing to pay the price, you can get it done." - **Mike Ditka**

"When you give joy to other people, you get more joy in return. You should give a good thought to happiness that you can give out." - **Eleanor Roosevelt**

"You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction." - **George Lorimer**

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." - **Albert Einstein**

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be

done does away with fear."  
— **Rosa Parks**

"We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action." — **Dr. Henry Link**

"What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals." - **Zig Ziglar**

"It is never too late to be what you might have been." — **George Eliot**

"It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." — **Sylvester Stallone**

"Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye."  
- **Helen Keller**

"Make your life a masterpiece, imagine no limitations on what you can be, have, or do." — **Brian Tracy**

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The global community recently marked this year's World Breastfeeding Week, an annual event commemorated every 1 to 7 August, to promote deliberations and policies on the practice of breastfeeding around the world. With this year's theme being "Let's make breastfeeding and work, work", the week-long advocacy witnessed global discussions on the essentiality of breastfeeding and the necessity of promoting maternity rights in the workplace.

As one of the cardinal ingredients required for the proper growth, development and wellbeing of a child, the mother's breastmilk is naturally fortified with minerals and nutrients, which offer many advantages to the child from infancy into the early years of childhood. It is against this background that the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have continually recommended that mothers, all over the world, initiate breastfeeding within the first hour of birth and exclusively breastfeed their infants for the first six months of life.

As experience and research findings have shown, however, actualising the goal of exclusive breastfeeding is a challenge for many working mothers, given the strenuous demands of most modern workplaces. Indeed, going by recent reports from UNICEF, only 9 per cent of workplaces have a breastfeeding centre, with only 1.5 per cent of such existing in the public sector. Even more disturbing is the alarm raised by the apex health body that more than half a billion working women

## Time to scale up exclusive breastfeeding is now

are not given essential maternity protections in national laws, with only 20 per cent of countries requiring employers to provide employees with paid breaks and facilities for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Consequently, fewer than half of infants under six months of age are exclusively breastfed.

This is a worrisome reality that portends grave dangers for the overall health of children globally and, by extension, the wellbeing of nations that encourage such anomaly. As a nutritionist from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Dr Uju Onuorah, has noted, "Antibodies found in breast milk help to shield infants from a variety of ailments and disorders, including asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes and sudden infant death syndrome. Infants who are breastfed are less likely to get respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases. Also, it helps with cognitive development for children and studies have shown that exclusively breastfed babies tend to have higher intelligent quotient than non-exclusively breastfed babies."

To reverse the appalling trend of laxity towards exclusive breastfeeding and stem the resultant consequences, it is imperative for nations to scale up their implementation of exclusive breastfeeding policies. Such critical

policies that must be enforced with all seriousness include demanding all employers of labour to comply with paid maternity leave and ensuring that they provide enabling environments for breastfeeding mothers in workplaces.

In Nigeria, for example, while the Federal Civil Service Commission has provided 16 weeks paid maternity leave for women in its employ and two hours off a day to breastfeed their babies till 6 months after their resumption, this is still short of the six months recommended duration of exclusive breastfeeding for nursing mothers. Findings have actually shown that only five states of the federation - Lagos, Kwara, Ondo, Borno and Niger - have complied with the six months paid maternity leave policy. It must be emphasised that, as long as the remaining 31 states and the Federal Capital Territory decline in domesticating this crucial policy, Nigerian indices in the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding will remain poor.

With Nigeria's exclusive breastfeeding rate standing at 29 per cent in a country of over 220 million people, it means that a whopping 71 percent of infants in the country are not enjoying the benefits of breastmilk in their formative years. This is definitely a time-bomb that will prove inimical to the nation's health and general

progress, if concrete steps are not taken to remedy the situation. The Federal Ministry of Health, relevant NGOs and all other stakeholders must work together towards improving these discouraging figures, which cast a dark cloud over the health and longevity of infants in the country.

Moreover, with more Nigerian women gaining employment and working to support their families, it has become imperative for the Federal Government to review the Labour Act to correct its limitations, with regard to breastfeeding rights. One of such is the stipulation that mothers employed outside of the public sector are entitled to only 12 weeks maternity leave, with half pay if they have worked for their employer for at least six months. Such stringent rules subject mothers to undue pressure during the breastfeeding period, which ultimately proves unhealthy for them and their babies.

Fortunately, it has not been all doom and gloom in the facilitation of exclusive breastfeeding by employers of labour in the country. Recently, Alive & Thrive - a global nutrition initiative - recognised four private organisations in Nigeria for instituting family-friendly workplace breastfeeding policies. The companies are MTN Nigeria Communications PLC, Access Bank PLC, Guinness Nigeria PLC, and UAC Nigeria. This is highly commendable and we call on other public and private organisations in the country to join these few recognised ones in instituting policies and creating a workplace environment that make breastfeeding and work, work!

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## Destined for Chike Okonya Award

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

On 15 July, 2023, I ceremonially received the Chike Okonya Award of the Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS) Old Boys Association, Onitsha. This award is given annually to the most illustrious old boy for dedicated and meritorious services.

Chike Okonya was of the 1939 set and former vice president and secretary general of DMGS Old Boys Association. Although I have received many awards, mainly from the healthcare sector, this one has come from my *alma mater*. Again, this award was the most celebrated one, and I was well represented because I was away in Canada.

This award caused me to reflect on how certain events work towards my destiny. Surely, God has concluded a wonderful plan for my life, even before I was born, according to Jeremiah 1:5. And He has been working out His purposes for my life for His own glory.

Sometimes, I make wrong decisions and choices but He still ensures that He keeps me on the right path. This is because He had determined the assignment I should carry out for Him in order to succeed in life.

Firstly, I could not have been a Dengramite but for my late uncle and guardian, Mr Dan Erinne, formerly the vice principal and senior science master of DMGS. God used him to affect my transfer to DMGS in 1955 from Merchants of Light School, Oba, where I had spent my first year of secondary school. Without this change of school, I would have been a completely different person today – and certainly not a Chike Okonya Award winner.

Secondly, in our final year, 1958, we chose the subjects to offer in our Cambridge School Certificate Examination. I decided to exclude Physics from my list of subjects because I found it problematic. We filled our forms and submitted to the principal, Mr S. J. Cookey, before the deadline. He then processed and packaged the documents, ready for submission to the examination council.

The following day, my uncle, who had moved to Bishop Lasbrey College, Irete, Owerri, as the principal, visited me. The first question he asked was about my subjects for the school certificate exams. I named my subjects.

“What of Physics?” he asked,

and I told him that I did not include it. “Why? You must include Physics!” he exclaimed. “It is too late to change now,” I murmured. “No, you must include Physics. Let’s go to the principal.”

The principal reluctantly brought out the sealed envelope of our completed forms. My uncle insisted that my own form should be changed to include Physics. Eventually, Mr Cookey yielded to my uncle’s pressure and cut open the big brown envelope for us to make the necessary changes.

That encounter with the principal caused me to give serious attention to Physics, knowing full well that it was a vital subject in the sciences. I sought the help of friendly and brilliant classmates to overcome

my challenges.

That was how I offered Physics in Cambridge School Certificate, Higher School Certificate and even GCE Advanced Level. Having Physics enabled me to choose any science or medical course I desired, including Pharmacy. By implication, without Physics, I might not have been the person I am today.

If God had not used my uncle in the two cases narrated above, definitely, my conditions and circumstances of life should be completely different today.

Our responsibility in life is to discover and live according to God’s plans for our lives. We must be travelling along the destiny course. He provides certain people as helpers or counsellors to ensure we are on the right course, as a children of God.

But bear in mind that the Holy Spirit is your Helper and Counsellor. He is the only one that can safely take you to your destination. We must give Him glory and only appreciate the instruments He has used.

This Chike Okonya Award is very significant in my life. It is remarkable that my uncle, Dan Erinne, and Chike Okonya were mates in DMGS. My uncle was in the 1938 set, while Chike was 1939. Probably, they were friends. It is also remarkable that I was born in 1939.

It is also worthy of note that the first winner of this award was my professional colleague, Pharm. (Sir) Chris U. Efobi, in 1974. In the same year, 1974, Efobi and I were elected into the national executive committee of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN). We were made the president and editor-in-chief of the journal respectively and we had a successful tenure.



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# Integrity is your first product

By George O. Emetuche

*"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost." – Billy Graham*

The proverbial story of the frog and scorpion comes to mind whenever I talk about integrity. As the story goes, the scorpion once asked the frog to carry him to the other side of the river. Naturally, the frog was afraid to grant the scorpion's request, for fear of being stung in the course of their journey. The scorpion promised not to sting the frog but the frog refused to budge.

Consequently, the scorpion made a deal with the frog that if he stung him, both of them would drown in the river. The frog agreed and they began the journey. Well, just as the frog had feared, midway into their journey, the scorpion did what the frog had been afraid of. He stung the frog and both of them went down the river. This is a true case of betrayal of trust; a case of deficiency in integrity.

In the story, the frog agreed to do the bidding of the scorpion, believing he would keep to his words. On the other hand, the scorpion, true to its nature to sting, did disappoint the frog. People don't suddenly change.

## Integrity as the first product

Know this truth as a salesman - people buy you before the product. People buy your character and attitude before buying the product you are selling. The salesman is the first product. A salesman who fails the integrity test will likely end up like the scorpion because integrity begins every great relationship.

What will sustain the relationship in the journey of buying and selling is your ability to convince buyers that you can be trusted. A salesman who fails in the area of integrity is planning to fail. Once there is deficit in integrity, the salesman will likely face the risk of crashing like the scorpion in the story.

The beauty of selling is in continuity. A good salesman sells today and thinks also about selling tomorrow. Advanced selling techniques encourage spending reasonable time with buyers with the intention of building trust. The time you spend to bond with the prospect or customer is an investment. Such time should be encouraged, because trust and friendship are not developed overnight.

## Closing a sale shouldn't be the only drive - sell honesty!

Failure in sales starts when the salesman's drive is only in making the sales. When your purpose is just in closing the sales, issues may likely arise. Such a business relationship may not stand the test of time because it has the attribute of a one-off sale, which does not guarantee continuity. Sales professionals should not be in a hurry to sell. They should be smart and strategic in their sales activities. This is my position always.

You need to approach issues as a man of integrity. The things you say must be the truth. The things you do must stand out all the time. Be outstanding; let your

character be distinguishing. It takes time and efforts to get to this level. The good news is that every good thing is learnable. You can learn how to develop this personality. It is already within you. You only need to let it out by living it daily.

## Integrity promotes healthy business relationships

Integrity strengthens friendships and enhances trust in that relationship. Sales professionals should know this sequence. This is why I maintain that the salesmen should be in a hurry to build friendship and trust, instead of being in a hurry to make sales.

The salesman should be consistent in building positive qualities. Distrust does not make

the sales. It won't be easy for a salesman to sell when the buyer does not trust him. People buy from whom they like and trust. This is a universal sales rule. Once there is a question mark on the salesman's integrity, there will also be an issue with the salesman's sales activities, which naturally affects the salesman's products adversely.

In sales, success begins and ends with integrity.

**UPDATE:** The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our sales and business strategy annual masterclass holds on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 at Dover Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos.

**THEME:** Selling In a Complicated Market.

**SPEAKERS:** Chidi Okoro, founder, Drug & Medicaments, faculty at Lagos Business School, Austin Nweze, Phd, management consultant, entrepreneur and faculty at Pan Atlantic University, George O. Emetuche, CES, serial



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# Inquest

with  
**Patrick Iwelunmor**

Tel: 08135439281  
Email: iwelunmorpatrick@yahoo.com

In their desperate quest to escape the eagle eyes of drug law enforcement agents, Nigerian drug traffickers are not sleeping. They are devoting enormous time and effort to seeking ways to carry on with their nefarious activities undetected.

Officers of the National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and their counterparts in the Nigeria Police Force have many rivers to cross in their bid to curtail the movement of hard drugs within the country. This concern becomes even more disturbing in the face of the many strategies being mapped out by street-side drug traffickers to evade notice.

As Nigerians, we have every cause to be worried about the spate and sophistication of drug trafficking in our local communities. In Lagos, there is hardly any street where you won't find drug trafficking cells involving different types of couriers, ranging from innocent children to teenagers who are working for their local barons. This emerging system of local trafficking will require serious and strategic thinking on the part of drug law enforcement agents to curtail, largely because these couriers receive some stipends for their efforts in a Nigerian society

where poverty and the cost of living are taking a debilitating toll on the economies of families.

Recently, law enforcement agents in Lagos paraded a 10-year-old girl who was being used by her mother as a local drug courier. Knowing that it would be very unlikely for law enforcement agencies to stop and search a minor, her mother converted her into a drug courier by stuffing hard drugs, especially cannabis, in her underwear for onward movement to the selling point where customers usually came to buy. Who would have thought that a little girl would be involved in such an illicit trade?

While investigations are still ongoing in the minor's case, it must be reiterated here that Nigerian laws are explicit on matters relating to drug trafficking. Worse still, the case in question raises so much concern because it involves a child and reflects the level of desperation of traffickers who are bent on profiting from a trade that is responsible for the destruction of a nation's most productive population in their millions.

It is equally important to state that there are several other minors in different parts of the country that are being used by drug traffickers. The

## New shenanigans of drug abusers and traffickers

NDLEA should intensify their covert operations, especially in areas with high concentration of local gin (*ogogoro*) joints. Most of these joints actually sell hard drugs like cannabis, Colorado, ice and the rest.

In fact, there is a herbal mixture in town called *adimenu* that has all the characteristics of a hard drug, being peddled by hawkers of herbal mixtures, popularly known as *alagbo*.

Some of the people who have taken this herbal mixture complained of the following immediate side effects: dizziness, euphoria, loss of concentration, and mental disorientation. Those saddled with the enforcement of our drug laws should, as a matter of urgency, also beam their searchlight on hawkers of herbal mixtures, especially those who claim to cure every sickness on earth (*gbogbonise*).

Interestingly, another bizarre drug trafficking system that is hard to believe is the use of religious houses and "religious leaders" for the peddling of hard drugs. This writer once witnessed the arrest of an *alfa* in a Lagos mosque as he wrapped cannabis for his customers. No one would have ever thought that such an unholy activity would take place in a place of worship but that is the new reality we have to face and tackle in Nigeria today. Sadly, after spending a couple of days in detention in the police station, the *alfa* was released without prosecution. This writer later discovered that some money

was paid to the police as settlement.

In 2022, a Nigerian pastor and General Overseer of Christ Living Hope Church, Rev. Ugochukwu Emmanuel Ekwem, was arrested by officials of the NDLEA at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, while on his way to a crusade in Nairobi, Kenya. Even God is not accorded respect by drug traffickers. If people could disrespect God and peddle drug in His name and house, then no one should be accorded any form of immunity in the fight against drug trafficking.

While we commend the sincere efforts of the NDLEA, we also call on the leadership of the Nigeria Police to live above board when it comes to handling matters involving drug traffickers. Rather than just collect money and grant these local traffickers bail, the police should hand them over to the NDLEA which has the statutory responsibility to prosecute drug offenders in the country.

The damage that drug abuse and trafficking are causing in Nigerian communities is attaining alarming proportions. In my community in Lagos, no fewer than four people have run mad, with two of them now in rehab. I have vowed to commit most of my time as a writer to championing anti-drug campaigns. However, parents and guardians have very important roles to play. The attitude of "I am minding my business" will not help the fight against this rampaging societal cancer.

**swipha**

## Something NEW is coming

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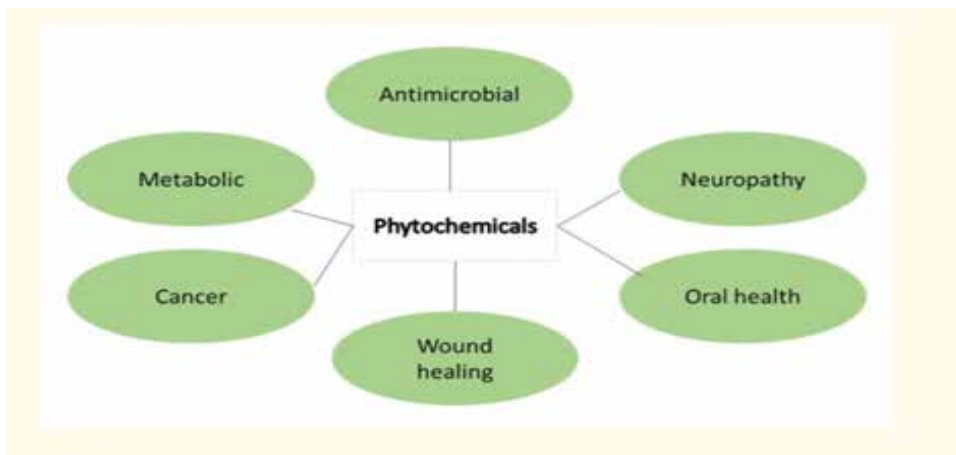
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# Phytochemicals: Vitamins of the future?

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor



**P**hyto is a Greek word for plants and chemicals are substances. Therefore, phytochemicals are substances found in plants. These "plant substances" are also helpful in preventing diseases like cancer and those that affect the heart. So far, scientists know of 3,000 different phytochemicals with possible health benefits.

## Phytochemical terminology

Definitions we may need to know include:

**Free radicals:** These are byproducts of metabolism. They are capable of causing cells to lose their structure, function, and eventually destroying them. They are connected with the development of 50 diseases, including heart diseases and cancer.

**Antioxidants:** These are substances capable of stabilising or deactivating free radicals before they attack the cells.

**Chemo prevention:** This means using one or several compounds to prevent, stop or reverse the development of cancer.

**Designer food:** Are processed foods that are supplemented with food ingredients naturally rich in disease-preventing substances.

**Nutraceutical:** Specific chemical compounds in foods, including vitamins and additives, which may aid in preventing disease.

**Pharmafood:** Food or nutrients that claim medical or health benefits, including the prevention and treatment of disease.

**Cancer:** A disease of the body cells.

**Carcinogenesis:** This is a multistage process.

**Initiation:** The transformation of cell.

**Promotion:** Cells multiply to form a tumor.

**Progression:** Leads to a malignant tumour.

## So what's so exciting about phytochemical's?

Their apparent ability to stop a cells conversion from healthy to cancerous.

They inhibit various hormone actions and metabolic pathways that are associated with the development of cancer and heart diseases.

Some phytochemicals have been found to lower LDL cholesterol.

Others have been found to help prevent blood clotting, reduce how much cholesterol the body produces and keep blood pressure down.

Phytochemicals are also being used in cancer treatment in dosages.

Researchers still don't know a lot about phytochemicals. However, they do know that people who eat large quantities of fruits and veggies have reduced cancer risks. It means such people are doing something right! The highest anti-cancer activity can be found in garlic, soybeans, cabbage, tinger, liquorice root, aloe and the umbelliferous vegetables.

Additional foods found to have cancer protective activity includes onions, flax, citrus, tumeric, cruciferous veggies, tomatoes, sweet peppers and brown rice.

## The phytochemical family

There are thousands of phytochemicals. But some of their basic classes are found in these foods:

Cruciferous vegetables. (eg broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, dark leafy greens. **Phytochemicals found:** Organosulphur and Glucosinolates. They may help prevent cancer. Tomatoes and Watermelons.

**Phytochemical found:** Lycopene. Lycopene has been found to be two times as powerful as beta carotene in the destruction of free radicals.

Onions, garlic, aloe vera, scallions, chives. They help to keep healthy cells in the body from being damaged by free radicals.

Grapes, strawberries, cranberries, nuts, blackberries, raspberries. **Phytochemicals found:** Ellagic acid. It has been big in the news lately. Appears to make blood less likely to clot; therefore is beneficial in preventing heart disease.

Citrus fruits. **Phytochemical found:** Monoterpenes. May help to prevent cancer. Also found are isoflavones and saponins, which have a wide range of benefits, including lowering the risk for heart disease.

The Aloe Vera Gel drinks - Berry Nectar, Bits n Peaches, Pomesteen Power, Argi Plus, Forever Kids, Absorbent C, Supergreens, Fields of Greens, Lycium Plus, Immublend, Forever Daily, Vitolize Men and Women - are all excellent sources



of these phytonutrients.

## References:

Recommendations for Nutritional Healing by Ijaoba Adebayo 2021/2022 Edition

## Google

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

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# Ade Williams: Community pharmacist who became face of healthcare excellence

By Ola Aboderin

*"For me, community pharmacy opens its doors to people but you've got to open your heart to people. But more importantly, you need to bring the community to the heart of what you are doing." – Dr Ade Williams*

As part of events to mark the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the British National Health Service (NHS) during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it was announced that giant portraits of 12 outstanding health workers would be showcased on electronic billboards around the country. Specifically to be targeted were bus stops and iconic pedestrian areas, including the world-famous Piccadilly Lights in Central London. Only one pharmacist was included on that prestigious list of healthcare luminaries, and that was Nigerian-born Dr Adeyemi Adedamola Williams (more commonly known as Ade Williams).

