



PCN decries non-adherence of pharmacists, others to regulations

- Vows to engage security agencies, judiciary for stiffer enforcements

The Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) has lamented what it describes as gross

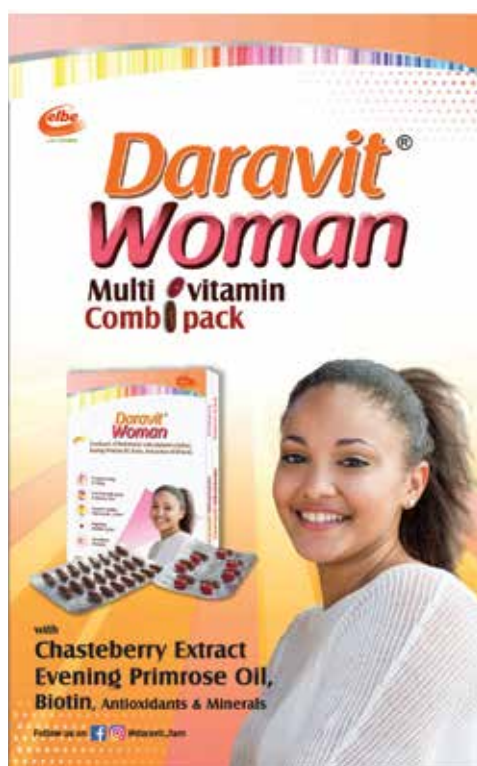
disregard for extant laws governing the profession among pharmacists

and other stakeholders, saying it has concluded plans to

continued on page 16



L-R: Mr Bharat Vaswani, country head manager, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Chief Paulinus Anowai, MD, Raform Pharmacy, super distributor; Pharm. (Mrs) Oluranti Adedeji, chief technical officer, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Mr Suraj K Vaswani, national sales manager, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; during the Launch of DANACEE (vitamin C syrup) and Ferrodan Plus (blood booster) and 27th anniversary celebration of Paradana, recently held at Ivy Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos.



Becoming a pharmacist is fulfilment of my lifetime dream - Nwoke

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Egbujiobi to institute annual grants for pharmacy scholars

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Grace Delano: Legendary matriarch of reproductive and family health

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PHARM. AMBROSE EZEH

Pharm. Ambrose Igwekemma Ezeh is the immediate past national secretary of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), and managing director, Rosemus Pharmacy Limited, a chain pharmacy outlet in Apapa and its environs.

A native of Affa in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, Ezeh was born on 1 October, 1976. After his elementary education at Amofia Imezi Community Primary School, Affa, and secondary education at Technical Secondary School, Amofia Affa, he proceeded to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he graduated with the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree.

A man with an uncommon passion for the pharmacy profession, especially at the community level, he obtained a Master in Public Health (MPH) degree, from the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Lagos. He has also bagged several other professional international certifications, including the Certificate in Principles of STD/HIV Research, from the University of Washington.

Ezeh had his internship training at Jos University Teaching Hospital, Plateau State, where he developed a deep understanding of patient care and fostered meaningful connections with patients. He had his mandatory NYSC programme at the Jericho Nursing Home, Ibadan, Oyo State.

After his youth service in March 2008, the young and enthusiastic Ezeh came back to Lagos immediately, with several opportunities presenting themselves to him. He eventually settled for community practice and, in November of the same 2008, he gathered all his savings from the NYSC to establish Rosemus Pharmacy, in Olodi Apapa, Lagos.

Since 2008, Eze has dedicated himself to improving the health and well-being of countless individuals. He has also been a committed member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), and other professional associations.

In his 15 years of practice as a pharmacist, he has served the PSN and the ACPN in various capacities. Aside from serving as a committee member at national and state levels, he has also been publicity secretary, ACPN, Lagos; financial secretary, ACPN, Lagos; national treasurer, ACPN; national secretary, ACPN, among others.

An advocate for good pharmacy practice, with a track record of role modelling and mentoring the younger ones in business decisions, Eze has received several meritorious service awards and recognitions to his credit. These include being a Merit Award Winner of PSN-Lagos and many others.