Many passers-by who beheld Williams' smiling face on the magnificent screens easily recognised him as the superintendent pharmacist at the multi-award winning Bedminster Pharmacy, an independent healthy living pharmacy, in South Bristol, England. He is also known as the director and superintendent pharmacist of the MJ Williams Pharmacy Group.

However, a greater number of people would have recognised him from his frequent appearances and presentations on national, regional and local media – electronic and print – through which he offers enlightening insights on community pharmacy practice, healthy living, and general public health issues. He was, in fact, UK's "Pharmacist of the Year" (2018), an award which came one year after he had been honoured as "Community Pharmacist and Manager of the Year" (2017), by the renowned *Chemist & Druggist* magazine.

Williams is an independent prescriber, with a general practice role. He and his team are widely acknowledged as advocates that champion and pioneer cost-effective, pharmacy-based community health solutions through their innovative campaigns, interventions and collaborative partnerships. According to him, "Community pharmacy must re-imagine its purpose, reinventing why and how it does what it does by disrupting the current model through innovation and integration, and by exploring new and sustainable health-based funding."

## Inclusive pharmacy practice advocate

Described by *The Bristol Magazine* as a "community champion and brilliant ambassador for



Bristol", Williams is a firm believer in proactively understanding, developing and adopting strategies for tackling barriers that prevent individuals from accessing the best care. He once declared to his professional colleagues, "Community Pharmacy is already a lifeline to many of the worst served population groups. Every effort we make to improve access and care significantly improves health outcomes while also resetting their lived experience of feeling invisible or undervalued. We are their advocates, champions, and stewards of their journey to more equitable treatment. They need us to remain committed and alert, or they stay in the shadows, underserved and unrepresented."

Williams' enthusiastic input to finding pragmatic, solutions to complex health and policy matters, alongside a passion for engaging and empowering patients, makes him part of many national and cross-professional working groups and campaigns. He is also a qualified Canadian pharmacist and the pharmacy ambassador for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Charity.

## Background and foray into Pharmacy

Williams was born in Nigeria in 1981 and mostly spent his early years with his mother and three siblings, having lost his father at the age of eight. He had his primary and secondary education in Nigeria before moving, in 1997, to live with

his aunt in Hove, a seaside resort, in East Sussex, England.

Having earlier been convinced by his teacher to ditch his plan of becoming a watercolour artist and instead seek better use of his empathetic nature and good science grades, he desperately needed direction on the career to pursue. The answer came through his curious visits to a nearby pharmacy to observe the pharmacist and chat with him about his work. According to him, seeing how the pharmacist cared for his community settled it for him that he must follow the same career path.

Williams subsequently enrolled to study Pharmacy at the University of Portsmouth, graduating in 2002. Thereafter, he did his pre-registration training with H&A McParland Pharmacies, an independent pharmacy group. Following his registration in 2003, he started working for Tesco Pharmacy, Didcot, Oxfordshire. He also commenced the Canadian Pharmacist Qualification process, with the aim of relocating, having been drawn to the dynamics of the Canadian health system.

Williams further spent some years as a locum pharmacist, where he had the opportunity to work with various community pharmacy contractors, multiples and independent pharmacies. The locum role allowed him ease of travel to Canada to complete his Canadian qualification exams in 2005. However, according to him, the arduous qualification process had dampened

his enthusiasm for relocating. Also, the fact that new models of delivering pharmaceutical care and better ways of using the expertise of community pharmacists were being developed in the UK ultimately made him to discard his relocation plans. He qualified as an independent prescriber in 2018.

## Awards and recognitions

Aside from the "Community Pharmacist and Manager of the Year" and the "Pharmacist of the Year" awards, which he received in 2017 and 2018, respectively, Williams has received other notable recognitions for his exceptional commitment to pharmacy practice and public health. He is a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society for Public Health. In 2019, he received the NHS Parliamentary Award for Excellence in Primary Care.

Williams is the inaugural winner of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Patient Champion Award. In 2016, his pharmacy, the Bedminster Pharmacy, won the award for best Healthy Living Pharmacy at the inaugural Pharmacist's Awards. That same year, the company won the Pharmacy Team of the Year award by *Chemist & Druggist*. In 2001, he was presented the Member of the British Empire (MBE) award, for services to the NHS and to the community in South Bristol, particularly during COVID-19. Most recently, in July 2023, the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

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## Handling rejection (2)

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)

After the entire school had gone on Christmas break, which was like three weeks before Christmas, those of us who were to play various roles were asked to come to school every single day, Monday to Friday, for rehearsals. It was herculean but I felt the end would have justified the means by the time the accolades were rolling in on the main day.

Alas! That was not to be. About two or three days to the main event, I was called by one the teachers - apparently among the local organising committee members - to inform me that I would no longer be playing the role. What! Are you kidding me?

I wished I could protest that much to have generated enough dust, so that the school authority or my parents would have had a serious conversation on the matter. That didn't happen. Till today, I cannot explain what made me simply acquiesce to that decision of this "horrible" teacher who had just tainted my acting career, as it were.

Looking back now, I think I probably didn't mention it to my parents or any of my siblings then, because of the shock of the rejection I felt of being inadequate. In fact, when the younger brother of this star boy (now a graduate of the school) who had been ill for a while, was selected for the role, I rationalised that he had to be better than me by every standard for him to have been chosen.

I am sure, you are wondering, just like me, how preposterous that must have been. How could somebody's younger brother be asked to play the same role that the brother played, not minding that he had no trait of acting in him at all. That was exactly what happened, dear reader.

To put it more directly, the insecurities and fears of one of our teachers made me to lose the role. To the teacher, he somehow felt psychologically more secure having the younger brother of the fellow who had played the role so well take the same role. Of course, what was the outcome of the programme? Nothing spectacular.

I am sure one of the teachers might have asked the question, why didn't you allow the pupil who had been coming for rehearsals regularly to take the role?

Children teachers, counsellors or caregivers, as the case may be, have a lot to do in this regard. There is a tremendous knowledge gap which needs to be bridged with constant training and retraining; else, the world would lose many great minds to the tomb of rejection. This is because rejection eats up self-esteem for breakfast.

There are many children whose rejection history is traceable to past events which they are yet to fully deal with. Unfortunately, they have grown into adulthood with this stigma in their memory. The memories may push them into becoming so defensive and cantankerous individuals, even with their fantastic academic qualifications. Anytime the thought of being marginalised or cheated creeps into their mind, it triggers some measure of aggression in them. This isn't healthy.

For so many others, rejection can be interpreted when any of the following scenarios occurs:

Everyone else (especially those within your clique) is invited to an event, except you.

Potential investors or clients suddenly change their minds about a contract offer which was almost sealed.

As an actor who feels so confident about his acting skills, you are asked to step down by your director for someone who you don't consider a match.

Top leaders in your place of worship hierarchy decide to leave, for reasons best known to them, without fully briefing you.

You are asked to exit a group or an organisation, especially for "doing nothing wrong", to the best of your own knowledge.

A broken relationship that comes when you least expected, or the way and manner in which your lover broke the news whether directly or indirectly.

Divorce notification from your spouse

A child who cries for the parents' attention and after waiting for a while intensifies the cry into wailing because he or she didn't get the commensurate attention desired, either in form of breast milk or some other need.

The list is endless. However, notwithstanding what anyone considers as rejection, there are few tips that are helpful in better handling rejection.

### How to handle rejection

**Name it to tame it:** The primary challenge with handling "rejection" is that the greater percentage of the time, what many consider as rejection is simply based on their perception of the gravity of the event or the offence. It is not about the shame; it is about the name you give to it. What you are referring to as an embarrassing situation can be the biggest publicity stunt for you to be announced and for many more to like you. The very thing that you think will make people



to reject you might just be what will cause them to accept you.

(To be continued in the next edition).



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# Treatment options for erectile dysfunction and infertility

**E**rectile dysfunction (ED) and infertility are two major issues generating concerns the world over, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, people have a misconception that erectile dysfunction (ED) is the same as infertility. In reality, while ED does not cause infertility, it can contribute to it. It is a symptom, not a condition. As a result, recognising the fundamental cause of the illness can aid in the treatment of infertility that result from it. Infertility can be caused by a variety of factors, and ED is just one of them.

## What exactly is ED?

Erectile dysfunction, which affects the majority of men, refers to a man's inability to get and maintain an erection for a long amount of time, in order to engage in sexual activity. Low libido can also be a result of this. In other words, ED is a condition in which a man experiences consistent or recurrent inability to achieve and/or maintain a penile erection, sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance.

According to a Fertility Specialist and Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Dr Abayomi Ajayi, erectile dysfunction, also known as impotence, is a form of sexual dysfunction that is present in 20 to 25 per cent of infertile couples, adding that it can cause infertility or worsen it when.

Ajayi, who is the managing director, Nordica Fertility Centre,

Lagos, noted that when a man cannot attain or maintain an erection suitably for sexual intercourse, it is usually an inconvenience, particularly if he and his partner are trying to conceive.

According to him, sexual impotence has psychological roots with anxiety, depression and stress. This is understandable, as sexual arousal depends on an intricate interplay of psychological, neural, vascular, and endocrine factors.

Hormonal imbalance can also lead to ED. The inability to achieve pregnancy could be due to sperm production that is below par or due to poor sperm motility. Both impotence and infertility have a negative impact on intimate relationships, quality of life and self-esteem.

Contrary to the belief by many people that being impotent means the person is infertile, the gynaecologist explained that impotence and infertility mean different things, saying while impotence is not a cause of infertility, it can make conception extremely difficult.

In addition Dr Michael Roizen, medical director of Internal Medicine, said ED and infertility are very different terms, noting that a man may be producing perfectly good sperm, but having trouble with his erection, which is what is known as ED.

## What is infertility?

Infertility is a health condition common in both males and females. It is the inability to conceive or produce offspring, despite having regular

unprotected sex. It occurs when a poor reproductive system impairs the ability of the body to perform the necessary functions of reproduction.

In a report published by the Department of Andrology, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt, on the link between ED and fertility, it was revealed that: "ED can cause a guy to experience stress, anxiety, sadness, communication problems, guilt, humiliation, embarrassment, and low self-esteem, causing him to avoid sexual activity." Ineffective ejaculation, which is required for the sperm to penetrate the vaginal canal and reach the woman's egg, is one of the causes of male infertility, while infertility itself elevates the risk of anxiety and despair, which leads to ED.

## How common is erectile dysfunction?

Approximately one in 10 adult males will suffer from ED on a long-term basis. Many men do experience occasional failure to achieve an erection, which can occur for a variety of reasons, such as drinking too much alcohol, stress, relationship problems, or being extremely tired.

The failure to get an erection less than 20 per cent of the time is not unusual and typically does not require treatment. However, the failure to achieve an erection more than 50 per cent of the time generally means that there is a problem and

treatment is needed.

ED does not have to be a part of getting older. While it is true that some older men may need more stimulation, they should still be able to achieve an erection and enjoy intercourse.

## Causes of erectile dysfunction

There are many possible causes of ED, and they can include both emotional and physical conditions.

Common physical causes include:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension, or high blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Hypothyroidism
- Obesity
- Low testosterone levels or other hormone imbalances
- Kidney disease
- Increased age
- Relationship problems
- Certain prescription medications, such as those used to treat high blood pressure or depression
- Sleep disorders
- Drug use
- Consuming too much alcohol
- Liver cirrhosis
- Epilepsy
- Using tobacco products
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Damage to the pelvic area through injury or surgery
- Peyronie's disease, which causes scar tissue to develop in the penis

Common emotional causes include:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Performance anxiety
- Relationship problems

*continued on page 13*

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## PHARMANEWS IS BORN (3)

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

Then I did something unusual. I wrote again to the institute to appreciate the grant for my tuition and also asked that my boarding expenses be granted also. After several desperate reminders, this request was also granted. I wrote so many letters that when I eventually met Ms Carole Samworth, the registrar, personally, she confessed to me that nobody had bombarded her with so many letters as I did.

It was only my flight ticket that I did not request from the institute. Who knows whether whatever made them consent to my first two requests would have made them favourably disposed to that as well? But just as Abraham did while pleading with God over Sodom, I decided that the favours I had been granted were enough and I would have to take care of the rest myself. It was at this point that I presented my plan to my boss, making sure to emphasise that all expenses had been taken

care of, except for my ticket and that it was an opportunity to visit Norwich in New York. What I needed from the company

was the air ticket and time. However, for reasons which I could not understand, my boss wasn't willing to let me go for the

confrontation with my superior, I decided to take some congenial steps to make my boss grant

me permission to attend the programme. The first step was to appeal to him to convert the period I would be absent to my annual leave, which was four weeks, and the remaining two weeks deducted from my leave for 1979. My boss again rejected my plea, saying that I wasn't entitled to go on leave until October.

Still, I remained persistent because even though I was still in Nigeria physically, my spirit was already in America. Attending the programme had become my sleeping and waking thought. I was always imagining myself in the class with participants from other countries. I eagerly looked forward to it as an experience that was sure to be as exciting as it would be enriching.

The next step I took was to reach out to a relative of my boss who was in another department of our company. I explained my predicament to him and requested him to persuade my boss to grant me permission to attend the programme. After some days, I received a letter from the company, saying my request had been granted and that I was free to attend the programme without bothering about the additional two weeks.

With heartfelt gratitude for this breakthrough, I was soon on my way to the venue of the marketing training.

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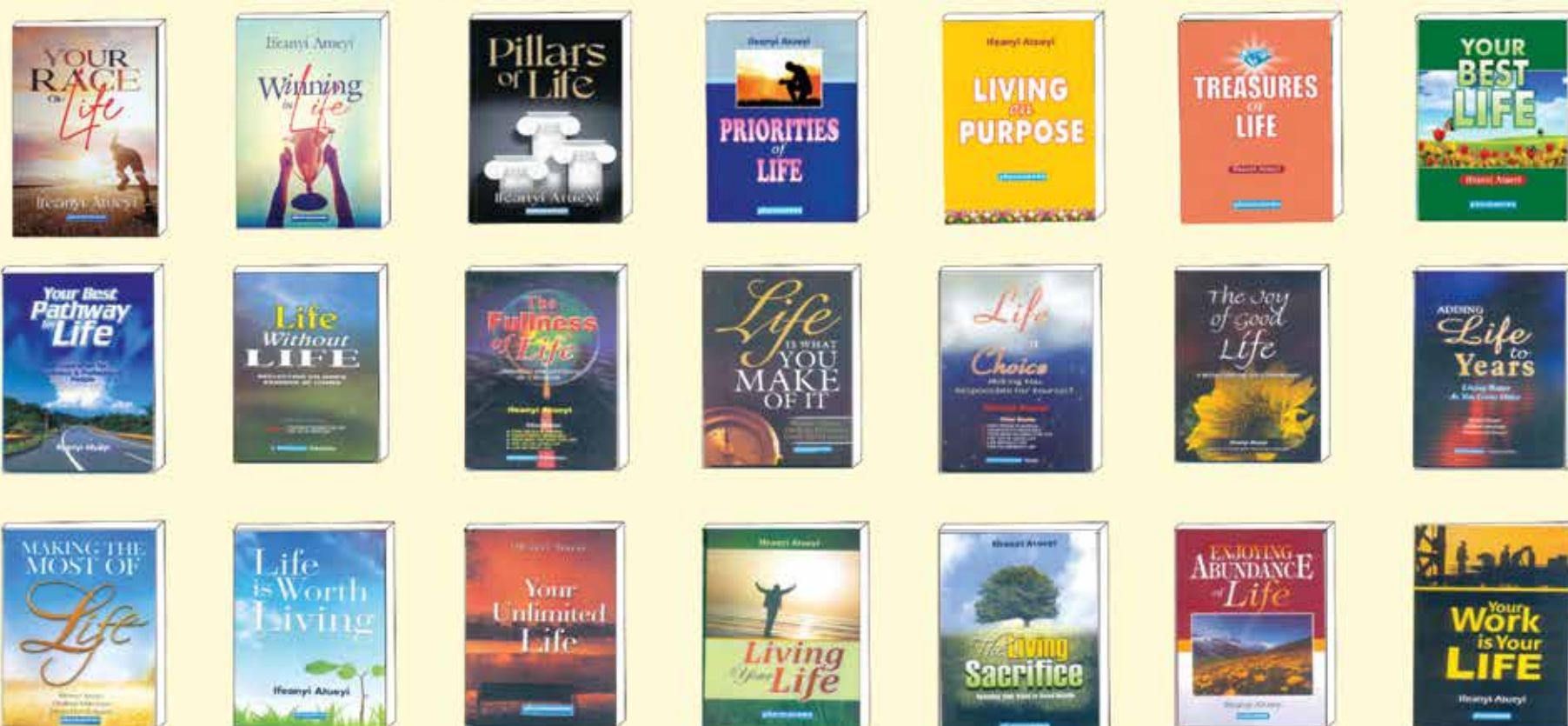
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# Treatment options for erectile dysfunction and infertility

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## Diagnosis of erectile dysfunction

To find out what is causing erection problems, a doctor will begin by asking about other medical conditions the man might have, what medications he is taking when his erection problems occur, and what form they take.

Standardised questionnaires or surveys about erectile function and the satisfaction of sexual intercourse may be used to identify the nature of erectile dysfunction. Blood pressure tests and tests of hormone levels are standard.

There are tests that aim to distinguish between psychological, nervous, and circulatory causes. One is the nocturnal penile tumescence (NPT) test. A measuring device is attached to the penis to monitor erections during sleep. Men without physical disorders usually have erections during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.

Several devices, including a Doppler radar, can track blood flow in and out of the penis and identify circulatory problems.

## Treatment

### Self-care and prevention

- Limiting or avoiding alcohol and drugs.
- Not smoking or using tobacco products.
- Controlling your blood sugar level if you have diabetes.
- Seeking help to cope with anxiety or depression.

### Medical treatments

Medical treatments are appropriate treatments for erectile dysfunction caused by a physical condition or medication. Usually, less invasive treatments are tried first.

Medical treatments include:

#### • Changing usual medication

Some medications can cause erectile dysfunction. A change in medication may help, although finding an alternate medication that works best may take time. Never stop taking a prescribed medication, or change the way you take it, without first talking with your health care professional.

#### • Hormone therapy

For men who have testosterone deficiency, testosterone replacement therapy may be an option.

#### • Oral medication

Many men experience improvement in erectile function from phosphodiesterase inhibitors. These medications relax muscles in the penis and increase blood flow in response to sexual stimulation.

#### • Self-administered intraurethral therapy

Medication can be placed into the urethra and absorbed by the erectile body. The medication increases blood flow to the penis and produces an erection.

#### • Self-injection therapy

Medication can be injected into the erectile body to increase blood flow to the penis and produce an erection. You use a fine needle to inject the medication into the base or side of your penis.

#### • Vacuum therapy

This treatment uses an external vacuum device that encourages blood to flow into the penis, resulting in an erection. A tube is placed over the penis and a hand-held pump creates a vacuum in the tube. Once you achieve an adequate erection, you slip a rubber ring around the base of your penis to maintain the erection, and then remove the device.

## Surgical treatments

Surgical treatments are appropriate when erectile dysfunction is caused by nerve or blood vessel damage due to pelvic or spinal cord injury, pelvic surgery or radiation in the pelvic area. It is also an option for men who have tried medical treatments without success.

### Surgical treatments include:

#### • Arterial surgery

Arterial bypass surgery is an option if erectile dysfunction results from injured arteries that carry blood to the penis. These procedures are rarely performed, and long-term results are limited.

#### • Penile implants

This treatment involves surgically placing a device, or prosthesis, inside the penis to produce an erection when you wish. Everything is concealed in the body. While this device will never replace a natural erection, it provides high patient satisfaction rates when natural erections are not possible.

### Psychological counselling

Counselling is an appropriate

treatment for erectile dysfunction caused by psychological factors. The both partners may meet with a psychologist, psychiatrist or other counsellor trained to treat sexual problems.

## Infertility

### Key facts according to the World Health Organisation

Infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system, defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.

Infertility affects millions of people – and has an impact on their families and communities. Estimates suggest that approximately one in every six people of reproductive age worldwide experience infertility in their lifetime.

In the male reproductive system, infertility is most commonly caused by problems in the ejection of semen, absence or low levels of sperm, or abnormal shape (morphology) and movement (motility) of the sperm.

In the female reproductive system, infertility may be caused by a range of abnormalities of the ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes, and endocrine system, among others.

Infertility can be primary or secondary. Primary infertility is when a pregnancy has never been achieved by a person, and secondary infertility is when at least one prior pregnancy has been achieved.

Fertility care encompasses the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infertility. Equal and equitable access to fertility care remains a challenge in most countries; particularly in low and middle-income countries. Fertility care is rarely prioritized in national universal health coverage benefit packages.