Ezeh is a professional with a real passion for healthcare. His enthusiastic and approachable nature has made him enjoy excellent working relationships at different levels. He is happily married to Mrs Ann Nwakaego Ezeh, and blessed with four children.



Inspiration

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." — **Dale Carnegie**

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." — **Thomas Edison**

Your hardest times often lead to the greatest moments of your life. Keep going. Tough situations build strong people in the end." — **Roy T. Bennett**

"Integrity is the most valuable and respected quality of leadership. Always keep your word." — **Brian Tracy**

"We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us." — **Joseph Campbell**

"Never limit yourself because of others' limited imagination; never limit others because of your own limited imagination." — **Mae Jemison**

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough." — **Mae West**

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." — **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"Find out who you are and be that person. That's what your soul was put on this earth to be. Find that truth, live that truth, and everything else will come." — **Ellen DeGeneres**

"We need to take risks. We need to go broke. We need to prove them wrong, simply by not giving up." — **Awkwafina**

"Stay away from those people who try to disparage your ambitions. Small minds will always do that, but great minds will give you a feeling that you can become great too." — **Mark Twain**

"Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable." — **John Wooden**

Celebrating 44 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication

(1979 - 2023)

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The recent decision by the Lagos State Government to enforce stricter compliance with environmental laws by shutting some markets in the state is commendable and should serve as an example to governments across the country. The affected markets in Lagos were the Ladipo Spare Parts Market, Agbado Oke-Odo Market, Oyingbo Market, Alayabiagba Market and the Mile 12 Market.

Statements released by the government revealed that the markets were shut for “serial environmental infractions”. This should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with these markets and others scattered around the country. Despite being the lifeblood of the nation's economy and bustling hubs of community interaction, Nigerian markets are often overcrowded, with poor sanitation facilities and practices.

In most of these markets, piles of waste accumulate, straining the limited resources available for waste management and disposal. These markets are also characterised by open drains that are clogged with garbage, as well as harmful odours and pests, all of which inevitably result in a vicious cycle of poor sanitation and a declining quality of life.

It is noteworthy that, in shutting the affected markets, the Lagos State Government might not necessarily have chosen to “witch-hunt”, as was being peddled by some sections of

Enforcing environmental sanitation in Nigerian markets

the public. The decision, as announced by the government, was purely punitive and was meant to serve as a deterrent to violators. The Lagos State Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Folashade Kadiri, specifically listed environmental breaches, such as reckless waste disposal, unhygienic premises and non-payment of waste bills and others, as major reasons for the disciplinary action. “It is imperative that markets in the state adhere strictly to environmental laws and regulations put in place for the well-being of residents,” she stated.

It is undeniable that in an age of infectious diseases, filthy and unhygienic environments aid the transmission of harmful microbes, which can cause food poisoning and contamination of natural resources, such as water, soil and the air. This justifies the action of the Lagos State Government. Moreover, the action is in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.2 of the United Nations, which seeks to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation.

In apparent validation of the action of the Lagos Government,

the CEO of Environmental Health Officers Registration Council of Nigeria (EHORECON) Yakubu Mohammed Baba, recently reaffirmed the decision of the council to implement sanitation and hygiene laws across board in the country. This, he said, is to safeguard the populace from avoidable morbidity and mortality caused by infectious diseases.

According to Baba, “I believe with the framework we are bringing, we want to trigger the sanitary inspectors to really start enforcing the law, because the policy and guidelines are there but the challenges are the enforcement of those laws. The council, under my leadership, has come up with a framework where we will start the enforcement vigorously at all levels of government and I believe it will not be business as usual. We need to change the narration.” It is our expectation that the council and other relevant agencies of government will truly advance their efforts in this aspect of enforcement.

It should be particularly concerning that UNICEF has reported that 73 per cent of the diarrhoeal and enteric disease

burden in Nigeria is associated with poor access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene. This should jolt government at all levels in the country to invest in market infrastructure, including proper drainage systems, sanitation facilities, and garbage disposal points. These improvements will not only boost sanitation but also make the markets more appealing for customers and investors.

As the giant of Africa, which serves as a commercial nerve centre to other neighbouring countries, it is incumbent on the Federal Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment, to follow the Lagos State worthy example in enforcing environmental sanitation and hygiene regulations across the country, by intensifying prosecution of violators. The Federal Government must also renew its commitment to the attainment of SDG 6 and WASH programmes, in ensuring that the 2030 target of SDG is a reality.

In all, environmental sanitation in Nigerian markets is a challenge that must be met head-on. It is not only a matter of health but also a critical factor for economic growth and prosperity. The government, market authorities, traders, and citizens all have a role to play in keeping these vital centres of commerce hygienic and safe. Now is the time to take the necessary steps to clean up our markets and secure a brighter future for the country.

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My Vancouver trip

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

The name “Vancouver” has stuck to my mind from my days in the secondary school. It has been so because a student of my *alma mater*, Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), Onitsha, Emmanuel Ifeajuna, broke the British and Commonwealth high jump record at the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada, as far back as 1954.

At that time, I imagined how the place looked like and the type of people living there. You can imagine a young boy whose only exposure was his village and the school. At that time, I did not think or imagine that I would one day be in Vancouver. But God had already planned that I would be there at His own appointed time.

I recall my first time of visiting Canada in 1985 for FIP congress in Montreal. That was the time USA and Canada were active members of the FIP. Later, FIP virtually became a "European club." The second was in 1997 for another FIP congress in Vancouver. The third time was in 2016, during the joint conference of NAPPSA and ANPA (Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas), held in Las Vegas, USA. This conference gave me the opportunity to visit our daughter's family in Calgary, Canada. From there, we went to Las Vegas.

We enjoyed Canada Day, 1 July, 2016 in Calgary, and participated in the celebration with the family. I remember the parade, dances, carnivals, several traditional dresses, foods and spectacular fireworks. It was a great display of various cultural heritages. Canada Day celebrates the birthday of Canada. On 1 July, 1867, Canada became a new federation with its own constitution, by signing the Constitution Act, formerly known as the British North America Act.

Coincidentally, this year, my wife and I landed in Canada on 1 July, the Canada Day, amidst celebrations, but no time to enjoy them again. However, one remarkable thing is that our main purpose for the visit, the process of obtaining the Canadian Permanent Resident Card, was started. Our passports were duly stamped on this national day of 1 July, 2023.

Our family friend, Esther, who picked us up, remarked that she came to Canada on 1 July 1973, and was, therefore, celebrating her 50th anniversary that day. I jokingly told her that I would celebrate my own 50th anniversary in November. "Anniversary for what"? She asked. I told her that I would celebrate my 50th attendance of PSN annual

conferences in Nigeria. I told her that, by the grace of God, I hold that record in Nigeria.

From our experience of travelling to USA in September last year, I appreciated the value of airport wheelchair services. Therefore, we booked and enjoyed their services throughout the trip to Vancouver. With the wheelchair, you don't worry about the airport processes and timing for your connections. We enjoyed their services in Lagos, and the other airports we used.