### Causes of infertility

Infertility may be caused by a number of different factors, in either the male or female reproductive systems. However, it is sometimes not possible to explain the causes of infertility.

continued on page 15

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# Treatment options for erectile dysfunction and infertility

continued from page 13

## Causes in females

- Tubal disorders such as blocked fallopian tubes, which are in turn caused by untreated sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or complications of unsafe abortion, postpartum sepsis or abdominal/pelvic surgery

- Uterine disorders which could be inflammatory in nature (such as endometriosis), congenital in nature (such as the septate uterus), or benign in nature (such as fibroids);

- Disorders of the ovaries, such as polycystic ovarian syndrome and other follicular disorders;

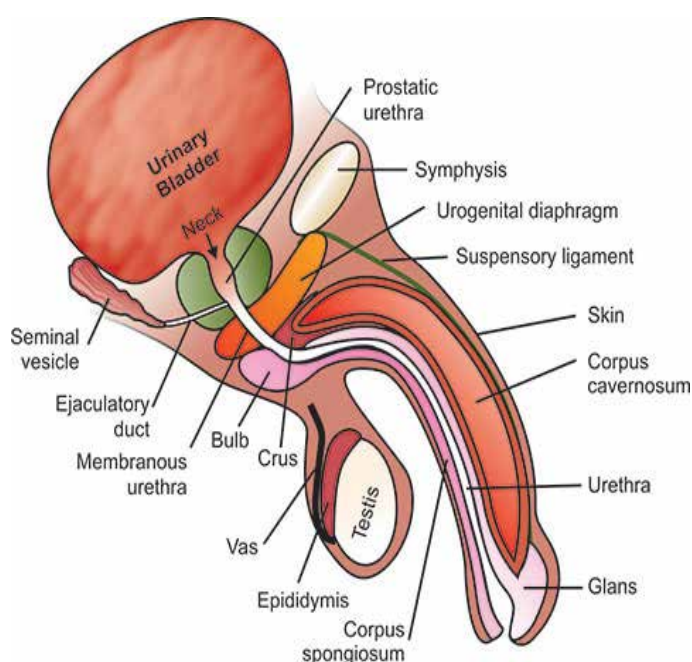
- Disorders of the endocrine system, causing imbalances of reproductive hormones. The endocrine system includes the hypothalamus and the pituitary glands. Examples of common disorders affecting this system include pituitary cancers and hypopituitarism.

However, the relative importance of these causes of female infertility may differ from country to country, for example, due to differences in the background prevalence of STIs, or differing ages of populations studied.

## Causes in males

- Obstruction of the reproductive tract, causing dysfunctions in the ejection of semen. This blockage can occur in the tubes that carry semen (such as ejaculatory ducts and seminal vesicles). Blockages are commonly due to injuries or infections of the genital tract.

- Hormonal disorders, leading to



abnormalities in hormones produced by the pituitary gland, hypothalamus and testicles. Hormones, such as testosterone, regulate sperm production. Examples of disorders that result in hormonal imbalance include pituitary or testicular cancers.

- Testicular failure to produce sperm, for example, due to varicoceles or medical treatments that impair sperm-producing cells (such as chemotherapy).

- Abnormal sperm function and quality. Conditions or situations that cause abnormal shape (morphology) and movement (motility) of the sperm negatively affect fertility. For example, the use of anabolic steroids can cause abnormal semen parameters such as sperm count and shape.

Note that lifestyle factors

such as smoking, excessive alcohol intake and obesity can affect fertility. In addition, exposure to environmental pollutants and toxins can be directly toxic to gametes (eggs and sperm), resulting in their decreased numbers and poor quality.

## Symptoms of infertility

The main symptom of infertility is not getting pregnant. There may be no other obvious symptoms. Sometimes, women with infertility may have irregular or absent menstrual periods. In some

cases, men with infertility may have some signs of hormonal problems, such as changes in hair growth or sexual function.

Most couples will eventually conceive, with or without treatment.

## Risk factors

Many of the risk factors for both male and female infertility are the same. They include:

- **Age.** Women's fertility gradually declines with age, especially in the mid-30s, and it drops rapidly after age 37. Infertility in older women is likely due to the lower number and quality of eggs, and can also be due to health problems that affect fertility. Men over age 40 may be less fertile than younger men.

- **Tobacco use.** Smoking tobacco or marijuana by either partner may reduce the likelihood of pregnancy. Smoking also reduces the possible effectiveness of fertility treatment. Miscarriages are more frequent in women who smoke. Smoking can increase the risk of erectile dysfunction and a low sperm count in men.

- **Alcohol use.** For women, there's no safe level of alcohol use during conception or pregnancy. Alcohol use may contribute to infertility. For men, heavy alcohol use can decrease sperm count and motility.

- **Being overweight.** An inactive lifestyle and being overweight may increase the risk of infertility. For men, sperm count also may be affected by being overweight.

- **Being underweight.** Women at risk of fertility problems include those with eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, and those who follow a very low-calorie or restrictive diet.

- **Exercise issues.** A lack of exercise contributes to obesity, which increases the risk of infertility. Less often, ovulation problems may be associated with frequent strenuous, intense exercise in women who are not overweight.

## Prevention

Some types of infertility are not preventable. But several strategies may increase the chances of pregnancy.

## Couples

Have regular intercourse several times around the time of ovulation for the highest pregnancy rate. Intercourse beginning at least five days before and until a day after ovulation improves chances of

continued on page 17

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**INDICATIONS:** Iron deficiency anaemias, Increased iron demand, For rapid recuperation during convalescence, Deficiency of blood iron stores.

**DOSAGE & ADMINISTRATION:** Adults - therapy should be started with two teaspoonsful orally three times a day; for prophylaxis dose of one teaspoonful once or twice daily. Children (5-12 yrs) - one teaspoonful once or twice a day, as directed by the physician.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 is contraindicated in patients known to be hypersensitive to any of the ingredients, anaemias not caused by iron deficiency.

**PRECAUTIONS:** May cause black discolouration of stools, indiscriminate use of prolonged high dose should be avoided as it may lead to iron overload.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** Is well tolerated at usual recommended doses, may cause gastrointestinal upsets due to iron intolerance, which can be controlled in many cases by reducing the dose or giving Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 after meals. Rarely allergic reactions or rash may occur.

Please refer to the product insert for more information.

### "Abbreviated Product Information"

#### Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 Capsules

**DESCRIPTION:** Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 Capsules contain Ferrous fumarate BP (equivalent to 100 mg of elemental iron), Folic acid, Ascorbic acid, Cyanocobalamin and Zinc sulphate.

**INDICATIONS:** For the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia.

**DOSAGE & ADMINISTRATION:** The usual recommended dose is one capsule to be taken orally two or three times daily.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 Capsules are contraindicated in patients known to be hypersensitive to any of the ingredients, patients with porphyria tarda, anaemic conditions unless accompanied by iron deficiency, haemochromatosis or haemosiderosis, hyperoxaluria, glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency, or in iron overload.

**WARNINGS:** Caution is recommended from iron overload in patients receiving repeated blood transfusions, accumulation of zinc may occur in renal failure, and has been reported to cause haemolytic anaemia in patients with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency and ascorbic acid may aggravate the condition in patients having hyperoxaluria.

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## Oborevwor, Usifoh, others advocate collaboration to drive universal health coverage

*continued from page 1*

Annual National Conference of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), the governor, who was the guest of honour, said Universal Health Coverage is an attainable goal, once there is effective collaboration in the healthcare family.

The conference, which was held at the Dome Event Centre, Okpanam Road, Asaba, Delta State, was themed, "Building Effective Community Pharmacy Services For Universal Health Coverage".

Oborevwor, who was represented by his Senior Special Adviser on Policy, Hon. (Chief) Solomon Funkekeme, said harmonious relationship among healthcare personnel would help in addressing challenges and exploring new opportunities that will lead to a healthier and more productive population.

He noted that, as frontline healthcare providers, community pharmacists particularly have a strategic role to play in the attainment of UHC. This, he said, can be achieved by continuing to ensure accessible and affordable healthcare for all, as well as serving as the bridge between the patients and the medical practitioners.

"Community pharmacists offer vital services in healthcare delivery, from dispensing medication to counselling patients on the proper usage of drugs, contributing significantly to disease prevention and health promotion," Oborevwor said.

Speaking further, the governor assured that his administration would continue to partner with community pharmacists to improve healthcare delivery in the state, adding that the government would continue to expand the capacity of the Delta State Contributory Health Commission to maintain its leadership position in the country.

He said: "Obviously, community pharmacists have an important roles to play if the nation is to achieve its goal of Universal Health Coverage. So, as a government, we shall continue to leverage the knowledge, skill, and expertise of community pharmacists to deliver quality healthcare to our people because they are the bridge between patients and medical practitioners."

Oborevwor added: "It is gratifying that this conference is focusing on Universal Health Coverage. Accessible and affordable healthcare is non-negotiable for a healthy, vibrant, and productive population. Health is life; hence, the implementation of the mandatory health insurance scheme must be pursued with vigour."

"I am happy that Delta State is doing very well in this regard. We are the first state to implement the mandatory health insurance scheme, with over 1.2 million enrollees. That makes us the only state that has achieved over 20 per cent coverage of its citizens in the health scheme."

Also speaking at the event, President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Prof. Cyril Usifoh, averred that the theme of the conference aligned with the vision of a healthier and more inclusive society.

"As we continue to strive for healthcare equity and accessible services for all citizens, community pharmacists are at the forefront of



**PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh (middle), flanked by the national chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, presenting a plaque to the keynote speaker, Dr Chidebelu Ufodike, at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Conference of the ACPN, held at the Dome Event Centre, Asaba, Delta State.**

making the vision a reality," he said.

Usifoh further said it is through collaboration that positive change and quality of healthcare services across the nation can be driven and enhanced, adding that as the pharmaceutical landscape evolves, the practitioners must remain adaptable, receptive to new ideas, and willing to embrace advancements in technology and patient care.

"Let us seize this opportunity to strengthen the bond and camaraderie among providers, building a supportive network of professionals who can share knowledge, support one another, and foster mentorship," he said.

In his keynote address, the Chief of Staff and Vice-President (U.S. Healthcare) Walgreens Boots Alliance, Dr Chidebelu Ufodike, asserted that it was time to re-imagine healthcare in Nigeria, adding that "to change the trajectory of care, we need a new kind of network, new points for engagement and care delivery model; convenient, accessible, cost-effective, and connected care."

Earlier, in his welcome address, the National Chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, noted that the theme of the conference was uniquely chosen in tandem with the current realities in the country, adding that the Asaba conference was being attended by over 800 delegates, several pharmaceutical companies. He disclosed that no fewer than 107 pharmacists had been trained in vaccine administration.

Highlights of the opening ceremony included presentation of prizes to the winners of the National Anti-Drug Abuse Students Competition, which was won by Early Grip High School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State; with Junior Secondary School, Kurudu, Abuja, and Al-Maghili International Academy, Kano, coming second and third respectively.

There was also the official launch of the ACPN labelling machine and retail box.

The conference had in attendance several other personages from the health care sector and other walks of life, including Dr U.N.O. Uwaga, former president, PSN; Pharm. Anthony Aikhmien, former president, PSN; Pharm. Azubike Okwor, former

president, PSN; Pharm. Olumide Akintayo, former president, PSN; Dr Dere Awosika, chairman of the event, who was represented by Chief Paul Enebeli; Pharm. Ahmed Babashehu, registrar, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN); and Pharm. Bridget Otote.

Others were Pharm. Deji Osinoiki, former national chairman, ACPN; Pharm. (Alh) Femi Adebayo,

former national chairman, ACPN; Pharm. Bode Ogunjemiyo, national chairman, AHAPN; Pharm. Ken Onuegbu, national chairman, NAIP; Dr Ejoro Foyibo, former national chairman, ACPN; Pharm. Gbolagade Iyiola; Pharm. Olabanji Obideyi; Pharm. Lawrence Ekhatior; Pharm. Bolanle Adeshina; Pharm. Gbenga Falabi; Pharm. Bola Oyawole, among others.

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## Treatment options for erectile dysfunction and infertility

**continued from page 15**

getting pregnant. Ovulation usually occurs in the middle of the cycle — halfway between menstrual periods — for most women with menstrual cycles about 28 days apart.

### Men

Although most types of infertility are not preventable in men, these strategies may help:

- Avoid drug and tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol, which may contribute to male infertility.
- Avoid high temperatures found in hot tubs and hot baths, as they can temporarily affect sperm production and motility.
- Avoid exposure to industrial or environmental toxins, which can affect sperm production.
- Limit medications that may impact fertility, both prescription and non-prescription drugs. Talk with your doctor about any medicines you take regularly, but don't stop taking prescription medications without medical advice.
- Exercise moderately. Regular exercise may improve sperm quality and increase the chances of achieving a pregnancy.

### Women

For women, a number of strategies may increase the chances of becoming pregnant:

- Quit smoking. Tobacco has many negative effects on fertility, not to mention your general health and the health of a fetus. If you smoke and are considering pregnancy, quit now.
- Avoid alcohol and street drugs. These substances may impair your ability to conceive and have a healthy pregnancy. Don't drink alcohol or use recreational drugs, such as marijuana, if you're trying to get pregnant.
- Limit caffeine. Women trying to get pregnant may want to limit their caffeine intake. Ask your doctor for guidance on the safe use of caffeine.
- Exercise moderately. Regular exercise is important, but exercising so intensely that your periods are infrequent or absent can affect fertility.
- Avoid weight extremes. Being overweight or underweight can affect your hormone production and cause infertility.

### Tests for men

Male fertility requires that the testicles produce enough healthy sperm and that the sperm is ejaculated effectively into the vagina and travels to the egg. Tests for male infertility attempt to determine whether any of these processes are impaired.

You may have a general physical exam, including an examination of your genitals. Specific fertility tests may include:

- Semen analysis. Your doctor may ask for one or more semen specimens. Semen is generally obtained by masturbating or by interrupting intercourse and ejaculating your semen into a clean container. A lab analyses your semen specimen. In some cases, urine may be tested for the presence of sperm.
- Hormone testing. You may have a blood test to determine your level of testosterone and other male hormones.
- Genetic testing. Genetic testing may be done to determine whether there's a congenital defect causing infertility.
- Testicular biopsy. In select cases, a testicular biopsy may be performed to identify abnormalities contributing to infertility or to retrieve sperm for assisted reproductive techniques, such as IVF.



- Imaging. In certain situations, imaging studies such as a brain MRI, transrectal or scrotal ultrasound, or a test of the vas deferens (vasography) may be performed.

- Other speciality testing. In rare cases, other tests to evaluate the quality of the sperm may be performed, such as assessing a semen specimen for DNA abnormalities.

### Tests for women

Fertility for women relies on the ovaries releasing healthy eggs. The reproductive tract must allow an egg to pass into the fallopian tubes and join with sperm for fertilization. The fertilized egg must travel to the uterus and implant in the lining. Tests for female infertility try to find out if any of these processes are impaired.

You may have a general physical exam, including a regular gynaecological exam. Specific fertility tests may include:

- Ovulation testing. A blood test measures hormone levels to determine whether you're ovulating.
- Hysterosalpingography. Hysterosalpingography evaluates the condition of your uterus and fallopian tubes and looks for blockages or other problems. X-ray contrast is injected into your uterus, and an X-ray is taken to determine if the cavity is normal and to see if the fluid spills out of your fallopian tubes.
- Ovarian reserve testing. This testing helps determine the quantity of eggs available for ovulation. This approach often begins with hormone testing early in the menstrual cycle.
- Other hormone testing. Other hormone tests check levels of ovulatory hormones, as well as pituitary hormones that control reproductive processes.

- Imaging tests. A pelvic ultrasound looks for uterine or ovarian disease. Sometimes a sonohysterogram, also called a saline infusion sonogram, is used to see details inside the uterus that are not seen on a regular ultrasound.

Depending on the situation, rarely the test may include:

- Hysteroscopy. Depending on your symptoms, your doctor may request a hysteroscopy to look for uterine disease. During the procedure, your doctor inserts a thin, lighted device through your cervix into your uterus to view any potential abnormalities.
- Laparoscopy. This minimally invasive surgery involves making a small incision beneath your navel and inserting a thin viewing device to examine your fallopian tubes, ovaries and uterus. A laparoscopy may identify endometriosis, scarring, blockages or irregularities of the fallopian tubes, and problems with the ovaries and uterus.

### Treatment

Infertility treatment depends on:

- Cause
- Duration

- Sperm retrieval. These techniques obtain sperm when ejaculation is a problem or when no sperm are present in the ejaculated fluid. They may also be used in cases in which assisted reproductive techniques are planned and sperm counts are low or otherwise abnormal.

### Treatment for women

Some women need only one or two therapies to improve fertility. Other women may need several different types of treatment to achieve pregnancy.

- Stimulating ovulation with fertility drugs. Fertility drugs are the main treatment for women who are infertile due to ovulation disorders. These medications regulate or induce ovulation.

- Intrauterine insemination (IUI). During IUI, healthy sperm are placed directly in the uterus around the time the ovary releases one or more eggs to be fertilized. Depending on the reasons for infertility, the timing of IUI can be coordinated with your normal cycle or with fertility medications.

- Surgery to restore fertility. Uterine problems such as endometrial polyps, a uterine septum, intrauterine scar tissue and some fibroids can be treated with hysteroscopic surgery. Endometriosis, pelvic adhesions, and larger fibroids may require laparoscopic surgery or surgery with a larger incision of the abdomen.

**Compiled by Adebayo Oladejo with additional information from Pharmanews; University of Cairo Medical Journal; Urology Care Foundation; Medical News Today; Cleveland Clinic; Family Doctor; Mayo Clinic; Centre for Disease Control; The Punch; World Health Organisation (WHO), and Science Alert.**

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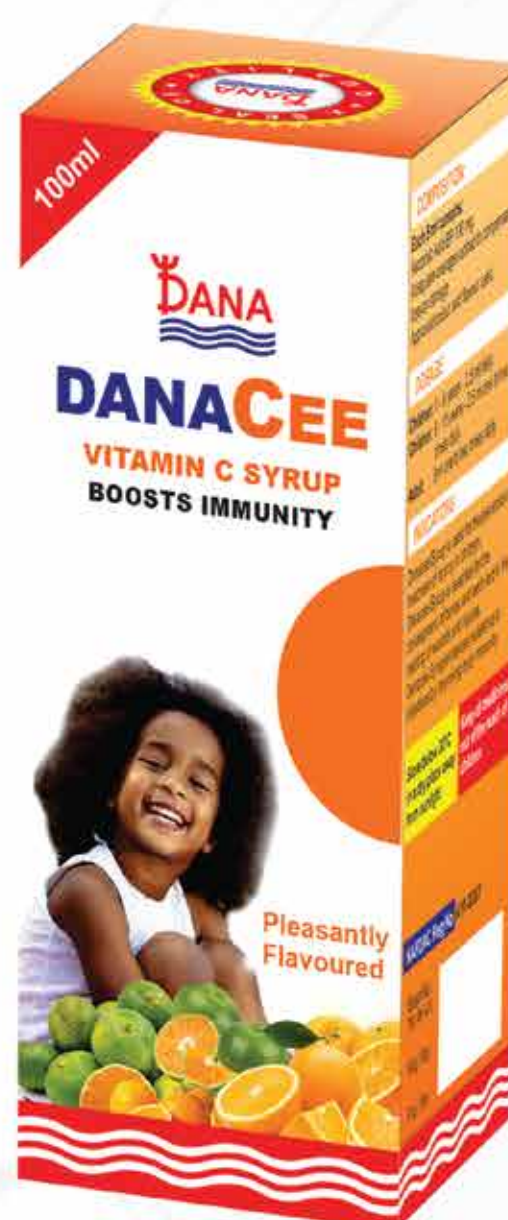
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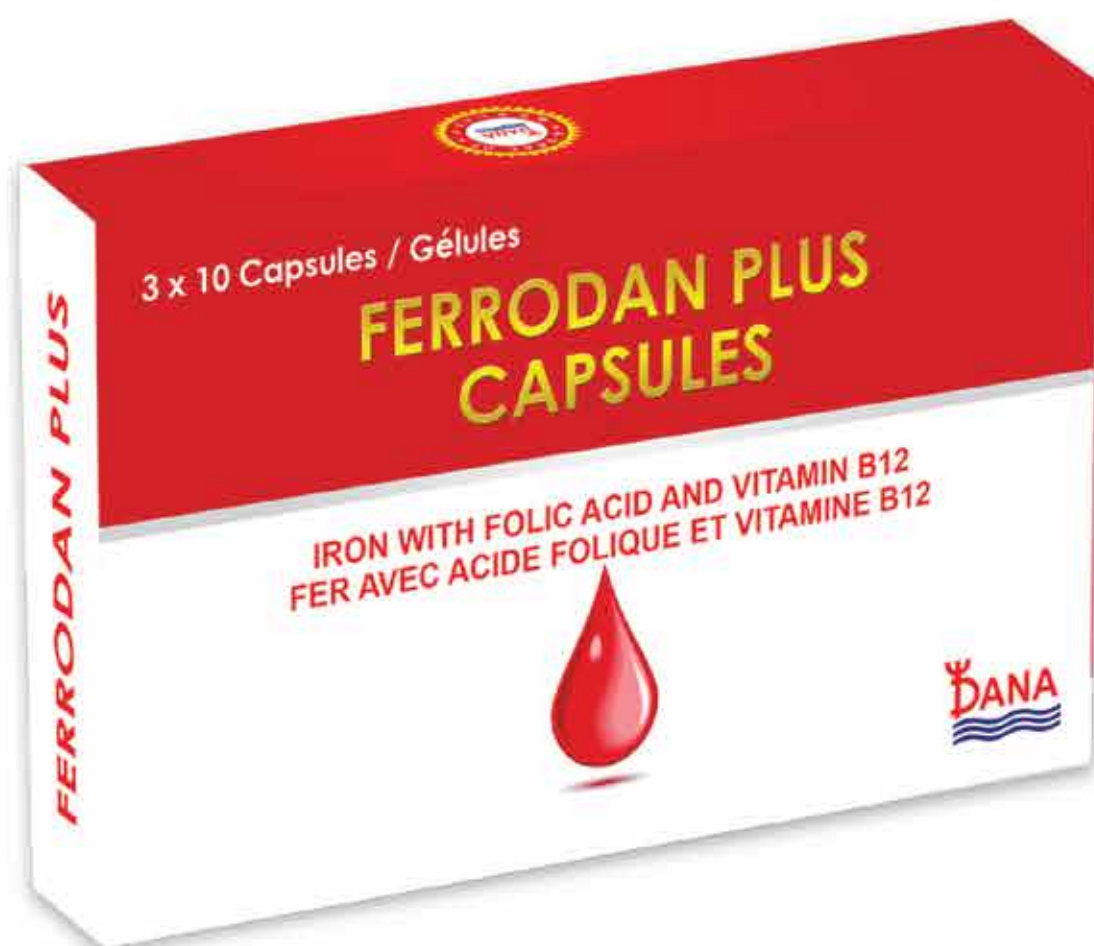
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## Dengue fever: Important facts

By Patrick Iwelunmor

The documentation of dengue fever transmission by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes was done at the beginning of 19th century. However, the first suspected outbreak of a dengue-like disease was reported in 1635, in Martinique and Guadeloupe, in Panama. Other incidences of diseases similar in characteristics were reported even earlier.