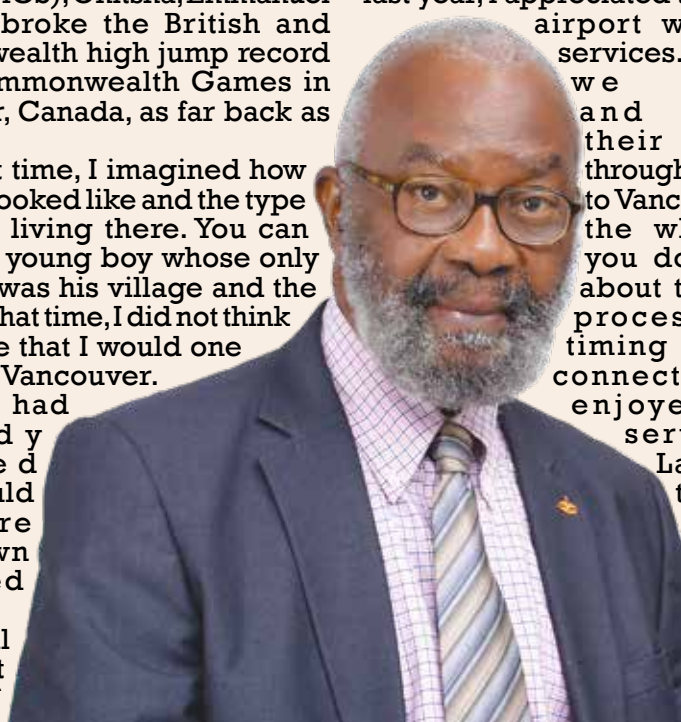
I was impressed with the in-flight

entertainment and services throughout the 10 hour-45 minutes' flight to Washington DC. My only problem was cold. Despite my warm dressing and the blankets supplied to passengers, I observed that majority of the passengers made serious efforts to cover up.

Snacks were liberally served. Even while many passengers were sleeping after the dinner, snacks were still served. I saw mine when I woke up. A few hours later, breakfast was served. Those interested in eating and drinking were hanging around with the stewards at the crew rest compartment and entertaining themselves.

I was pleased that the airline patronised locally-made foods. The *chin-chin* served was manufactured by Pure Flour Mills Ltd., Port Harcourt. The plantain chips were manufactured by Wisekings Ventures, Ketu, Lagos. One other snack was manufactured in Ghana, and even the water in 25cl bottles served was my favourite Lasena water, produced in Ogun State. This is the only bottled water in Nigeria that can boast of pH 7.78. The packaging of all these products was very attractive.

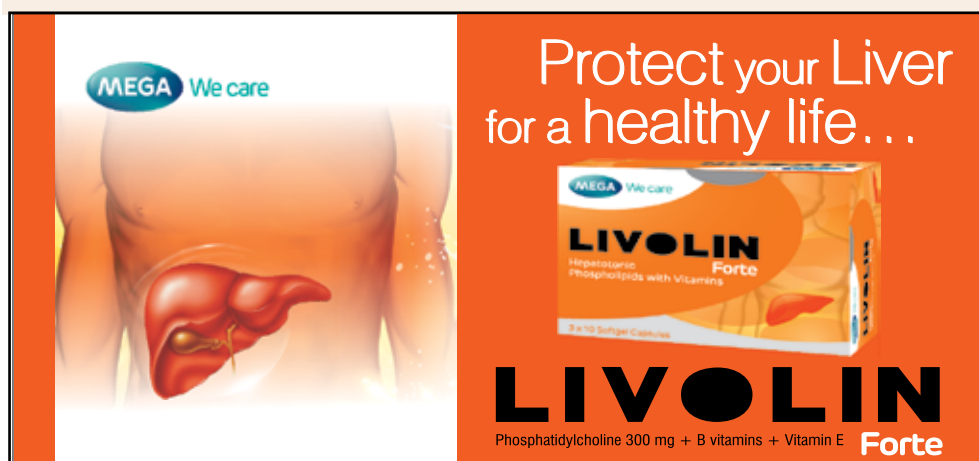
That reminded me of the Suya Spot restaurant, owned and managed by Nigerians, that we visited in Maryland, USA, last year. The environment was truly Nigerian, with mostly Nigerian customers, listening to Nigerian music and enjoying Nigerian decorations and pictures. I know that the original Suya Spot is in Mende, Maryland, Lagos, where I have been living since 1970. The Suya Spot has maintained its popularity since I knew it more than 50 years ago. But I have never entered there because I don't eat *suya*.