Dengue fever, also known as break-bone fever, is a viral infection that is caused by the dengue virus (DENV) and transmitted to humans from mosquitoes. It is predominantly common in the tropical and subtropical climates of the world. A larger percentage of people with dengue fever have mild or no symptoms and will usually get better in one to two weeks. The disease rarely leads to death.

The symptoms, which usually manifest between four to ten days after infection, last for two to seven days. They include high fever (40°C/104°F), severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains and nausea. Others are vomiting, swollen glands and rash.

For people with who are infected for a second time, they stand a greater risk of developing severe dengue. The symptoms for sever dengue are severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, rapid breathing, bleeding gums or nose, fatigue and restlessness. Others are blood in vomit or stool, heavy thirst, pale and cold skin, and weakness.

### Transmission

According to the WHO, after feeding on a DENV-infected person, the virus replicates in the mosquito midgut before disseminating to secondary tissues, including the salivary glands. The time it takes from ingesting the virus to actual transmission to a new host is termed the extrinsic incubation period (EIP). The EIP takes about eight to 12 days, when the ambient temperature is between 25–28°C.

It is also interesting to note that human-to-mosquito transmission is also possible, as mosquitoes can be infected by people who are viremic with DENV. This can be someone who has a symptomatic dengue infection, someone who is yet to have a symptomatic infection (they are pre-symptomatic), and people who show no signs of illness at all (they are asymptomatic).

Maternal transmission of the disease is also possible. While the WHO agrees that the primary mode of transmission of DENV between humans involves mosquito vectors, it also stated that there is evidence of the possibility of maternal transmission (from a pregnant mother to her baby).

“At the same time, vertical transmission rates appear low, with the risk of vertical transmission seemingly linked to the timing of the dengue infection during the pregnancy. When a mother does have a DENV infection when



she is pregnant, babies may suffer from pre-term birth, low birthweight, and fetal distress,” it said.

### Prevention and treatment

While avoiding mosquito bites is the best way to prevent the onset of the disease, dengue fever can be treated at home with

the appropriate medication. Though there is no specific treatment for dengue, the focus is to treat pain symptoms and this is best done with acetaminophen (paracetamol). Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen and aspirin are not indicated because they can increase the risk of

bleeding. People with severe dengue usually require hospitalisation. A vaccine, Dengvaxia, has been developed for people who have had dengue fever, at least, once, and reside in places where the infection is common.

### Global incidence

The global incidence of dengue has increased in recent decades, with the WHO reporting that cases have increased from 505,430 cases in 2000 to 5.2 million cases in 2019. There is a consensus among infectious diseases experts that a vast majority of dengue cases are under-reported, largely due to their asymptomatic nature. As a result, many cases are misdiagnosed and self-treated as other febrile illnesses.

The disease is currently endemic in more than 100 countries in the WHO regions of Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. Regions most affected by the disease are the Americas, South-East Asia and Western Pacific, while Asia represents about 70 per cent of the global disease burden. As the disease is spreading to new places in Europe amid serious outbreaks, local transmission was reported in France and Croatia in 2010.

The year 2019 witnessed the largest number of global dengue cases ever reported. Virtually all regions were affected, with Afghanistan recording its very first case. The American Region reported 3.1 million cases, with more than 25 000 classified as severe. A high number of cases were reported in Bangladesh (101,000), Malaysia (131,000) Philippines (420,000), and Vietnam (320,000), in Asia.

In Nigeria, dengue fever is endemic in almost all the states of the federation and could be the leading cause of many unclassified febrile illnesses. As earlier observed, the best precaution against the disease is the avoidance of mosquito bites by ensuring very neat and hygienic environments.

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



# With puzzle games, it's higher cognitive capacity and lower dementia risk

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

Playing puzzle games has been found by scientists to lower the risk of dementia and ultimately enhance cognitive capacities. In fact, a study has found that solving puzzles could reduce the onset of dementia by two-and-a-half years.

A puzzle is a game that tests a person's ingenuity or knowledge. In a puzzle, the solver is expected to put pieces together in a logical way, in order to arrive at the correct solution to the puzzle. Jigsaw puzzle is one that requires the assembly of often irregularly shaped interlocking and mosaicked pieces, each of which typically has a portion of a picture. When assembled, the puzzle pieces produce a complete picture.

Researchers have stated that sitting down to solve puzzles is a great way to develop memory or motor skills. Various findings have also pointed out that solving jigsaw puzzles on a regular basis will provide a substantive boost in the results of most intelligence quotient tests in most people.

Incidentally, puzzle has gone beyond being a mere indoor fun activity to actually becoming a sport with global recognition. For instance, the last jigsaw puzzle Olympics game took place in May 2022, in Tokyo, Japan. There will also be a World Jigsaw Puzzle Championship in September 2023, at Millenium Dome, Valladolid, Spain. This means that, aside from the health benefits that will be derived, participants in the competition will also win mouth-watering prizes.

## Succour for the elderly

Puzzles are a great activity for the elderly to do on their own or with others. This is because they help to exercise their fingers and minds, have fun, and feel a sense of belonging.

Research has further shown that older adults who regularly take part in word and number puzzles have sharper brains. The study established that the more often they played puzzles, the better their brain functioned, adding that doing jigsaw puzzles could reduce the onset of dementia by two-and-a-half years. This confirms that mentally stimulating activities may help delay the onset of dementia symptoms. The researchers specifically said brain puzzles may be considered as part of a more comprehensive dementia prevention programme that also involves exercise and healthy eating.

According to the finding of a study conducted by five researchers at Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience, long-term involvement in jigsaw puzzles strongly engages multiple cognitive abilities and it enhances cognition capacity. The study, which was carried out at the ULM University in Germany and also published in the *American Medical Journal*, posited that jigsaw puzzles may provide two active ingredients which are

effective features that benefit cognition. The researchers said cognitive demands of jigsaw puzzling could contribute to an increased brain reserve and that regulation of distressing emotions through jigsaw puzzling could prevent chronic stress that can exert a negative impact on cognitive aging and dementia in the long term.

"We found out that jigsaw puzzle skill was highly associated with global visuospatial cognition and all measured visuospatial cognitive abilities, indicating that solving jigsaw puzzles strongly tap multiple visuospatial cognitive processes, including perception, constructional praxis, mental rotation, speed, flexibility, working memory, reasoning, and episodic memory," the researchers said.

## Brain booster

Another study was also conducted on the jigsaw puzzle and its health benefits by the Protect Study, a research centre in the UK, run by the University of Exeter and Kings College, London, in partnership with the UK National Health Service. The centre researches how healthy brains age and why people develop dementia.

The study, which was conducted in 2018, involved more than 19,000 participants. The researchers asked participants to report how frequently they engaged in word and number puzzles and undertook a series of cognitive tests sensitive to measuring changes in brain function. They found that the more regularly participants engaged with the puzzles, the better they performed on tasks assessing attention, reasoning, and memory.

The finding of the study was also presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in 2018. Alzheimer's Association is the body of experts that treat dementia disease. From their results, the researchers concluded that people who engage in puzzles have brain function equivalent to ten years younger than their age on tests assessing grammatical reasoning, and eight years younger than their age on tests measuring short-term memory.

Speaking on the outcome of the study, the leader of the research team, Dr Anne Corbett of the University of Exeter Medical School, said: "We've found that the more regularly people engage with puzzles such as crosswords and Sudoku, the sharper their performance is across a range of tasks assessing memory, attention, and reasoning. The improvements are particularly clear in the speed and accuracy of their performance."

"In some areas, the improvement was quite dramatic. On measures of problem-solving, people who regularly do these puzzles performed equivalent to an average of eight years younger



compared to those who don't. This research supports previous findings that indicate regular use of the word and number puzzles helps keep our brains working better for longer."

On a general note, according to various studies, playing puzzles improves short-term memory, by reinforcing connections between brain cells, and also improves mental speed. Also, playing puzzles will enhance mood, as it increases the production of dopamine, a chemical that regulates mood, memory, and concentration. Playing puzzles also improves visual and spatial

reasoning, sharpens logic and reasoning, and refines critical and analytical thinking skills.

In view of the benefits associated with playing puzzles, this is the right time to start playing them. Modern puzzle plates are mostly made of cardboard and the pattern of a jigsaw puzzle is a whole piece of fine art printed on the surface of cardboard before cutting. Good enough, the plates are not expensive. **Pharmanews** findings have shown that some generic 3D wooden puzzle plate boards in Nigeria are in the range of N20,000 to N30,000, and some may be cheaper.

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# Be politically relevant to drive favourable policies, stakeholders task pharmacists

## - As Oyo ACPN appoints Sanusi grand patron

By Adebayo Oladejo

The National Chairman, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, has lent his voice to the call on pharmacists across the country to make themselves relevant in the nation's affairs, by participating actively in politics.

According to the ACPN boss, joining politics is one way of ensuring that more policies favour the pharmaceutical sector, especially in the new political dispensation.

Oladigbolu gave the charge at the recent investiture of the Ibadan-based philanthropist and Chief Executive Officer, Ilaji Hotels and Sports Resorts, Engr Dotun Sanusi, as the grand patron of ACPN, Oyo State, at Ilaji Hotels and Sports Resorts Hall, Akanran Road, Ibadan.

He noted that unless pharmacists come out of their shells and participate actively in politics, just as their colleagues in other health professions, they would not be able to champion a better health sector.

"Pharmacists are passionate people; we are very much interested in what goes on in our community. Politicians may not necessarily understand as much as healthcare providers; so, the more pharmacists we have in the political space, the more we are able to advocate for the health sector for the benefit of mankind," he said.

The ACPN chairman also decried the poor understanding of the role of pharmacists in the community, saying the pharmacy profession is not just about drug dispensing but also about manufacturing and marketing, as well as education on the use of drugs, dosage, possible drug-



L-R: Pharm. Adebayo Gbadamosi, chairman, ACPN, Oyo State; Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN; Engr Dotun Sanusi, newly decorated Grand Patron, ACPN; and Pharm. Adegboyega Oguntayo, chairman, PSN, Oyo State, at the Investiture programme in Ibadan, Oyo State.

drug interactions to avoid, research into new drugs, and counselling on common diseases in the community.

Also speaking at the event, the ACPN chairman in the state, Pharm. Adebayo Gbadamosi, disclosed that the selection of Sanusi as the grand patron of the association was due to his investment in human capacity and community development, saying these are similar to the aspirations of pharmacists.

Gbadamosi also concurred that the political consciousness of pharmacists needed to be reawakened, saying the time to start is now.

The ACPN leader further revealed that the association, in its

quest to continue to deliver quality healthcare services to the citizens of Oyo State, was collaborating with well-meaning people with interests in community development as partners, so as to further deliver the benefits of community pharmacy to the people at the grassroots.

He added that, while searching for a befitting grand patron, the association found Sanusi to be a unique personality with a deep interest in developing his people at the grassroots.

"This community man always seeks advancement and support for the less-privileged and the downtrodden; he advocates for

the physically challenged and is a philanthropist," Gbadamosi enthused.

He also seized the opportunity to task the Federal Government to stem the exodus of health professionals from the country, saying it is getting challenging to have young pharmacists supervise community pharmacies in the country.

Speaking in the same vein, Pharm. Azeez Gbolagade, managing director, Ajoke Pharmacy Limited, said it is time for pharmacists to take the bull by the horn by participating in politics, stressing that the appointment of the new grand patron was a step towards achieving it.

In his remarks, Chief Sanusi thanked ACPN-Oyo for making him the grand patron and promised to use his personal network to advocate for pharmacists and ensure the profession is accorded its due recognition in the state.

He said he was particularly delighted to accept the honour because ACPN is focused on the grassroots, which is always dear to him.

The investiture was flagged off by a medical outreach that benefitted 500 indigenes of the Ilaji Community, in Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State, who accessed essential health services and medications, including mass deworming and screening for high blood pressure, malaria, hepatitis and HIV.

Other dignitaries at the event included Pharm. Adegboyega Oguntayo, chairman, PSN, Oyo State; Pharm. Abiodun Gbadamosi, immediate past chairman, ACPN Oyo State; Pharm. (Mrs) Hamida Atere Akeukere, secretary; Pharm. Chief Hamidu Oluyedun; Pharm. Abiodun Ajibade, and Pharm. Taofik Odokoya.

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**“Cholesterol, cholesterol, my dear cholesterol.... You have been vilified the world over. You have been tortured and imprisoned and now there is genocide on you”**

From what reference point do we understand our bodies? From a spiritual perspective, we are created by a Creator, who is whole, perfect and complete. Our bodies are perfect and everything within it has a purpose to the benefit of the body.

Today, we vilify a very important component of our bodies called cholesterol. This article, hopefully, will alter what has become a serious misunderstanding. Why is it important and where is our misunderstanding? Why is cholesterol so important? Why is it your friend and not your enemy?

#### Facts about cholesterol

1. It is a substance made by our liver.
2. It is used in the body to make nerve and brain cells. Your brain is about 25 per cent cholesterol.
3. It needed to make all new cells and to replace damaged tissue or aged cells.
4. All our nerves have a large



component of cholesterol inside them and around them, forming the protective covering.

5. Cholesterol is a major component in cell membranes. It is like a glue holding our cell together.

## Wellness and cholesterol: A misunderstood friendship

6. Vitamin D is synthesised on the skin when sunlight hits cholesterol and converts it to vitamin D, which is very important for our immune system, preventing autoimmune

disorders, heart health, anti-cancer effects, calcium and bone health, and much more.

7. Sex hormones - oestrogen, progesterone, and even the male hormone testosterone - are all made from cholesterol. These hormones are responsible for many functions, including libido, fertility, health sex life, etc.

8. Steroid hormones—cortisol, aldosterone—help with stress, blood pressure, electrolyte and kidney function, and much more.

9. Digestion—Cholesterol is a major component in the bile acids that help the body digest fats and other foods

#### Where does it come from?

Liver makes cholesterol and supplies it all over our body. Cholesterol is lipid-soluble, not water-soluble, thus needs a protein driver to transport it around the body.

**LDL** – A transport protein that transports cholesterol from the liver to the tissues /cells/ organs in the

body where it is used.

**HDL** – A transport protein that transports cholesterol back to the liver for recycling, after cells are broken down by activities like exercise, or after cells are destroyed by inflammation and disease.

There is no such thing as good or bad cholesterol. There is no cholesterol in LDL or HDL.

In a child, a fever may occur if there is an ear or throat infection. Treat the ear infection and the fever goes away. A baby cries, not because it loves to cry, but because it is hungry or the diaper is wet. Feed the child, or change the diaper, and the crying stops. If the “service engine light” on your car dashboard lights up, do you turn it off or cover it with a cloth and keep going, or do you take heed that the engine needs service ASAP?

High cholesterol is not a disease – just as fever is not a disease; it is a warning symptom and sign that something else is wrong. Your cholesterol level is high because there is an underlying dysfunction in the body. It could be inflammation, like arthritis (joint inflammation), kidney or stomach inflammation, or a smouldering inflammation, such as diabetes, insulin resistance, heart disease, or an ongoing mutagenic damage to cells, including an undiagnosed cancer. It is a marker that problems are going on that have triggered a response for more cholesterol. It is like a fever, a marker of inflammation. So, stop treating the fever chronically, and treat the underlying cause of the fever, immediately.

(Continues next edition)

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# DEANS' Corner

## PROF. TAVS ABERE

**P**rofessor Tavs Atavwoda Abere is the dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Madonna University, Elele, Rivers State. A teacher par excellence, Abere is a professor of Pharmacognosy and was the vice-chairman of Delta State Traditional Medicine Board, from 2016 to 2023.

Abere obtained his secondary school certificate (WASC) at Federal Government College, Warri, in 1986, through the Federal Government of Nigeria College Scholarship Official Gazette No. 37, Vol. 70. He obtained his Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm.) degree in 1994, from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, and thereafter obtained his Masters of Science (M.Sc.) in Pharmacognosy in 1998, also from the University of Benin.

In May 2012, Abere bagged Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pharmacognosy from the University of Benin. He teaches Phytochemistry, Evaluation and Formulation of Phytomedicines, Herbal and Alternative Medicine, and other pharmacognosy and biotechnology courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in universities. He has also served as an external examiner to many universities, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Abere was the head of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Benin,

from 2011 to 2014. He was also a coordinator of the Pharm.D Conversion Programme, University of Benin, between 2005 and 2006. He was the Faculty of Pharmacy representative in the University Certificate Screening Committee, University of Benin from 2009 to 2011.

Abere was the pioneer head, Department of Pharmacognosy and Traditional Medicine, Delta State University, Abraka, from 2010 to 2013. He was the head, Department of Pharmaceutical Microbiology and Biotechnology at Madonna University, from 2017 to 2021. He was also the pioneer coordinator, School of Postgraduate Studies, Madonna University, from 2018 to 2020.

A professional to the core, Abere was the coordinator of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN)'s Mandatory Continuing Professional

Development (MCPD) Programme, Benin City Centre, from 2011 to 2015. He has also been a member of the PCN Accreditation Committee to Nigerian Universities and is currently a member of the PCN Foreign-Trained Pharmacists Assessment Committee, as well as the PCN Education Committee.

Abere belongs to various professional bodies. Aside from being a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), he is also a member of the PSN National Education and Research Committee. He was the editor-in-chief for PSN, Edo State Branch, from 2002 to 2005 and later became the public relations

officer, PSN, Edo State, from 2005 to 2006.



Abere is a member of the National Association of Pharmacists in Academia (NAPA), as well as the Nigeria Society of Pharmacognosy (NSP). In 2002, he became the national treasurer of NSP and held the position till 2007. He became the zonal coordinator of NSP in 2011 and held the post till 2014.

Abere has attended local and international conferences. He has also delivered lectures at conferences and meetings within and outside Nigeria, including Germany and Brazil. He has published several research articles in peer-review journals.

**Abere was the pioneer head, Department of Pharmacognosy and Traditional Medicine, Delta State University, Abraka, from 2010 to 2013. He was the head, Department of Pharmaceutical Microbiology and Biotechnology at Madonna University, from 2017 to 2021. He was also the pioneer coordinator, School of Postgraduate Studies, Madonna University, from 2018 to 2020.**

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## Understanding AI Basics for Business Growth

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

"The playing field is poised to become a lot more competitive, and businesses that don't deploy AI and data to help them innovate in everything they do will be at a disadvantage."

– Paul Daugherty,

chief technology and innovation officer, Accenture

Welcome to the world of artificial intelligence (AI), where the possibilities for small businesses are endless. In this article, we will explore how AI can revolutionise your small business, drive growth, enhance efficiency, and spur innovation. With Artificial Intelligence, you have the potential to take your business to new heights, outperform competitors, and meet the ever-evolving demands of your customers.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that aims to develop machines that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include speech recognition, problem-solving, decision-making, learning, and language translation. AI has the potential to revolutionise various industries, including small businesses, by automating processes, enabling advanced data analysis, and enhancing customer experiences.

In the context of small and large businesses, AI can be applied in numerous ways. It can optimise operations, by automating repetitive tasks; streamline customer interactions through chatbots or virtual assistants; improve decision-making, through data analysis and predictive modelling; personalise marketing campaigns, and enhance product recommendations. The applications of AI are limited only by imagination and the specific needs of each business.

### Types of AI technologies relevant to small businesses

**Machine learning (ML):** Machine learning is a subset of AI that focuses on training machines to learn from data and make predictions or decisions, without being explicitly programmed. Small businesses can utilize ML algorithms to analyse large datasets, detect patterns, and make accurate predictions. Examples include fraud detection, customer segmentation, and demand forecasting.

- **Natural language processing (NLP):** NLP enables machines to understand and interpret human language. Small businesses can leverage NLP to automate customer support through chatbots, extract insights from customer feedback, or analyse sentiment in social media data. NLP can also power voice assistants and facilitate voice-based interactions with customers.
- **Computer vision:** Computer vision enables machines to understand and interpret visual information from images or videos. Small businesses can utilise computer vision to automate quality control processes, analyse images for object recognition or classification, or develop augmented reality applications. For example, a small business in the fashion industry can use computer vision to recommend outfits based on customer preferences.
- **Robotic process automation (RPA):** RPA involves automating repetitive and rule-based tasks typically performed by humans.

Small businesses can use RPA to automate data entry, invoice processing, or inventory management. By implementing RPA, small businesses can improve accuracy, speed, and efficiency in their operations.

- **Expert systems:** Expert systems are AI systems that mimic human expertise in specific domains. Small businesses can leverage expert systems to provide personalised recommendations, automate decision-making processes, or offer expert-level advice to customers. For example, a small business in the financial sector can use an expert system to provide personalised investment recommendations to clients.
- **Predictive analytics:** Predictive analytics involves using historical data and statistical algorithms to make predictions about future events or behaviours. Small businesses can apply predictive analytics to forecast demand, identify customer churn risk, optimise pricing strategies, or anticipate maintenance needs. By leveraging predictive analytics, small businesses can make data-driven decisions and gain a competitive advantage.

These are just few examples of AI technologies that small businesses can explore and



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

leverage. The choice of AI technology depends on the specific needs and objectives of each small business. It is important to carefully evaluate the potential benefits, costs, and implementation requirements before adopting any AI technology.

By understanding the basics of AI and the various AI technologies available, small business-owners can make informed decisions about leveraging AI to drive growth, efficiency, and innovation.

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

**ACTION PLAN:** Learn more about how to leverage AI for business growth, innovation and profitability. Invest in AI solutions to increase your company's performance and productivity.

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

Sesan Kareem is the founder of HubPharm Africa, a digital pharmacy that provides medicine delivery and extraordinary care, [www.hubpharm africa.com](http://www.hubpharm africa.com), and the principal consultant of SK Institute, [www.sesankareem.com.ng](http://www.sesankareem.com.ng).

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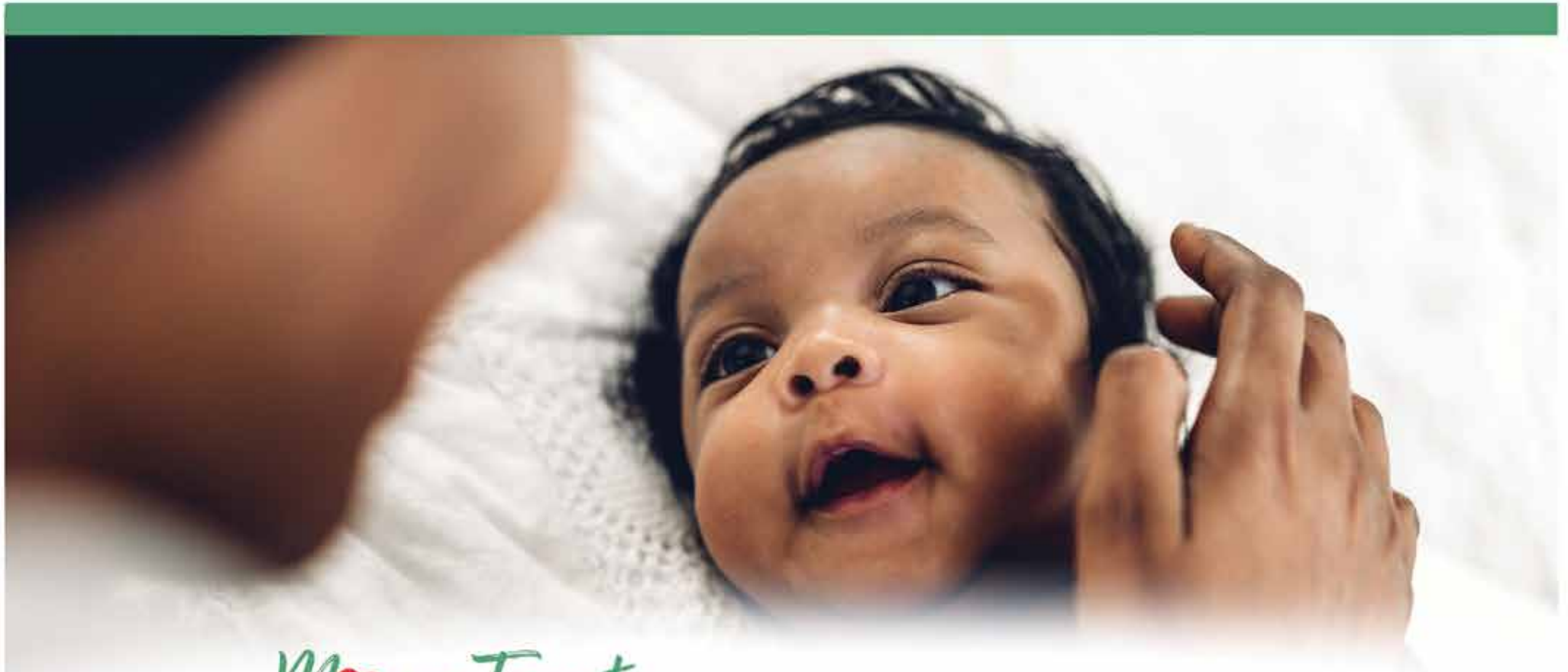
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1. FAU Amin, J et al. Comparative Evaluation of Cefixime Versus Amoxicillin-clavulanate Following Ceftriaxone Therapy of Pneumonia - Department of Pediatrics, Hasharon Hospital, Israel, 1996 Dec.

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# How CBN intervention fund boosted capacity of pharma manufacturers - Ayebae

**I**n this exclusive interview with MOSES DIKE, the managing director of Fidson Healthcare Plc and immediate past chairman of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN), Dr Fidelis Ayebae, assesses the impact of the N100 billion pharmaceutical intervention fund given to local pharmaceutical manufacturers, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also decries the current economic challenges in the country and the exit of pharmaceutical companies. Excerpt.

**How would you describe the current economic situation in the country, especially, as it affects Fidson Healthcare and other stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry?**

Nigeria is faced with very challenging times, both in micro- and macroeconomics, monetary or fiscal policies. All of these are very difficult to juggle and they are chiefly responsible for how companies perform. When these indices, including inflation, are stable or predictable, it makes it easy for you to plan or project and run your business better.

But times like this are times that you cannot predict. You can only guess or try to figure what is going on in the mind of the government and its agencies. Within all of these, you would have to find an acceptable position to do your business. This is what is responsible for the good or bad performance of companies.

To God be the glory, we are complaining but we are doing well. Even Dangote, who is the richest man in Nigeria, is complaining. That said, my advice to upcoming entrepreneurs is not to be discouraged but to put on their thinking cap. Secondly, they should know that we have no other nation and we can't all *japa*.

We can't all be cowardly and pretend that somebody will come from the sky and solve all our problems when we *japa*. At some point in our lives, we would still return to Nigeria. So who would we have left behind to solve the problems of Nigeria? Those of us who are entrepreneurs must live with the reality that we have only one country and therefore must be true to ourselves.

Again, you must spend within your means, either in business or personal life. Avoid ostentatious lifestyle. Do not over-trade. Know what working capital your business requires and make effort to get it on a long-term or medium-term basis - but certainly not on a short-term basis - because that can kill.

Above all, know that stock is king. Cash is king. The good times will come and when they do, if you have no stock and you have no cash, you will be cleaned out.

**In light of current economic realities, how has government policies on ease of doing business translated into reality?**

The truth is that there is no ease of doing business when there are all of these crises earlier enumerated. Registering a business in 24 hours is not ease of doing business. When all of these indicators that I mentioned earlier are predictable, that is when you can really do business with ease. Some of those artificial points on the ease of doing business are out of the window as we speak.

The Nigerian situation is such that we have to rebuild the economy from the beginning. You can't even solve FX problem without drilling more oil and selling more oil. Even if you solve all the other problems, your FX overhang would be staring you in the face. So, the first thing is to maximise potentials in the oil and



**Dr Fidelis Ayebae**

gas sector, while addressing the other issues.

There are fundamental issues that need to be addressed before business can be done with ease. You have infrastructural problems, double taxation, electricity problems, and unstable FX rates that are affecting your duty payment, your LC charges, Form M rates that finally translates to the unit cost of the product and this has increased the unit cost of products by over 60 per cent.

Now, the question is, how do you sell something that is constantly increasing when the purchasing power of the populace is constantly diminishing? This is why we need to quickly stem the entire slide and find a way of ensuring that we put more money in the hands of the consumer.

Again, we have unfortunately found ourselves in a situation where we have made the dollar an almost indispensable currency, such that, even people who do not need dollars for business are taking it for other purposes. When everybody is doing this, the implication is that you will need more dollars. When you have more dollars through foreign direct investment, through increased oil sales and others, that is when you stem this tide of everyone running around chasing the dollar, as if it is the only thing that exists.

Again, we have to cut more deals with most of our foreign partners - India, China and the rest of them - in which we can do trade outside of the dollar, build it slowly in the form of commodity exchanges, or use our local currencies.

**The *japa* syndrome appears to be assuming a corporate dimension, as some well-known companies are said to be leaving Nigeria. What steps do you think can be taken to stem this ugly trend?**

Well I don't think there is a magic wand that can reverse this trend. It will continue for a while, until we are able to stabilise, by implementing some of the things I have said earlier.

Stability and predictability in our economy are very key. When there is no stability or predictability of those key indices, foreigners will run. It is a natural process of preserving and protecting values and investment in a country you are not sure is going in the right direction.

That said, the best thing is not for any Nigerian that can afford to *japa* to do so. Although you cannot stop people, especially the younger people, from having aspirations, but when they go out there, they will see that it's not as easy as they think it is out there, even for the citizens of those countries. Since this is the situation, it will now become a case of "some years ago, we took you forcefully to come and slave for us, but today you are now volunteering yourselves to come." So, whatever you see, you will have to take.

It is now left for those of us that love this country and that this country has given so much to, to stay put and work with the government to salvage this situation. It is not the time for us to chicken out of a challenge that is solvable.

We are not going to collapse as a nation. Therefore, let everybody stand up and be counted as part of the solution, rather than the problem. While you are alive, use your money to make a bad situation better. That is how to add value. Even all the politicians that are stealing money here and there and hiding up and down, what are they going to do with the money when they die? For some, their families don't even know where the money is. This selfishness

is not leading us anywhere. Rather than this, let us join hands to build a vibrant economy, where everybody will survive and be happy.

We have smart people out there that can solve Nigeria's problem. It is the

ungodliness and selfishness of a typical Nigerian in leadership or position of responsibility that is compounding our problems. Imagine, if, as businessman today, I started stealing the money belonging to the shareholders and stashing it away - maybe in foreign countries like Australia, Switzerland, Canada and the rest of them - what would happen to our dream of building a vibrant corporate institution? Our problems would be compounded and we might close down. Of course, I might have money stashed somewhere, but I would end up being a lonely and miserable person out there for the rest of my life. This is what is happening to Nigeria and our economy.

**How is Fidson managing to navigate these challenges?**

Nothing good comes out of complaining. We have challenges like every other person but the thing is that we must remain focused on the goal. What is the goal? To run a successful enterprise that is sustainable and is returning consistent values to all stakeholders.

Investors don't care what problems you have. They gave you money at the time they bought your shares and you promised to return value to them. So, your role is to ensure that you are constantly moving and adapting. Ensure that your reflexes, in terms of planning or reactions, as a team, are swift.

**Recently, Nigerians were alarmed when the news of GSK's exit was announced. As an industry stakeholder and former chairman of PMG-MAN, what is your reaction to this and how prepared are we to fill this vacuum?**

To be honest with you, the exit of GSK is heart-breaking. When things like that begin to happen, it shakes an industry, because GSK is not an ordinary company. To start with, GSK is part of the history of the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry and the fact that GSK is here confers credibility on the Nigerian pharmaceutical space.

Their exit may be part of a business decision that was made because of the challenges that Nigeria is facing. They may come back if things get better. There is nothing stopping them. The market is on free entry and free exit basis. I am sure that it was not an easy decision for them to make.

They are not leaving with talents but they are leaving with those platforms that would have helped the pharmaceutical industry. But, having said that, we are not going to die. The rest of us have to fill the vacuum. Filling the vacuum is not a very difficult thing because the products that they provide are also products that we either manufacture locally or import from other sources. There are plants here that can manufacture those things. So, it is now left for the people that have the plants to seize the opportunity of the exit and take advantage of the vacuum that will be left for a while, pending

*continued on page 57*





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# Fuel price increase no excuse to compromise standards – DG, SON

Highly passionate about standards and the international integrity of Nigerian products, the Director-General of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Pharm. Farouk Salim, remains optimistic that Nigerian products will continue to blaze the trail of quality in the global market. In this interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, he shares his thoughts on how his knowledge of Pharmacy has shaped his activities as one of Nigeria's most important public officers, working collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to improve Nigeria-made products, including pharmaceuticals. He also explains why adherence to standards is sacrosanct, even in seemingly harsh economic conditions. Excerpts:

## How has your knowledge of Pharmacy helped in the discharge of your duties at SON?

Pharmacy is a very precise profession, where a simple decision can produce either life or death for individuals. Accuracy is very important and that determines how and why people have confidence to make prescriptions.

Consistency is also very important – which is part of being standard. If you take a medicine in Nigeria, America, Russia or anywhere in the world, language may be different but the standards are the same. So, being a pharmacist, you are used to adhering to procedures and standards.

## You spent quite some time working in the US. How would you compare the quality of standards in the US with what obtains here, especially in the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector?

The quality of standards is the same. The problem is the application. The people in the US worry about being sued – they worry about consequences; while, here in Nigeria, we rarely hear about somebody suing somebody for a mistake, either in a hospital or in any setup.

If a mechanic does not fix your tyre properly and you are involved in an accident and lose your family, the mechanic may not even be approached. But, in the US, if he is at fault, he will not only be sued, he will be locked up and then made to pay compensation. So, the standards are the same but approach and cultural understanding are totally different.

## Are there ways your organisation is collaborating with NAFDAC in ensuring the quality of products, especially in the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector?

Way before I started working with SON, we had a committee that has been working with NAFDAC and we have areas of overlap. Even though NAFDAC regulates foods and drugs, we set the standards for that; and so we have to collaborate in setting the standards together with the stakeholders.

When it comes to regulation, NAFDAC goes to the facilities to investigate and inspect; while it is our responsibility to ensure that the GMP machines that are measuring the equipment are all standardised and calibrated. We have a lot of areas where we work together and then we have overlapping areas, like in chemicals. There are chemicals that we use in the building industry that are also used in the pharmaceutical industry.

There is also overlap of regulation – even though anything that is not used in food and drugs should not be viewed by NAFDAC as part of its responsibility. And that is why we have the committee to iron out such areas of confusion.



Pharm. Farouk Salim

## The recent fuel subsidy removal by the FG has skyrocketed production costs. Don't you think this will compromise quality standards in the production of goods?

Theoretically, no industry should admit they are compromising quality standards because of costs. This is because standards, when compromised, destroy the integrity of a product. It is either you stop producing or you produce.

Standards are supposed to be the minimum requirements for any product. If you go below the minimum requirement, then your product becomes dangerous to the community. For example, if your aspirin is less than 325 milligrams, you have a chance that an individual will not get the benefit of that drug. It is even worse for antibiotics which can cause resistance and other issues.

I feel the pain of the industries with the fuel price hikes but that is no excuse to compromise standards. You can compromise prices but you can't compromise standards.

**Standards are supposed to be the minimum requirements for any product. If you go below the minimum requirement, then your product becomes dangerous to the community. For example, if your aspirin is less than 325 milligrams, you have a chance that an individual will not get the benefit of that drug. It is even worse for antibiotics which can cause resistance and other issues.**

## Are there Nigerian products you can list among the best internationally, in terms of standards?

There are hundreds of them but our lubricants come to mind quickly. Oando, Amasco and so on. They are not just only up to standard but are exported as far as the Middle East, to the point where some people are actually faking them.

The same thing applies to our electrical cables, which are of world standards. Most of the construction works in this country by those who really want quality depend on Nigerian cables. The same thing is also happening in our cement industry. We have almost all our local cement manufacturers in most Western and Eastern African countries. We have high standard products in the country.

## How does the concept of standardisation apply to products in the pharmaceutical industry?

The concept of standardisation is the basis for the pharmaceutical industry. It is also the basis for a practising pharmacist because

if a doctor calls and says he has a person with an infection, what you do as a pharmacist is to recommend the appropriate antibiotic, in terms of grams and frequency, and the understanding is that the prescription will cure the problem. The dosage, strength and frequency are all important aspects of our activities.

Pharmacists in Nigeria, America and the UK do the same thing. If a doctor prescribes a medicine for you, the prescription is not based on the country he comes from. It is based on what the standards are. Standards are the bases for the pharmaceutical industry. They are also the bases for pharmacy practice and any medical practice essentially.

## Can you tell us more about ISO certifications and their impact on the growth of international business?

International Standards Organisation certifications are important because they help guide the industry on how to measure and build things, how to keep things organised and how to be fair. For example, the ISO management 9001 and 2015 essentially give you the basis on how to run an organisation, management-wise. It is a basis for standards and a basis for people to fall back on to run an organisation and there are so many of them. We have environmental standards, managerial standards and quality standards. All these are parts of the basis. Everywhere you go in the world, they are the same thing. Different languages, notwithstanding; the standards are the same.

## Standards-wise, what is Nigeria's rating in Africa?

That rating does not exist because we don't have a rating on the countries with the best-kept standards. One thing I want to call your attention to is the fact that Alvin Toffler, in one of his books, said for any country to be number one and progress or become a better country, it has to stick to standards.

For example, in the 80s, Chinese products were below standard but today China is the second best economy in the world because they stuck to standards and their products are of high quality. Any country of the world that advances, you will see that all their activities are based on standards.

Those guidelines make industries progress, make businesses and trade easy. Like the ISO, together with the African Standards Organisation – the Nigeria Standards Organisation and ECOWAS – we are working together and the bottom line is in this African free trade. Products have to cross borders without hindrances. If you have a product in Nigeria that is certified by SON, it should be easily accepted in Cotonou, Kigali and Johannesburg. Likewise their products that are up to standard and certified as such, they have easy ways to cross.

On the flip side, this is what other countries are using for trade barriers because if your products are not up to standard, then they can block them from coming into their market. With the WTO and Free Trade and all that, that is the only thing now available for countries to use to fight other countries from bringing substandard products into their territories. Standards are the bases for trade and actually the bases for life.





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# The many benefits of sandalwood

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



*Santalum album*

Of the 15 different species of sandalwood that grow throughout the world, the two main varieties that are traded internationally are *Santalum spicatum* (Australian sandalwood) and *Santalum album* (Indian sandalwood), Fam. family *Santalaceae*. Sandalwood is also known as santal oil, white saunders oil, white or yellow sandalwood oil, and East Indian sandalwood oil.

## Constituents

Phytochemical screening of crude extract showed the presence of carbohydrates, amino acids, fatty acids, alkaloids, tannins, phenols, steroids, flavonoids, sesquiterpene alcohols ( -and -santalol etc.), terpenes (squalene), sesquiterpenes, esters, aldehydes, vitamins and minerals.

## Preparations

Sandalwood is available and used as powder, oil, paste, soap, hydrosol or floral water.

## Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

Sandalwood is reported to have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, anti-proliferative, antiseptic, fever-reducing, blood sugar-lowering, lipid lowering, cardio-protective, scabies-inhibiting and antiaging properties. These properties have made it useful in the management of different diseases, such as acne, eczema, psoriasis, prickly heat, common warts and molluscum contagiosum.