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Appreciate employers of labour

By George O. Emetuche, CES

"Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." - **Mark Twain**

As a consultant who operates in the business space, I know that entrepreneurs are the worst hit in this tough business environment. I was with a business leader recently and we discussed the state of the economy. Businesses are passing through challenging times. The dwindling value of the naira against the USD, inflation, and the volatile environment are major factors that affect cost of production. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, inflation stood at 22.79 per cent in the month of June 2023.

These situations naturally affect projections, turnover, and the going concern of businesses. A company that has a fixed monthly salary of XYZ Naira is still expected to pay bills, even when sales figures are going down. This is what the employers of labour go through.

The reality

Many employers in the private sector have continued to carry on in this challenging environment without downsizing their workforces. It takes more than competencies and a thick skin to be an entrepreneur in today's Nigeria. I think it takes a miracle!

We should commend this segment of employers. I suggest we take a few minutes to appreciate employers of labour. A lot of them are just keeping on in business.

I listened to my friend, the business leader, as he explained how salary went up (because they had to cushion the effect of the recent removal of fuel subsidy) and sales came down. Imagine increasing salaries when sales performance is going down!

Be prudently creative, show empathy

I recently told a salesman who was complaining that his company increased his salary, without increasing fuel and sales activities expenses. I simply told him to rethink his daily sales activities and find ways to be more efficient and result-oriented. This is the time to go the extra mile for your organisation.

This is the time to find-cost effective ways to reach your target market. Technology should be explored - use phone, email and social media platforms to support your sales activities. This is the time to explore sales automation to reduce cost. This is the time to ensure you confirm appointments before setting out. Salesmen should go to places that are necessary and avoid movements that won't add value to their sales targets. Be strategically productive.

Most employers are on BP medication because they think a lot these days! A lot of these great men and women think of how to pay salaries and meet up with other responsibilities each passing month. Professionals should be at their best to save the situation.

Be efficient, go for results!

As we already know, the business arena is struggling with several challenges and this situation may not end soon. At the time of this writing, you will need N1,010.00 to buy one USD in the parallel market! You already know the chain effect of the weak naira. A lot of things can discourage the Nigerian entrepreneur but the spirit of the entrepreneur makes him to move on.

Sales professionals should find innovative ways to be productive, while reducing cost for the organization. People in the

production department should embrace efficient production models that will bring cost down. This is the time to embrace cost leadership model. Every department in the organisation must develop what I call "ownership mentality". This is where the employee thinks like the owner of the business. This is the mindset that gets outstanding results.

The right environment

One of the main functions of Government is to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. The CBN should urgently come up with policies that will save the naira from this freefall.

I think government should do more to encourage businesses in Nigeria. Businesspeople are not asking for too much. They are just asking for effective security management, constant power supply, good roads, a sane environment, and improved ease of doing business.

According to the World Bank annual ratings, Nigeria ranked 131 out of 190 economies of the world on ease of doing business. I think we can do better in this area.

Any economy that toys with the Private Sector is planning to fail. In an event to celebrate 2022 world MSMEs day in Abuja, the SMEDAN boss disclosed that small and medium-sized enterprises employ 87.9 per cent of the labour force in Nigeria. What incentives do the managers of the economy give to this segment of employers that employ over 87 per cent of the labour force?

It is true that government has no business in doing business, but this does not take away the responsibility that government should ensure that the right environment is in place for businesses to thrive. The drivers of the economy should help the private sector. Businesses are suffocating! A lot of businesses have gone down. Some are on life support. Only a few businesses are thriving. Urgent intelligent actions are needed!



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Inquest

with
Patrick Iwelunmor

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Music, as perhaps the strongest vehicle of Nigeria's popular culture, has had a very rich and eventful history that can be deconstructed from its various forms through different social milieus. Between 1960 and 1970, highlife and *apala* music genres were the most popular in Nigeria. Musicians of that era exuded nationalistic zeal and were more preoccupied with the propagation of morally didactic messages through their compositions.