The active ingredient of sandalwood album oil, alpha-santalol, is reported to be responsible for most of its pharmacological actions. It has been used as a remedy for a number of ailments, including common cold, urinary tract infections, haemorrhoids, digestive, muscle and mental health problems, among others.

Sandalwood paste and oil are presumed coolants, with the wood paste being used as an ointment to dissipate heat. The scent of the essential oil has also been said to calm the mind and act as a mood enhancer. Alpha-santalol has also been discovered to have chemopreventive effects, in addition to possibly being non-toxic against normal cells. The most important mechanisms by which alpha-santalol exerts its cytotoxic effects against cancer cells are through induction of cell-cycle arrest and apoptosis.

Alpha-santalol has been shown to have blood sugar lowering, lipid lowering and neuroleptic properties. SWO has been found to have activity against bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus*, fungal dermatophytes and yeasts as well as viruses like herpes, viral warts, molluscum contagiosum

and influenza. Animal study demonstrated complete resolution of all treated warts in eight out of 10 rats. It is thought that the antiviral and antibacterial activities of the oil help fight against *Helicobacter pylori* (the leading cause of stomach ulcers).

Sandalwood oil may help with wound healing; it reduces appearance

of bruises, scars, wrinkles and the darkening of the skin. It also softens the skin. Some reports suggest that the delightful aroma of sandalwood powder may help rid of body odour that could come from excessive sweating.

Studies have shown that sandalwood essential oils could significantly reduce systolic blood pressure, help in the recovery from stress, sedation, calming down of the nervous system and this might help ease menopausal symptoms like hot flashes.

The memory-enhancing potential, sedative and calming effect makes it useful in sleeping disorders, anxiety, and Alzheimer's disease. The anti-cancer properties present in sandalwood make it potentially useful in the management of skin tumours.

## Adverse effects

A few possible side-effects of the oil could be dermatitis and itching, gastrointestinal distress, blood in the urine (kidney damage). According to animal studies, sandalwood oil might affect the foetus when given to pregnant females.

## Economic uses and potentials

Sandalwood is useful in the pharmaceutical, food and cosmetics industry. A pack of 100g of sandalwood powder costs between N7850 and N12,000. The global sandalwood market remains buoyant, with 2019 wholesale prices of *Santalum album* oil ranging from \$1,750/kg (unlicensed production through Dubai) to \$2,100/kg for licensed production from India and \$2000–2500/kg as wholesale price for Australian *S. album* plantation oil.

## References

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## Events in Pictures



Director General, NAFDAC, Prof. Moji Adeyeye, cutting the tape of the newly commissioned ultra-modern wholesale and distribution centre of New Heights Pharmaceuticals. She is flanked by Pharm. (Sir) Paul Enebeli, chairman, board of directors (right); Pharm. Oghenechuko Omaruaye, chief executive officer of New Heights Pharmaceuticals (left) and Pharm. (Dr) Ukamaka Okafor, PCN coordinator, Lagos Office, (behind) representing Pharm. (Dr) Babashehu Ahmed, PCN registrar, at the official commissioning of the facility in Lagos, recently.



PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh, presenting an appreciation award plaque to the Executive Director, Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, Pharm. (Mrs) Uzoma Ezeoke, as the National Chairman, AHAPN, Pharm. Olabode Ogunjemiyo, looks in admiration, at the 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of AHAPN, held at the Welcome Centre, Ikeja, Lagos, recently.



Some members of the Local Organising Committee, at the Gala/ Cultural Night of the 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of AHAPN, held at the Welcome Centre, Ikeja, Lagos, recently.



National Chairman, AHAPN, Pharm. Olabode Ogunjemiyo, presenting an award plaque to the scientific research group of Lagos AHAPN, at the Gala/Cultural Night of the 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of AHAPN, held at the Welcome Centre, Ikeja, Lagos, recently.

## Coming Events

### 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 NAFTraph 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



R-L: Registrar, PCN, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed; PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh; Former PSN President, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai; DVC Academics, University of Ilorin, Prof. Wahab Egbewole-SAN; Prof. Olukemi Odukoya; NAPA National Chairman, Dr. Ezekiel Akinkunmi and other participants of the NAPA 21st Scientific Conference held at the University of Ilorin recently.



PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh (left) exchanging plesantries with the PCN registrar, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed; as NAPA National Chairman, Dr E.O Akinkunmi (2nd left) looks in admiration.



L-R: COMPFHI Chairman, Pharm (Dr) Ishola Adeyinka; Past Chairman, AHAPN, Pharm. Martins Oyewole; Secretary, Lagos AHAPN, Pharm. Christopher Ugwu and Country Manager, Pfizer, Pharm. Olayinka Subair, at the opening ceremony of the 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of AHAPN, held at the Welcome Centre, Ikeja, Lagos, recently.

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## THE JOURNEY OF AGILE ORGANISATION

### Legacy-driven leadership: Creating a lasting impact

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

**L**eadership is an essential aspect of all organisations. Whether in business, politics, or community organisations, leaders drive change and create a vision for the future. However, not all leaders are the same. Some leaders are driven by creating a legacy, a lasting impact that lasts long after they are gone. These are legacy-driven leaders, who believe in creating a better world for future generations.

#### What is legacy-driven leadership?

Legacy-driven leadership is about creating an enduring impact beyond the leader's lifetime. It is leadership that is not only focused on short-term goals but also on creating something that stands the test of time. Legacy-driven leaders believe in building a better future through their decisions and actions.

Leaders who are legacy-driven have a sense of purpose. They are committed to creating something that they believe is important and that will positively impact future generations. They are passionate, driven, and deeply committed to their goals, knowing their actions can inspire others to work towards the same vision.

Legacy-driven leadership is a concept that has gained significant attention in recent times. It involves creating a legacy for future generations, where leaders focus on creating something that lasts long after they are gone. A legacy-driven leader is driven not only by their immediate interests but by creating a long-term impact.

#### Why is legacy-driven leadership important?

There are several reasons why legacy-driven leadership is essential. First, it creates a sense of continuity that ensures that organisations remain stable and thriving. Second, it inspires employees to work towards something more significant than themselves.

Legacy-driven leadership is essential for creating long-term success in any organisation. It ensures a sense of continuity, where leaders build on the successes of their predecessors, rather than starting from scratch. It provides a sense of purpose, making it easier for leaders to make difficult decisions and build lasting institutions.

Moreover, legacy-driven leadership inspires employees to work towards something greater than themselves. It promotes collaboration, where individuals work together towards a shared goal. It also empowers employees, knowing that their work contributes to something that will positively impact future generations.

Additionally, legacy-driven leadership imbues a sense of purpose, making it easier for leaders to make difficult decisions and steer their organisations towards success.

#### Examples of legacy-driven leaders

There have been many legacy-driven leaders throughout history. One of the most famous is Nelson Mandela. His legacy-driven leadership ensured that he fought for the equality of all South Africans and left a lasting impact that inspired future generations.

**Legacy-driven leadership is essential for creating long-term success in any organisation. It ensures a sense of continuity, where leaders build on the successes of their predecessors, rather than starting from scratch. It provides a sense of purpose, making it easier for leaders to make difficult decisions and build lasting institutions.**

Another example is Elon Musk, who is committed to creating a future where humanity can thrive beyond the confines of our planet. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, Rev. Sr Margaret Howes, and Rev. Fr Martins McComboy are other legacy-driven leaders who have left an enduring impact.

#### The mindset of a legacy-driven leader

Surprisingly, many leaders don't spend enough time thinking about their legacy – what they will leave behind for the organisation and the people they serve. Webster's dictionary defines legacy as "anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor." Legacy is not bound by age or time. Legacy represents your body of work at each stage of your career as you establish the foundational building blocks and accumulate the required wisdom to contribute to growth, innovation and opportunity both in and outside the workplace. Your legacy grows with each new experience, with each previously untested idea and bold ideal that you are courageous enough to deploy, and each time you inspire others to see something through to fruition.

For many, leaving a legacy is associated with the end, rather than the beginning of the next phase in one's career. Your leadership is not shaped, and your legacy is not defined at the end of the road but rather by the moments shared, the decisions made, the actions taken, and even the mistakes overcome throughout the many phases of your career.

Leadership, done rightly, is a reinvention process – a continuous discovery that informs your mindset, new skill sets and aptitudes. You learn how to keep creating sustainable impact and influence at each career stage. With each step you take, you will identify new ways of mastering the fundamentals, providing greater clarity and depth of thought to improve your leadership approach and communication style further.

For legacy-driven leadership, there are five significant phases in my career. This series of legacy stages has guided my leadership journey and shaped the leader that I am today – just as much as the mentors who taught me about the importance of legacy. I've been able to use the five phases of my career thus far as milestones to measure my progress and maintain a strategic focus on my leadership trajectory.

As part of this process, I've remained in close contact with those who played essential roles in my leadership growth and ensure that at each stage of my career I remind myself of how I've matured and course-corrected along this journey.

If you were to leave your current line of work today, what is the legacy

you would leave behind? How would others define it? Are you paying attention to the feedback and how

it can guide the next phase of your career and your ability to influence others?

If you were to evaluate the last ten years of your career and its various stages, what is the story you would tell others about your legacy? If others told the story, would the same narrative hold? Based on the narrative, what would the next ten years look like? What would you change or do differently?

The best leadership legacies are a consequence of success coming to those surrounded by people who want their success to continue. When you can inspire those around you to take a leap of faith with you, you are creating a legacy-defining moment in your leadership career. Whenever you have this opportunity, embrace it. Capture the moment and appreciate the inherent responsibility associated with it



to guide and shape the overall experience. After the moment subsides, share the significance with your team and how it also plays an essential part in their legacy.

Here is another perspective you can get – review your resume and describe the legacy you left behind at each job. The legacies you can more easily define relate to jobs that matter most to you. They were more purposeful because you could contribute in meaningful ways that also inspired those around you. When you find it a challenge to identify your legacy, that particular job had less importance and impact on your career; in many cases, it may have taken you a step backwards in your leadership progression, causing an awakening and a course-correction to get your career moving forward again.

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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.





# Shalina unveils actor, Ninalowo, as Polygel ambassador

By Adebayo Oladejo

about the benefits and effectiveness

**S**halina Healthcare, a leading pharmaceutical company in Nigeria, has officially unveiled a popular Nigerian actor and film producer, Bolanle Ninalowo, "Nino B", as an ambassador for one of its flagship products, Polygel.

The Lagos State-born actor, who holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting, from Devry University, and a master's degree in Branding and Marketing, from Kellogg Branding School of Management, both in Chicago, United States of America, was unveiled at the corporate head office of the company in Lagos.

Polygel is noted for the relief of indigestion, heartburn, sour stomach, gastritis, stomach discomfort due to excess gas, hyperacidity and ulceration in the digestive tract and others.

Speaking during the unveiling, the Deputy General Manager (Marketing), West Africa, Shalina Healthcare, Sandeep Sahu, said the company purposefully made Ninalowo an ambassador, based on the similarities between the personality of the actor and Polygel, as a brand, and by extension, Shalina, as a company.

According to him, "Qualities and values that made Polygel stand out and be unique among all other brands of antacid are also traceable to Ninalowo. Just like Polygel, an antacid brand, Ninalowo as an actor, is also popular, top-rated, efficient, adventurous, professional, proven, tested and trusted.

Also speaking, the Brand



**L-R: Pharm. Femi Laleye, brand manager, Gastro and Anti-Infective; Arun Raj, vice president/ chief commercial officer; Bolanle Ninalowo, actor and movie producer; Pharm. Sandeep Sahu, head, Brand Marketing; Bharat Pahuja, head, Finance, West Africa, and Pharm. Theophilus Emeka Adimoha, director and head of Regulatory, Shalina Healthcare at the Unveiling of Bolanle Ninalowo as the Brand Ambassador for Polygel in Lagos.**

Manager for Polygel, Femi Laleye, said, "Polygel is a balanced combination of dried aluminium hydroxide gel and magnesium hydroxide. It contains the anti-flatulent agent, simethicone. It is scientifically proven and well-reported in medical literature, as it offers a rapid and longer-lasting calming effect on stomach acidity."

Speaking earlier, the Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Shalina West Africa, Arun

Raj, reiterated that the company is committed to its founding principles, saying the three pillars of affordability, availability and quality are key to the company, in its efforts to consistently produce brands that support and grow the quality of healthcare delivery in Africa.

Expressing his excitement about the partnership, Ninalowo, said he was eager to lend his credibility, charisma, and passion to raise awareness

sell, but mostly to touch lives and connect with the people. The main synergy I see with me and Shalina is its passion for the people, which informs the affordability of its products. I am delighted to be here and sincerely appreciate the company's management. I am honoured, as well as humbled, to be recognised. I will jealously guide this opportunity. I am set and can't wait to promote Polygel to the world."

of Polygel in offering a rapid and longer-lasting calming effect on stomach acidity.

He added that he decided to join Shalina as a brand ambassador, not just because of his love for marketing, but also because of the commitment of the company to initiatives and ideas that concern the masses.

He continued, "I always want to

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# PSN partners Pfizer to fight counterfeit medicines

By Temitope Obayendo

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) has pledged to collaborate with the biopharmaceutical company, Pfizer, to tackle the perennial challenge of counterfeit medicines in Nigeria.

PSN made the commitment during the recent courtesy visit of its President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh, to Pfizer's office in Nigeria.

Usifoh assured the multinational pharmaceutical firm of the Society's unwavering resolve to work with Pfizer in ridding the country of unwholesome medicines.

Pfizer's Country Manager/Cluster Lead, West Africa, Pharm. Olayinka Subair, while welcoming the PSN president and his team to his office, disclosed that the initiative was part of Pfizer's mission in developing breakthroughs that significantly improve patients' lives.

Subair said counterfeit medicines often lack key ingredients and dosages, or contain added harmful ingredients. As a result, patients who take counterfeits, including life-saving medicines for cancer and heart disease, lose the therapeutic benefits they rely on to treat their conditions, he added.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes counterfeit medicines as substandard, unregistered/unlicensed, and falsified drugs, which can be found in illegal street markets, via unregulated websites through to pharmacies, clinics and hospitals.

It estimated that one in 10 medical products in low- and middle-income countries is substandard or falsified,



L-R: Prof. Cyril Usifoh PSN president; Bunmi Femi-Oyekan, Pfizer's regulatory director Sub-Sahara Africa; Olayinka Subair, Pfizer's cluster lead, West Africa and Gbenga Falabi, secretary general of PSN, during the courtesy visit.

while affirming that substandard and falsified medical products contribute to antimicrobial resistance and drug-resistant infections.

The Pfizer's country manager further decried the perennial burden of illicit trade of medicines in the country, stressing the need for adequate enlightenment of patients on the identification of such products and the knowledge to protect their health from substandard medicines.

He noted that, to tackle the threat of counterfeits to patients' health,

Pfizer is collaborating with industry stakeholders to ensure patients have the information they need to avoid counterfeit medicines.

According to him, "The threat of counterfeits is not going away; Pfizer is seeking collaboration with stakeholders on efforts to educate consumers about counterfeit medicines because patients need the knowledge to protect their health from counterfeiters."

"Pfizer is seeking collaboration with government agencies,

pharmaceutical organisations, doctors, pharmacists, and industry partners to help raise awareness of the growing problem of counterfeit medicines.

"Together, we seek to tackle this threat to patient health by stopping counterfeits before they reach patients, giving consumers information they need to make the right choices, and supporting healthcare providers in our communities."

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\*Ajuwon et al. BMC Infectious Diseases (2021) 21:1120

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# Organisational politics: Are you an owl or a fox?

Countless hours of training, books upon books, academic and non-academic papers and vital units of business education curriculum have been devoted to many competencies required by managers and leaders. However, little has been written about organisational politics, either because many find the subject distasteful or perhaps because it is not deemed worthy of study. Indeed, the subject is not available in the syllabus of any management programme of MBA course that I have come across. What an oversight!

It is possible that more people's careers flounder on the rocks of organisational politics than for many other reasons. So, it is an area of great interest to practising managers. An exceedingly high proportion of the extra-curricular questions (i.e. those asked in the bar at the end of the day) in most out-of-site training programmes centre on this thorny area.

Whether we want to admit it or not, the stark reality is that there is heavy, sometimes dangerous, politics going on in our establishments and corporations. While it may not be surprising to find it in government institutions and corporations, the so-called blue chip companies are not left out.

In our environment, the basis of politicking is a little more complex and the instrument of practice can be scary. Organisational politics here is complicated by unbridled nepotism, ethnicity and corruption. It is not unusual for promotions, appointments and postings to be done on one or more of the above considerations, rather than merit and competence. And the instrument ranges from the absurd to the macabre - juju, assault, arson and, even, assassination!

## Understanding the dynamics

So how can politics be defined and, more importantly, how can it be survived? If company politics can be described as "the way we do things around here", then surely it can also be described as "the way that we do things to people around here." It is a sad truism that whenever people gather to tackle a task, there will be tensions, rivalries, jealousies, hidden agendas and plain old-fashioned mischief. Not only do

people want to achieve the task in their own way, they also want the way that the task is approached to reflect glory in certain specific directions and to help the careers of specific individuals or groups.

It may not be pleasant, but, whether your place of work is a merchant bank or a monastery, it is unavoidable. Indeed, there is evidence to show that the more senior and better educated the participants, the more prevalent and unpleasant the politics will be.

The concept of political animals is a popular one, and the University of Birmingham has conducted intriguing studies on the nature of these beasts in organisations. Researchers identified two axes behaviour:

That of being "well-read" in what was going on politically within the organization: having an interest in the different factions' power camps and power plays. The degree to which one was well-read could be high or low

That of having an interest in self and the promotion of one's own aims versus that of having a prime interest in the fortunes and welfare of the organisation.

With these axes in mind, it becomes possible to identify four discrete orientations and to label each with the name of the animal most representative.

**Orientation A:** Here, the individual is politically well-read and has a high interest in the fortunes of the organisation rather than self. This individual is the **wise owl**. Owls are both liked and respected; furthermore, they are seldom hunted and usually survive. There is one downside, however: they do not often get to the head of the forest.

**Orientation B:** In this box, the individual is well-read and takes an active interest in the politics; moreover, the individual promotes him- or herself actively within the organisation. Here, we have the **crafty fox**. The fox is not always popular, for it hunts and it can create mayhem, but usually it is a survivor. Occasionally, it oversteps the mark and is hunted down.

**Orientation C:** In the first of the lower boxes is found the person who is politically ill-read, but who on the other hand has a high degree of self-interest. The

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researchers contemptuously labelled this individual as the **donkey** – both stubborn and stupid. The donkey is used as a beast of burden, resents it and is seldom thanked. It never reached the top.

**Orientation D:** The final box contains those who are badly-read politically, who have no interest in improving their knowledge or skills and yet who continually put the organisation before self. Loyalty, blind loyalty, is the name of the game, and these people are labelled **sheep**, because they are unquestioningly naive. It often happens that the sheep ends up in the slaughterhouse.

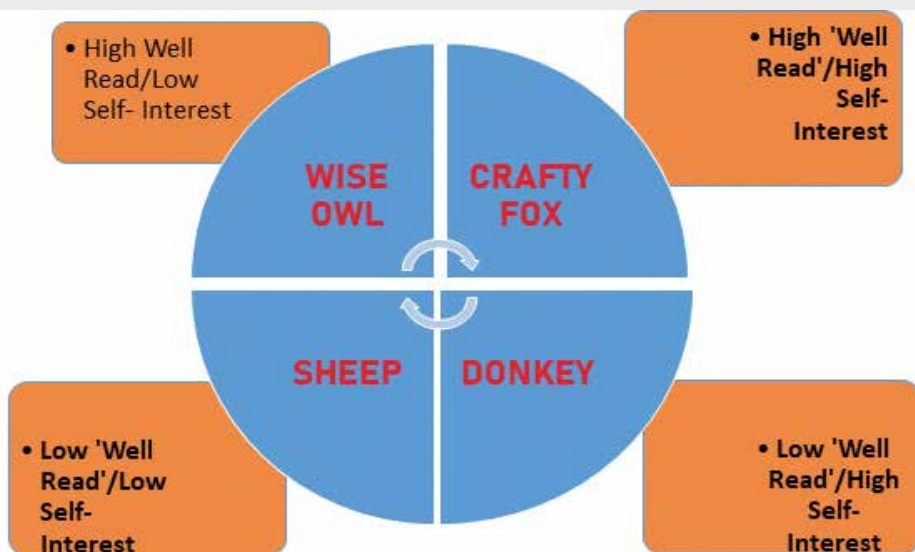
So, where is the best position to be politically? Having put this question to a wide variety of executives from different countries and cultures, the answer is invariably "just to the right of the fox/owl divide (i.e. a combination of both, but being slightly more of a Fox). In other words, you have to know the political forces at work and have to keep up-to-date with the trends and development here. In addition, you have to know how to play the game in order to appreciate that the game is

not worth the sacrifice of your personal integrity and self-respect.