Rex Jim Lawson, Osita Osadebe, Haruna Ishola, Bobby Benson, Cardinal Rex Lawson, Victor Olaiya, Ayinla Omoruwa and Olatunji Yusuf were some of the outstanding performers, who used their music as tools to inspire positive national consciousness. Most musicians of this social and historical milieu stayed away from hard drugs but still managed to send very strong messages of social and attitudinal change across to their teeming fans. For instance, Haruna Ishola's album, translated as "*Punctuality is the Soul of Business*", became a hit and passed a very important existential message at that time.

That class of Nigerian musicians birthed a social generation of ambitious and focused Nigerian

leaders and captains of industry. People drew inspiration from the positive messages in the music of those times, which were churned out to help shape society and drive it towards illustrious pursuits and engagements.

Most Nigerian who listened to musicians of that era later became very successful in their chosen fields of human endeavour and enjoyed very sound and stable mental outlook. This was mostly due to their observance of very disciplined, focused and God-fearing ways of life, which they imbibed from the moralistic deliveries of their icons.

Generally speaking, musicians of that time were socially responsible and saw themselves as the conscience of the society. To this end, they avoided actions and associations that could portray them in a negative light. Instead, they served as role models to the many generations of Nigerians.

Chief Ebenezer Obey, who became popular in the mid-sixties endeared himself to the large Yoruba-speaking communities spread across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Between 1964, when he established his International Brothers band, and the early 70s, the Ogun State-born juju musician had released great hits

Music, drugs and mental wellbeing in Nigeria

(with very deep cultural and universal messages), such as *Ewa Wo Ohun Ojuri* (1964), *Aiye Gba Jeje* (1965), *Oro Miko Lenso* (1966), *Olomi Gbo Temi* (1967), *Ore Mi Ese Pele Pele* (1968), *Ode*

To Nso Eledumare (1969), and *Esa Ma Miliki* (1971).

Ebenezer Obey becomes very relevant to this discourse because of events that later characterised his journey in the Nigerian musical firmament. During one of his tours to London, it was alleged that he had set his musical instruments on fire in order to conceal the presence or any trace of hard drugs which he had imported into Shakespeare's country, when it had dawned on him that the police were privy to the whole saga. However, on many occasions, Obey has maintained his innocence to such allegations, arguing that he has never been involved in anything relating to drugs. Many of his fans strongly believe him, largely due to the moral rectitude and pious undertones of almost all of his compositions.

From his earliest beginnings, Obey's songs have focused more on meekness, good moral upbringing, the fear of God, nationalism, contentment, marital bliss, patience and civility. No wonder why even after almost six decades, his music is still relevant to Nigeria and the world.

Fast-forward to the present time. The crop of musicians we have in Nigeria now are a complete contrast to the aforementioned generation. Today, the public abuse of hard

drugs, the use of sexual imageries, involvement in internet fraud and other forms of illicit ventures underscore the major focus of their worldview. Many of them are having a very negative influence on the mental wellbeing of young Nigerians who have embraced their anti-social philosophical leaning. Now, Nigerian musicians aid and abet crime and other forms of violent behaviour through their songs. This has led to many young people dropping out of school to chase filthy lucre on the streets.

How does one find morality and decency in Naira Marley's "*Ijo Soapy*", which promotes what some people call "masturbatory activism" - knowing that the act of masturbation in itself is highly condemnable in medicine and religion and has dire consequences on one's mental wellbeing? Or how do we explain the rationale behind his alleged complicity in the physical assault on Ruggedman - a fellow musician who may not have bought into his philosophical orientation? A mentally stable person, a public figure for that matter, would not resort to violence, no matter the level of provocation.

Though the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) recently disclosed that Naira Marley has renounced his involvement in drugs, what happens to the millions of youths who roam about the streets, claiming to be *Marlians* and unleashing terror on society?

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Natural treatments for arthritis

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor

Arthritis is a general term that refers to inflammation of the joints. It encompasses a group of more than 100 different types of joint disorders that can cause pain, stiffness, swelling, and decreased joint mobility.

Arthritis can affect people of all genders, but some types of arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis, are more common in women. The reasons for this gender difference are not fully understood, but factors like hormonal changes, genetics, and the immune system's response may play a role. It is important to note, however, that arthritis can affect anyone, and both men and women should be vigilant about managing their joint health and seeking medical advice if needed.

The two most common types of arthritis are:

Osteoarthritis: This is the most common form of arthritis, often associated with ageing. It occurs when the protective cartilage that cushions the ends of bones wears down over time, leading to pain and stiffness. Osteoarthritis commonly affects weight-bearing joints like the knees, hips, and spine.

Rheumatoid arthritis: This is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the synovium (the lining of the membranes that surround the joints). This can lead to inflammation, pain, joint damage, and even deformities. Rheumatoid arthritis can affect multiple joints and often requires ongoing treatment.

Other types of arthritis include gout, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis, among others. Each type has its own causes, symptoms, and treatments.

Arthritis can vary in severity from mild discomfort to chronic pain and disability. Treatment options often include medication, physical therapy, lifestyle changes, and, in some cases, surgery. The goal of arthritis management is to reduce pain, improve joint function, and enhance the individual's quality of life. If you suspect you have arthritis or are experiencing joint pain, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment plan.

Important facts

Bone health is crucial for overall well-being. Here are some key points:

Calcium: Calcium is a vital mineral for strong bones. It is found in dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods. Adequate calcium intake, especially during childhood and adolescence, is essential for building strong bones.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. It can be obtained from sunlight, certain foods (like fatty fish and fortified products), or supplements.

Exercise: Weight-bearing exercises (like walking, running, and weightlifting) can help strengthen bones. Physical activity is crucial for maintaining bone density.

Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol: Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can weaken bones. Quitting smoking and moderating alcohol intake can benefit bone health.

Balanced diet: A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains provides essential nutrients for bone health, including magnesium, potassium, and vitamin K.

Regular check-ups: Bone density tests, like DXA scans, can assess bone health and the risk of osteoporosis (a condition where bones become weak and brittle).

Hormonal health: Hormones, like oestrogen in women and testosterone in men, play a role in bone health. Hormonal imbalances can affect bone density.

Medications: Some medications, like corticosteroids, can weaken bones. If you're on long-term medication, discuss its potential impact on bone

health with your healthcare provider.

Lifestyle choices: Maintaining a healthy body weight and avoiding extreme dieting can help prevent bone loss.

Injury prevention: Taking precautions to avoid falls and injuries, especially as you age, can protect your bones from fractures.

Caution with foods

Certain foods and drinks can have a negative impact on your joints and bones.

Here are some to be cautious of:

Sugary beverages: Drinks high in sugar, like soda and some fruit juices, can lead to weight gain, which puts extra stress on joints.

Processed foods: Highly processed foods often contain high levels of unhealthy fats, sugars, and additives, which can contribute to inflammation and joint problems.

High-sodium foods: Excessive sodium can lead to calcium loss, potentially weakening bones. Processed and fast foods often have

high sodium content.

Alcohol: Excessive alcohol consumption can interfere with calcium absorption and contribute to bone loss.

Caffeine: While moderate caffeine consumption is generally fine, excessive caffeine intake can interfere with calcium absorption.

Red meat: Consuming too much red meat, especially processed or charred meats, has been linked to increased inflammation, which can affect joints.

Trans Fats: Trans fats, often found in fried and processed foods, can promote inflammation and harm joint health.

On the other hand, foods rich in calcium, vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids can be beneficial for your bones and joints.

FLP Nutritional supplements like Forever Calcium, Freedom, Aloe Gel, Move, Active HA and Arctic Sea are excellent for Bone and Joint Health.

It is important to maintain a balanced diet and consult with a healthcare professional or a nutritionist for personalised advice on maintaining



healthy joints and bones.

Remember that bone health is a lifelong process, and good habits established early in life can have a significant impact on your bone density as you age.