So, to survive, the effective leader must be "aware" and must learn to apply this awareness in ethical ways that reinforce his credibility, rather than detract from it. Having one's antennae out at all times is not being manipulative and does not sacrifice integrity. It is simply being smart.

**Acknowledgement:** This piece relied heavily on John Maurik's *Discovering The Leader in You* (McGraw-Hill, 1994) and *The Portable Leader* (McGraw-Hill, 1997).

**Tunde Oyeniran, B.Pharm., MBA, FSPSM, a sales/marketing strategist, selling/sales management trainer and personal sales coach is the president of the Society for Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing of Nigeria, and lead consultant, Ekini White Tulip Consulting Limited, Lagos. We deliver training, recruitment and field force management solutions. Feedback Channels: 080-2960-6103 (SMS/WhatsApp) / ekiniwhitetuliptraining@gmail.com or check out https://fb.me/EkiniWhiteTulipConsulting**



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# Thanksgiving galore, as Ezenwa clocks 70

By Moses Dike

**I**t was an evening of soul-lifting praises and worship to God, as friends, family and associates of eminent pharmacist and founder of The Roses Ministry, Pharm. (Mrs) Regina Ezenwa, gathered at Golden Gate Restaurant, Ikoyi, Lagos, to celebrate her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

The venue, which was literally transformed into a powerful worship centre, was filled to capacity, despite the busy schedules of Lagos on a typical week day, as guests were treated to melodious hymns and praises, rendered by a Christian band, which ensured there was no dull moment.

Speaking at the event, former President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) and Vice-Chairman of the council of The Roses Ministry, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, paid glowing tribute to the celebrant, thanking for accepting the call of God through The Roses Ministry which he said had made very positive impact on the lives of the needy and the less-privileged in the society.

Ohuabunwa observed that many might have been called by God but did not heed the call and thereby missing the blessing that comes from heeding the call of God. He said he was glad that Ezenwa heeded the call of God to help the needy and the less-privileged and had consequently been blessed by God.

In her testimony at the event, the celebrant, Pharm. Ezenwa recalled, with nostalgia, her upbringing as a child and thanked God for the gift of her parents whom she said laid



**Pharm. Nnamdi Okafor, former M.D. May & Baker Plc & his wife, Mrs Genia Okafor; Pharm Regina Ezenwa; & Pharm Ernest Okafor, M.D. Nemitt Pharma.; during the 70th birthday thanksgiving of Pharm Regina Ezenwa, recently held at Golden gate restaurants, Ikoyi Lagos.**

good examples for her.

She narrated how God had intervened some years ago to help resolve some tough health challenges she and her husband had faced, and appreciated divine mercies for the steadfast love towards her family and ministry.

Husband of the celebrant, Engr Obidi Ezenwa, in his tribute, expressed gratitude to God for the gift of the celebrant as wife. Applauding her attributes, he described her as a noble woman, with a heart of gold that is full of love for humanity and passion for the things of God.

He further thrilled guests with a narration of how he met the celebrant in 1971 and how their love culminated in marriage in 1979. He praised her for being an outstanding wife and mother to their children and prayed for God to grant her many more years in good health.

A major highlight of the occasion was the introduction of two books newly published by the celebrant – *The Burning Bush*, and *Fragrance of the Roses Devotional* (Volume 2). Ohuabunwa, who did the introduction on behalf of the celebrant, also announced that proceeds from the

sales of the books would go to The Roses Ministry.

Dignitaries at the event, which was organised by the children of the celebrant, included former governorship aspirant in Lagos and Managing Director of JayKay Pharmaceuticals Limited, Pharm. Jimi Agbaje; former Deputy Governor, CBN, Mr Ernest Ebi, and his wife, Lizzy; Chairman of MTN, Mr Ernest Ndukwe; football legend and former Super Eagles skipper, Austin Jay Jay Okocha; Managing Director of Nemitt Pharmaceuticals Limited, Pharm. Ernest Okafor, and a host of others.

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## Event in pictures

## PHAMATEX NIGERIA LIMITED

**Phamatex Nigeria Ltd unveils Nollywood actress, Rachel Okonkwo and actor Chigozie Atuanya as Luter brand ambassadors for its Luter antimalarial drug at an event recently held in Amuwo Odofin, Lagos.**



L-R: Pharm George Friday (MAW); Director, Sales & Marketing Phamatex Nig. Ltd and Nollywood actor Chigozie Atuanya; Luter brand ambassador



L-R: Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo; Luter brand ambassador and Pharm. Emeka Ezeani; Director Sales and Marketing (Ethicals) Phamatex Nig. Ltd.



L-R: Pharm George Friday (MAW); Director, Sales & Marketing Phamatex Nig. Ltd, Nollywood actor Chigozie Atuanya; Luter brand ambassador, Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo; Luter brand ambassador & Chief Joseph Ebowusim; MD/CEO Phamatex Nig. Ltd



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L-R: Pharm George Friday (MAW); Director, Sales & Marketing Phamatex Nig. Ltd, Nollywood actor, Chigozie Atuanya, Luter brand ambassador; Chief Joseph Ebowusim, MD/CEO Phamatex; Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo, Luter brand ambassador; Pharm. Emeka Ezeani; Director Sales and Marketing (Ethicals) Phamatex Nig. Ltd.



L-R: Nollywood actor Chigozie Atuanya; Luter brand ambassador and Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo; Luter brand ambassador



L-R: Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo; Luter brand ambassador, Barr. Nobert Ajaegbu; MD/CEO Ocean movies and Music Ltd, Chief Joseph Ebowusim; MD/CEO Phamatex Nig. Ltd



Nollywood actor Chigozie Atuanya; Luter brand ambassador



Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo; Luter brand ambassador



L-R: Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo, Luter brand ambassador; and Chief Joseph Ebowusim, MD/CEO Phamatex Nig. Ltd; signing the agreement at the event.



Chief Joseph Ebowusim, MD/CEO Phamatex Nig. Ltd; and Nollywood actress, Rachel Okonkwo, Luter brand ambassador.



Chief Joseph Ebowusim, MD/CEO Phamatex Nig. Ltd; and Nollywood actress Rachel Okonkwo, Luter brand ambassador



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## Phamatex unveils Atuanya, Okonkwo as Luter ambassadors

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

Phamatex Nigeria Limited has unveiled Nigerian Nollywood actor and producer, Chigozie Atuanya; and actress, Nnenna Rachael Okonkwo, popularly known as Nkoli Nwa Nsukka, as ambassadors for its leading product, Luter.

Luter is an antimalarial, with Artemether and Lumefantrine, manufactured by Hovid and exclusively distributed in Nigeria by Phamatex.

In his remarks at the recent contract signing, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company, Chief Joseph Ebowusim, said the new ambassadors were selected after painstaking due diligence. He added that their selection was based on the company's standard and values, which they reflect in their art and lifestyle.

He said, "We take pride in the quality and standard of our products, which is reflected in the quality of our corporate head office. This collaboration with the new ambassadors has come at a time when our company, as a brand, is making great leaps and taking critical in-roads in the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry. We are excited to have them on board."

"It is not all about money but quality. Phamatex is about quality, putting a smile on the faces of many people. That is what our new ambassadors stand for. Actress Okonkwo is a philanthropist. She empowered about 5,000 women



Luter ambassadors, Nollywood actor, Chigozie Atuanya; and actress, Nnenna Rachael Okonkwo posed with a pack of Luter, during their unveiling as Luter ambassadors in Lagos, recently.

just recently, putting a smile on their faces. Her gesture aligned with what Phamatex stands for. Anybody who knows Chigozie Atuanya will also know that he stands for nothing less but top quality. So, I am happy to have them as our ambassadors."

He continued, "Quality is what keeps Phamatex going. In Luter, you have top quality. It is a product that will help you win the fight against malaria at once and the good thing is that it is affordable."

According to the Director, Sales and Marketing, Phamatex, Pharm. Friday George, Luter is in

over 50 countries, across America, Europe, and Africa.

He added, "We believe Luter is the ultimate solution for people looking for an antimalarial that is effective yet affordable. With Luter, every Nigerian will be able to win every battle fight against malaria."

Also speaking at the event, the brand manager of Phamatex, Dr Charles Okafor, said Luter is a unique antimalarial product that is easy to use and cures malaria at once.

He said, "We have introduced the product to provide value for Nigerians at an affordable price.

The oblong shape of Luter makes it easy to swallow".

In her remarks, one of the new ambassadors, Okonkwo, expressed appreciation to the company for engaging her as an ambassador.

The graduate of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, said: "I am happy to be here, and it's an honour for me. Picking a brand ambassador that will represent Phamatex and by extension the global brand, Hovid, that has core values, moral standards, and integrity is not a joke."

"Like the MD/CEO rightly said, it's not about money, not about fame; it is about what you are known for. I'm also thrilled to know that my core values and moral standard align with those of the brand and I've been picked to represent the brand. That's also an encouragement to me. It shows that people are really watching more than we know."

"I have always known Phamatex. The company is known everywhere for quality

and I can confidently say that Luter is a quality product that will cure malaria."

Also speaking, Atuanya, who is an entrepreneur and graduate of Enugu State University of Science and Technology, stated that Luter is a top quality product.

"Mere looking at the product will tell you that Phamatex is up to something. I have used Luter to treat malaria and it works perfectly immediately. So it is a wonderful product, I am happy to be identified with such a wonderful product and company," said.

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# Compelling evidence that bitter leaf reduces blood sugar in humans

By Prof. Ernest B. Izevbogie

**Editor's note: This piece is a rejoinder to our August 2023 interview with Consultant Endocrinologist, Dr Akiniyi Akinmokun, captioned "No evidence bitter leaf reduces blood sugar" (Pg 50)**

Let me thank Dr Akinmokun for his contribution and to say that it is fortunate (NOT unfortunate) to believe in credible scientific data/evidence, in my view. Hitherto, the field of traditional medicine (TM) had been dominated by untrained (lack of training in either basic/ clinical sciences and/or medicine) practitioners. Consequently, TM practitioners faced the issues of toxicities and impurities and lack of standardisation/dosages for optimum efficacy of their preparations.

The good news is that in the last two decades, some of these problems have, at least, attenuated, if not surmounted. Studies conducted in the last two decades have provided quite compelling evidence to support not only that bitter leaf possesses antidiabetic (sugar-lowering) property but also elicits protective effects on the pancreas, liver, kidney and more, in animals, humans included. However, the focus of this article will be on glucose/sugar reduction.

For the purpose of clarity, it is important to note here that the scientific name for bitter leaf is *Vernonia amygdalina* (VA); "aqueous" means water; "sugar" also means "glucose", and both will be used here interchangeably.

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic disorder in which the body either does not produce enough or respond to insulin, resulting in elevated sugar/glucose level in the body. Diabetes mellitus affects millions of people worldwide and the prevalence of this disease was projected to reach 300 million before year 2025 (Erasto et al., 2009). *V. amygdalina* is the most popular antidiabetic traditional herbal remedy in Nigeria (Gbolade, 2009).

The lengthy evidence of the antidiabetic property of bitter leaf spans across cell culture, animal models, and clinical investigations (studies on humans).

## Sources/scientific references

- **Cell culture models.** In 2009, Erasto and colleagues observed and reported that aqueous extracts *Vernonia amygdalina* (VA) increased glucose utilisation in mouse muscle cell line (C2C12 cells), and Chang-liver cells but no effect on 3T3-L1 fibroblast cells. These investigators concluded as follows: "These results, especially of the water extracts, strongly corroborate the ethno-medicinal uses of VA (bitter leaf) as an antidiabetic plant" (Erasto and colleagues, 2009).
- **Animal model** - In 2000, Jayaweera and colleagues conducted a review of all the published scientific articles concerning the antidiabetic effects of VA in many, if not all, scientific data bases - such as Frontiers, Health STAR, MDPI, MEDLINE, PubMed, Taylor, Francis, Scientific Direct, Scopus, Springer, Wiley, American Diabetes Association - from 2000 to 2022 (22 years). After an exhaustive review, the investigators concluded that VA was the most medically beneficial plant in the genus *vernonia*, and that it possesses several properties including antidiabetic property (Jayaweera and colleagues, 2022).

In another investigation by Osinubi, using adult male Sprague Dawley rats rendered diabetic with alloxan drug, it was observed that animals treated with 500 mg/kg of body weight of VA produced significant reduction in blood glucose concentrations in both normoglycemic (non-diabetic) and diabetic rats, 1-12 hours after acute treatment, compared to controlled or untreated animals. The glucose-lowering property of VA was comparable to that of chlorpropamide, an antidiabetic drug belonging to the class of sulfonylurea (Osinubi).

In another study, using adult Albino Wister rats (24 animals: 12 males and 12 females) were divided into six groups of four animals each. Hyperglycaemia was induced by alloxan drug. *V. amygdalina* (VA) was administered orally at 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10% of diet before meal for 5, 10, and 15 days respectively. Results showed that VA remarkably decreased blood glucose level from a value of  $4.44 \pm 0.2$  to  $1.66 \pm 0.02$  mmol / L (more than 60% decrease). Okugbo and Killian (2022) showed a significant reduction both in diabetic and normoglycemic rats treated with VA.

- **Clinical studies (human subjects).** Okolie and colleagues conducted studies on healthy humans to evaluate the effects of VA on postprandial blood sugar concentrations. Fifty (50) grams of VA was administered by squeeze-wash-drink to chew raw to the subjects who also served as their own controls (n=8) in a randomized order. Blood glucose levels were evaluated at fasting (time= 0), and postcranially 30 minutes interval for two hours. VA elicited significant reduction in blood glucose at most postprandial time points and for area under curve (AUC). Clinical studies on Cambodians showed VA reduces blood sugar levels (Hul and colleagues, 2021)

## Bitter leaf potentiates/ synergises with Metformin activity

Many conventional and modern medicines trace their origins to natural products. For example, Metformin, an antidiabetic drug in the class of biguanide, is a derivative of the French Lilac called *Galega officianalis*, which is a herbal plant (like bitter leaf). It was first shown to lower glucose in 1918, and then became traditionally used in Europe for the treatment of diabetes, as early in the 1920s.

Metformin antidiabetic property was later discovered by a French diabetologist, Jean Sterne) in 1957 (Clifford 2017). Furthermore, results from many investigations have shown that bitter leaf potentiates/ augments or synergises with Metformin (Okugbo and Killian, 2022; U. Adikwu and colleagues, 2010; Oluwayemi and colleagues, 2018).

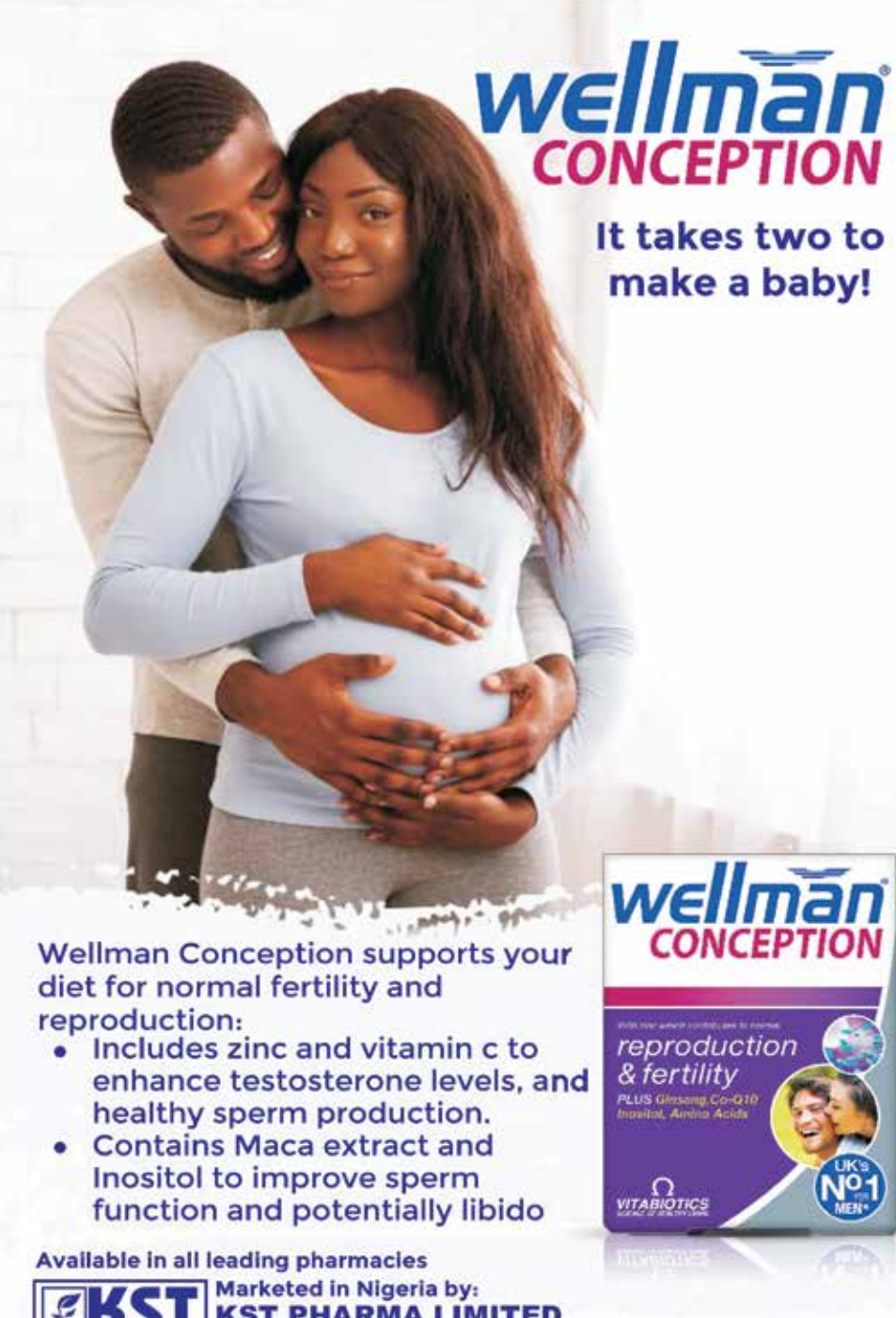
The next article likely to emanate from this discussion will be on the

mechanisms of actions

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**Professor Ernest B. Izevbogie is an emeritus vice-chancellor, multiple U.S. patent holder, and distinguished scientist, who received his training in Growth Biology/Nutritional Biochemistry from Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA. (PhD); followed by a post-doctoral training at the National Institute of Dental & Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda, Maryland, USA.**



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# The dice is still rolling

Dr Lolu Ojo FPSN

We are in this world for a purpose, which must be fulfilled before we return to our creator. Inside each one of us are coded messages, hidden talents or potentials and our prayer, always, is for us to be able to decipher these messages before we expire. However, as we keep trudging on the life journey, we face challenges that can, if not properly handled, derail our purpose. Amid the ever-changing times, we find ourselves walking a delicate tightrope between hope and despair.

The challenges we face are multifaceted and far-reaching. With aspirations becoming forlorn, hopes fading, disappointments becoming rampant, love disappearing, economy wobbling, incomes shrinking, insecurity rising, family and personal needs increasing, there is a tendency to throw in the towel in resignation. This tendency is evident in the stories of suicides, depression, broken homes and relationship, aggressive behaviour (sometimes with fatal consequences), instability, and sudden death.

The circumstances of our environment, with prolonged mismanagement of resources, have deepened people's lack of trust or belief in themselves and their innate ability to overcome the soaring challenges and keep their heads above the waters. For many of us, this is our story, and it is important for us to know that the "dice is still rolling". It is not finished yet; you can still have the desired "double six" and the narrative will change thereafter, even dramatically. In the face of adversity, hope persists as a guiding light, urging us to embrace success amidst failure, and discover opportunities hidden within challenges.

According to Thomas Edison, the legendary American inventor, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." The immediate task before all of us, therefore, is to overcome this weakness in the face of life turbulence and ride the storm to success.

## Historical lessons

When we examine the tapestry of nations, we witness remarkable tales of resilience, diligence, determination, and hope. These stories demonstrate that even in the most trying times, countries can and do rise above nation-building challenges and achieve greatness.

In 1983, Nigeria deported up to one million Ghanaian and other African immigrants, when Ghana was facing severe drought and economic problems. Many of us will remember the period preceding the deportation, when Ghanaians, as economic refugees, flooded our streets and schools, as labourers and teachers. Today, the story has changed, and Ghana can stand on her own, with an annual GDP growth average of 6.5 per cent from 2000 to 2023.

In 1994, a fratricidal and bitter war broke out in Rwanda, leading to the death of about 600,000 people (mostly ethnic Tutsi) in what is now known as the "Rwandan genocide". One would have thought that it was finished for this country but today, Rwanda has undergone significant transformation, with a GDP growth average of 7.6 per cent, as reported by the World Bank between 2000 and 2019. Rwanda has emerged from the

ruins of civil war to become a beacon of hope for other African countries and a model of development, under the focused and determined leadership of Mr Paul Kagame.

The lesson of South Korea's miracle on the Han River is also there for us to learn how not to give up when the tide rises against us. South Korea emerged from the ashes of war to become a global economic powerhouse, with a GDP per capita increasing from \$67.7 in 1962 to \$31,846 in 2019. Through unwavering commitment and dedication, South Korea transformed its economy, surpassing many developed nations. This remarkable journey of hope and progress showcases the extraordinary potential of a nation that refuses to succumb to despair.

## Nigeria's journey

In Nigeria's history, we find stories that exemplify the indomitable spirit of hope. From the struggle for independence, led by visionaries, to the peaceful transition of power in recent democratic elections, Nigeria has demonstrated that hope can pave the way for progress, unity, and societal transformation.

Today, things have gone from bad to worse, with fuel price hike and outright devaluation of the local currency, driving a surge in inflation, high cost of staple food items and mystery. It is not time to give up on the nation but to remember and act in line with the eternal words of Vince Lombardi, the American football coach, who said that "winners never quit and quitters never win". Nigeria is destined for progress and prosperity, and we must never give up on our country because of the current situation. We must remember that "the dice is still rolling".

## Resilient firms

In the realm of business, we know of corporations that navigated through turbulent waters, prevailing against all odds to remain afloat and competitive. Tesla, led by Elon Musk, revolutionised the automotive industry, with its visionary pursuit of sustainable transportation, amidst scepticism and challenges. Today, Tesla is the biggest automaker in the world, with a market capitalisation of \$569.95 billion, being in multiples of those of its major competitors like Toyota (\$181.6 billion), Porsche (\$110.03 billion), etc., as of March 2023 (Statista 2023). Tesla's visionary approach and unwavering commitment to a better future propelled it to unprecedented success, challenging the status quo and inspiring hope.

The amazing story of hope is reflected in the trajectory of other successful corporate organisations. Harriet Beecher Stowe, an American author and abolitionist, put it succinctly that we should "never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

At that critical time when you think it is over, if you persevere and push a little harder, it may be the tipping point, when things will change or tilt in your favour. After all, failure, itself, is fundamental to our growth, if only we can learn from what went wrong and do everything possible to avoid a repeat occurrence or introduce some factors that will result in a better future.

Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) founded by Colonel Harland David Sanders, now boasts of over 23,000 restaurants in more than

140 countries, generating billions of dollars in revenue annually. The company rose into fame and wealth from the ashes of failure of its founder, who had failed 1,000 times to sell his chicken recipe. It wasn't until his 1,010th time that he got someone to take a bite, and the narrative changed from that point onward.

What if Sanders had given up on his enterprise? The story of the fast-food industry would have been completely different from what we know it to be today. Sanders did not give up

but rather followed the advice of Conrad Hilton, the founder of Hilton Hotel Chain, who said that "Successful men and women keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit."

Rovio, a gaming company, is a leader in its industry and is admired today as one of the most successful corporate bodies. But Rovio did not start as one with success in its DNA but as a serial failure, until the tide changed in its favour. The company had developed and released 51 games in the past and all of them failed to catch the target audience's attention to become hits. However, the company's developers did not give up and success came with the 52<sup>nd</sup> game - the "Angry Birds" franchise - which has been a staple of mobile gaming since its release in December 2009 and remains a



favourite till today, with over five billion downloads, as of April 2022.

For Steve Jobs and Apple, the story took a slight turn because there was a tremendous success at the beginning before the company got hit with failure. The story however changed in 1997, when Apple was just months away from bankruptcy and Steve Jobs returned to the company (he had been forced out in 1985). By 2011, Steve Jobs had not only turned Apple into the world's biggest company, but had fundamentally changed the computing, music, and smartphone industries, with the introduction of the iMac, the iPod, and the iPhone. Can you imagine, for a split second, what the "tech world" would have been today, if Jobs had allowed his setback to get the best of him?

continued on page 57

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## ► Issues & Perspectives ◀ The dice is still rolling

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We have to answer the question posed by the American operatic tenor, Robert Breault, who said, "If you knew that hope and despair were paths to the same destination, which would you choose?" I will choose hope over and over again.

### Individual exemplars

At the individual level, the struggles between hope and despair are deeply personal, and stories of triumph over adversity serve as beacons of inspiration. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former President of Liberia, demonstrated remarkable bravery and determination in leading her country through a tumultuous period. She took office in 2006, becoming Africa's first elected female head of state. Despite inheriting a nation devastated by civil war and economic collapse, Sirleaf successfully implemented reforms, promoted reconciliation, and fought against corruption. Her leadership and unwavering commitment to rebuilding Liberia earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, making her the first African woman to be so honoured.

The legendary American President, Abraham Lincoln, failed many times in his bid for political posts between 1832 and 1858 but refused to give up; and by 1860, he was elected the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. He went on to become one of the notable and most respected presidents and will forever be remembered for his laudable acts, including the issuance

of the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January, 1863, which declared freedom for slaves within the Confederacy.

Hope plays a vital role in navigating the complexities of daily life. It is within these bonds that individuals find support, strength, and the determination to overcome challenges together. Whatever your circumstances are today - rejection by close friends, associates and family, dwindling financial fortune, business downturn, inability to attain a desired position, molestation by those you regarded as friends, etc. - please, remember that it is not finished yet. The dice is still rolling, and it can be your turn to win tomorrow. According to Albert Einstein, "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

In conclusion, let us embrace hope and determination in the face of life challenges. Let us look at the examples of nations, companies and individuals who have overcome adversity, and let their stories inspire us to keep rolling the dice until we achieve greatness. As the tide of hope and despair leads to the same destination, let us choose hope, time and time again. It is in hope that we find the strength to endure, the courage to innovate, and the resilience to triumph over life's trials and tribulations.

With input from Mr. Venket Subramanian Thiagarajan, a Distinguished Pharmaceutical Executive based in Lagos.

## How CBN intervention fund boosted capacity of pharma manufacturers - Ayebae

continued from page 34

when they sort themselves, in terms of getting a local distributor and other things.

For those of us that are left, it is a wake-up call to the government to continue to strive to create enabling environment for businesses to thrive more easily. So long as these difficult situations are there, no entrepreneur will invest or create businesses that will create more employment opportunities.

Now that it has happened, we should all sit down and work hard to develop our pharmaceutical industry, like the Indians and the Chinese. Even countries like Bangladesh that are not as buoyant have built their national drug capacity to 98 per cent locally manufactured and 2 per cent imported. This is same for countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and the rest of them. It is now left for all the key players in policymaking and the private sector to sit down and map out ways to grow like these countries.

**In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) launched an intervention fund to assist local pharmaceutical to increase capacity. Some years down the line, how would you assess the impact of the intervention fund on the industry?**

Let me, first of all, thank the Federal Government and the former CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, under whose watch that initiative

happened. Let me also thank the Director General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Christiana Adeyeye, who worked with the CBN. I also thank our friends and our bosses at the Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) national secretariat for working very swiftly with all stakeholders when there was a problem in the world and then came up with the intervention fund.

For those of us that got the fund, it was timely and fantastic. It is the way to build the industry. It is the way to capitalise the industry. Some, when they got the money, built brand new greenfield plants that are ready today or working already.

At Fidson for instance, we installed two additional infusion lines, including a dialysis fluid line. Even though we added more money to be able to do that, it was very helpful because it was at 5 per cent for two years. That is how an industry like the pharmaceutical industry that is in perpetual emergency should be treated. There should be a pharmaceutical fund, a pull of funds, that is in the region of N500 billion, that government can put together, through development banks or through sovereign wealth fund that we can go to, for long-term funding.

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# NAFDAC, PCN, others harp on efficient drug distribution system

*continued from back page*

wholesale and distribution centre of New Heights Pharmaceuticals (NHP), located at Plot 29, Ilupeju Industrial Avenue, Lagos, on 11 August.

They lauded the effort of the Board and management of NHP towards ridding the nation of fake and unwholesome medicines, through the commissioning of the facility in the heart of the megacity. They added that the move aligned with the ongoing drive of pharmaceutical regulators in ensuring quality healthcare for Nigerians through the use of quality drugs and medicines with traceability features.

Performing the official commissioning, the Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, congratulated NHP for keying into the vision of the agency, saying this explained why the company's management decided to replicate what they saw in the United Kingdom, 16 years ago, in Nigeria.

According to her, "The vision behind this facility resonates with our traceability goal, which is to ensure that our drugs and medicines can be traceable to genuine and certified manufacturers and distributors, across the country, which gives caregivers and patients confidence in the type of the medications they are using.

"If this is obtainable in other parts of the world, we can also do it here, because God did not create us differently. God gave us



**L-R: President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Prof. Cyril Usifoh; Pharm. Paul Enebeli, chairman, board of directors, New Heights Pharmaceuticals; Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC); Prof. Moji Adeyeye; Pharm. Oghenechuko Omaruaye, chief executive officer of New Heights Pharmaceuticals and wife, Pharm. (Mrs) Olubunmi Omaruaye, at the official commissioning of the ultramodern wholesale and distribution centre of New Heights Pharmaceuticals in Lagos.**

endowments; it is left for us to use the endowments purposefully, so that when we return to God, we can say we use the endowments purposefully.

"It is a purpose-driven life that led to this great achievement. When I saw this edifice, I said to myself, if I see more of this, I can actually go and sleep and wake up in peace."

The Registrar, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, Pharm. (Dr)

Babashehu Ahmed, averred that the commissioning of the NHP facility would expedite the agency's drive against all illegal drug distribution networks in the state.

Ahmed, who was represented by Pharm. (Dr) Ukamaka Okafor, PCN coordinator, Lagos Office, mentioned how the Council's implementation of National Drug Distribution Guidelines in Kano State had been effective, with the

closure of open drug markets and relocation of certified distributors to Coordinated Wholesale Centre.

He added that the NHP initiative was in tandem with such a goal, stating that the Council was almost at the point of implementation in Lagos State too.

In his remarks at the event, President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Prof. Cyril Usifoh urged the board and management

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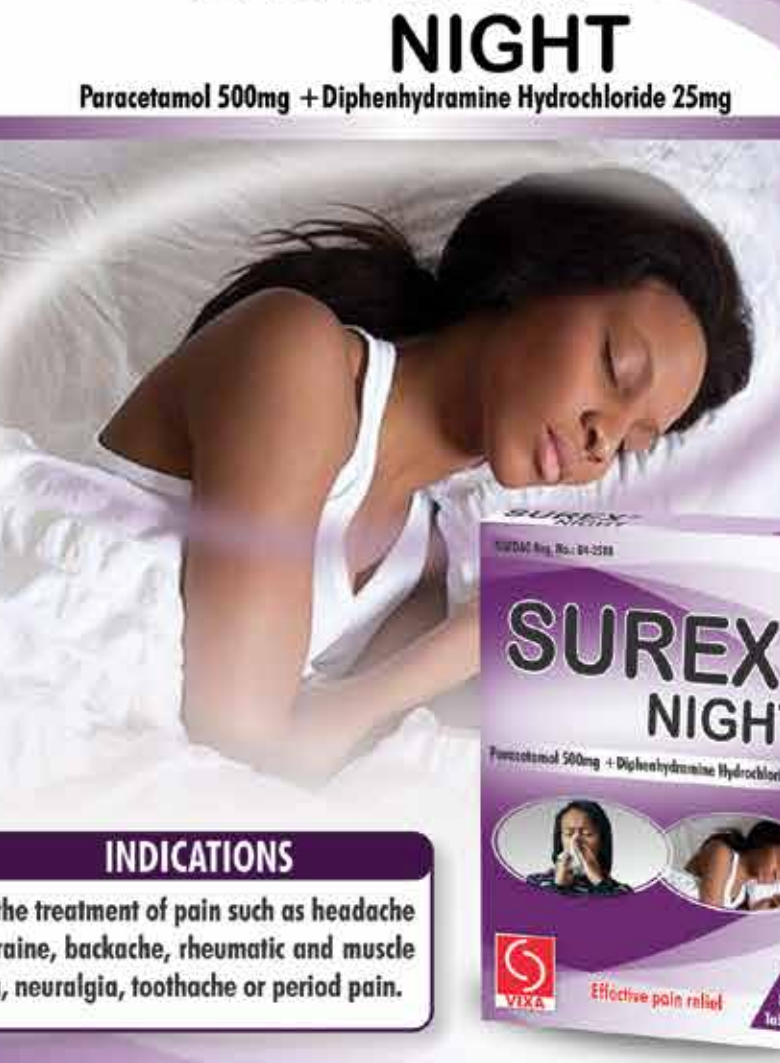
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# NAFDAC, PCN, others harp on efficient drug distribution system

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of NHP not to rest on their oars, but to spread their reach to the whole of Africa.

"As we are commissioning this, there are greater heights to achieve. You must not stop in Nigeria, the West African sub-region must be covered, and by inclusion Africa. And, God sparing our lives, wherever you are commissioning anything, let me know; I will be there," Usifoh said.

Speaking at the occasion, Pharm. Paul Enebeli, chairman, board of directors, New Heights Pharmaceuticals, said regardless of the *japa* syndrome that is gaining traction in the country,

the company remains confident in the can-do spirit of the average Nigerian, and would therefore continue to invest in the country.

Enebeli appealed to the federal government to assist NHP in duplicating the ultra-modern centre in the six geopolitical zones of the country, saying Nigerians deserve the best drug distribution network as the mainstream of the pharmaceutical ecosystem.

According to him, "This request is vital because an efficient drug distribution system is a panacea to the sale of fake, unwholesome and adulterated drugs and medicines in the country. To change the

narrative of the pharmaceutical industry for the betterment of the Nigerian people and indeed the ECOWAS nations."

Narrating the success story of the pharma company, Pharm. Ogheneochuko Omaruaye, chief executive officer of New Heights, said that the huge investment was in response to the identified gap for standardised and certified pharmaceutical wholesale and distribution centres in the country, for the supply of quality healthcare products.

According to him, the new facility has a 5000 sqm workspace, an epoxy floor to ease the rigours of a busy wholesale and

distribution centre, and a central cooling facility that ensures that temperatures conditions in the facility meet good distribution practice standards.

"Additionally, data loggers that notify operators when temperatures are not conducive, are also installed in the centre," he said, adding that the company's injectable and auxiliary product sessions had been hugely improved.

Omaruaye however charged NAFDAC and PCN on the urgent implementation of NDDG in Lagos, noting that the time is ripe for action to be taken, with facilities and tools for implementation at near completion.

## Yakasai, Odukoya, others call for teamwork among pharmacists

continued from back page

the "gown," symbolising academia, and the "town", representing the real-world pharmacy practice.

"By working together as a united team, we can bring about positive transformation in the Nigerian healthcare system, enhance patient care, and elevate the role of pharmacists in shaping the future of medicine. Together, we can shape policies, influence practice standards, and contribute to a healthcare landscape that truly places patients at the centre," Yakasai said.

The former PSN president, who is the "Kachallan Kano", noted that pharmacists in academia hold the key to advancing pharmaceutical knowledge, conducting ground-breaking research, and nurturing the next generation of healthcare professionals.

He added, however, that pharmacists' contributions go beyond the classroom and extend to community health, policy development, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

Addressing the academics, Yakasai said, "The 'gown-town approach' signifies the synergy between your academic pursuits and the pragmatic challenges faced by pharmacists in the field. It emphasises our responsibility to translate research findings into commercial and practical solutions, to share expertise with practitioners, and to work hand-in-hand with healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the public to promote health and well-being.

"In essence, it's important for the academics to understand the needs of those in practice, and do so on a regular basis, and take on a 'business-like approach'.

Stressing the specific benefits of such collaboration for the academic community, the Kachallan Kano stated that, if done rightly, academic pharmacists may be able to update their curriculum with relevant case studies, involve their students in shadowing and visitations, get more mentors and guest speakers to routinely interface with students, as well as helping those in practice see value in sponsoring schools, lecturers/researchers, and student activities.

"We need more collaborations with innovation right from school, otherwise, we will lose our young pharmacists right as they graduate.



L-R: Dr Bilqis A. Lawal; Dr Ezekiel Akinkunmi, NAPA national chairman; Dr S. T. Abdullahi, acting dean, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Ilorin; Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, registrar, PCN, presenting award to the former PSN President, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai; Prof. Wahab Egbewole, SAN, DVC Academics, University of Ilorin; and Dr K.M. Salawu, NAPA Chairman, Unilorin Chapter, at the NAPA 21st Scientific Conference, held at the University of Ilorin, recently.

Let us embrace the spirit of unity and cooperation, striving for a future where the gown and the town not only coexist but thrive as a harmonious force for progress," he said.

Yakasai also appealed to the federal government and university authorities to look into the payment of professional allowances to all pharmacists in academia. He also tasked the government to improve infrastructure and current equipment for teaching and research, as well as create internship spaces in more pharmacy schools to be able to retain brilliant graduates that will also train future professionals for the benefit of the nation.

Also speaking, the President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Professor Cyril Usifoh, said working together as a team is critical, if the pharmaceutical sector must progress and transform the nation's health sector. He also charged pharmacists to join politics, so as to be part of the policy shapers in the country.

In his remarks, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Prof. Wahab Olasupo Egbewole (SAN), who was represented at the event by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academics, Prof.

Olubunmi Abayomi Omotesho, said collaboration is the driver of current innovations in the world and pharmacists must join the trend.

The Registrar, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, in his presentation, said that the Council takes delight in working with all the technical arms of the PSN.

"This is the only way we can stand the test of time. Working as a team by all and sundry in the industry is now more important than ever before and PCN will continue to do so," he assured.

Earlier in his address, the national chairman of NAPA, Dr Ezekiel Akinkunmi, disclosed that the aim of the conference was to strengthen collaboration among pharmacists, adding that the goal of solving many challenges in the pharmaceutical sector can only be achieved through collaboration.

"For a while now, we have been talking about medicine security in the country. This can only be achieved through cooperation and speaking with one voice. All stakeholders must work together and speak with one voice to be able to achieve this goal," Akinkunmi said.

In her keynote address on the theme of the conference,

Prof. Olukemi Abiodun Odukoya, pointed out that the state of the Nigerian health sector requires that all health workers must work together optimally.

She averred that pharmacists in academia and those in the industry, hospital, and community settings must collaborate to contain the challenges facing the profession, while ensuring good health for all Nigerians, in collaboration with other healthcare professionals.

According to Odukoya, "Even the Holy Book states that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Pharmacy is that house, and we must not allow it to fall. But it can easily fall, if each of us is holding tight to our areas of practice, to the exclusion of everyone else, including fellow pharmacists. It is time to match the town with the gown. Those who coined the motto for the PSN, 'As men of honour, we join hands', were visionary people indeed.

"We must therefore join hands, not just in word, but also in deed. Pharmacists can and should be a part of the larger initiative to improve public health, particularly in reaching targets in Sustainable Development Goal 3, which is good health and well-being".





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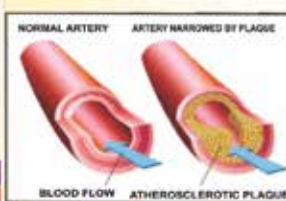
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# NAFDAC, PCN, others harp on efficient drug distribution system

## -As New Heights unveils ultramodern wholesale centre

By Temitope Obayendo

Regulatory agencies in the pharmaceutical industry have emphasised the need for multiple ethical wholesale and distribution centres in the Nigeria, saying it will help to curb the recurrent challenge of fake and substandard medicines circulation in the country.

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) appealed to government, at all levels, to support such initiative, by reducing multiple taxations and creating conducive working environments for indigenous businesses to thrive, in the face of massive brain drain in the health sector.

The regulators and prominent stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry spoke at the launch of the ultra-modern



National Secretary, PSN, Pharm. Olugbenga Falabi (right), presenting an appreciation award plaque to the President, PSN, Prof. Cyril Usifoh, as the National Chairman, AHAPN, Pharm. Olabode Ogunjemiyo looks in admiration, at the opening ceremony of the 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of AHAPN, held at the Welcome Centre, Ikeja, Lagos, recently.

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# Yakasai, Odukoya, others call for teamwork among pharmacists

## - As NAPA holds 21<sup>st</sup> scientific conference

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

Eminent stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry have highlighted the need for Nigerian pharmacists in all practice areas to work together to advance the pharmaceutical sector and enhance the quality healthcare delivery to Nigerians.

The personages bore their minds at the recent 21st Annual Scientific Conference of the Nigeria Association of Pharmacists in Academia (NAPA), held at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State,

with the theme, "The Gown-to-Town Approach: Nigerian Pharmacists Working as a Team".

Speaking at the event, former President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, pointed out that in the dynamic landscape of healthcare, where innovation and collaboration are paramount, it is imperative that pharmacists foster a harmonious relationship between

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