References:

Google, Chatgpt

Mrs Chima Ejimofor is the lead partner of 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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Grace Delano: Legendary matriarch of reproductive and family health

By Ola Aboderin

No narrative of the evolution of reproductive health in Nigeria would be complete, or even meaningful, without a resounding mention of Chief (Mrs) Grace Ebun-Oluwa Delano. The depth, diversity and duration of her contributions, especially in the entrenchment of modern family planning in the country, are phenomenal and deserve reverential attention.

The nursing matriarch was there from the early years of an indigenous push for family planning in Nigeria. She contributed to its gestation, worked assiduously for its implementation, went to extreme lengths for its propagation, and continues to build lasting legacies towards its consolidation.

Incidentally, Delano's extraordinary footprints in the field of reproductive and family health field seemed predestined. In the first place, she had been born into a family with reproductive health issues, which had propelled her desire to study nursing and midwifery. According to her, "My reason for wanting to be a midwife was based on the reproductive history of my family, especially that of my mother, who had infertility for 12 years, wasted pregnancies and high infant mortality."

Secondly, her conception had been unplanned and her survival had not been expected. The situation had been really dire for her mother, whose name, "Durojaiye" (meaning "Stay alive to enjoy life" in Yoruba), suggests that she herself had been born after previous stillbirths. When she unexpectedly conceived Delano at the age of 44 – ten years after having her only surviving child – it was with mixed emotions. She was embarrassed to be carrying a pregnancy at such an advanced age and she was not sure of carrying the pregnancy to term or birthing a living child.

Against all odds, Delano was born on 13 November, 1935, a healthy, bouncy baby. And even though her parents still feared that she might be an "abiku" (a re-incarnation of the previous dead children, who might still choose to join the others), they considered her conception and successful birth a miracle and named her Grace Ebun-Oluwa ("Gift of God").

Gifted to humanity

While Delano's parents might have thought they were merely acknowledging God's goodness to them, they were actually forecasting her future – as Delano grew to not just become a priceless gift to her family but to multitudes of women, children and youths in Nigeria, Africa and beyond! From the point that she came to the realisation that the fertility and fatality issues that troubled her lineage and several other families in the country were caused by ignorance, unhealthy practices and preventable childhood diseases, she vowed to be the one to reverse the trend.

And for someone known to be a



Chief (Mrs) Grace Delano

daring achiever from her early years, Delano has meritoriously spent the bulk of her lifetime combatting infant and maternal mortality. She is particularly renowned for her relentless commitment to correcting misconceptions, while providing education, counselling, and quality maternal and child health services, especially to the underserved.

Path to impact

With her parents being prominent residents of Kaduna, in northern Nigeria, Delano had her primary and secondary education in Kaduna, Lagos and Ogun States between 1940 and 1955. In 1956, she was sent to England for her nursing and midwifery training. From age 21, in 1956, she had a series of training in nursing and midwifery, including a specialist training that qualified her to provide care to women who preferred home delivery.

It was during her specialist training that Delano discovered that there were several Irish women having many pregnancies, which put them at risk, just like the women in her home country. This inspired her to go for a specialised training on family planning in Euston, London.

Having been armed with ample knowledge and experience that she needed to fulfil her mission back home, Delano returned to Nigeria in 1961. She reunited with her Nigerian husband, whom she had met and married in London in 1960 but had returned to Nigeria before her.

Supercharged visionary

Bustling with the passion to

save as many women and children as possible from needless deaths, Delano went to work immediately. Her keenness was so intense that, 48 hours after she had her first baby in January 1962 and had not been discharged from the maternity ward, she went for an interview at the University College Hospital, (UCH) Ibadan, as midwife.

Delano worked as a midwife in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, UUCH, Ibadan, between 1962 and 1970. She gained widespread popularity with the patients, staff and consultants for her exceptional expertise, professionalism and commitment to duty. Professor O. A. Ojo, the first Nigerian head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, consequently invited her to team up with him in the Population Programme of the College of Medicine to set up the first integrated family planning clinic in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Through her innovative and multifaceted efforts, the objectives of the family planning clinic were tremendously achieved, as many women and families came to accept the necessity and safety of family planning methods and devices. The clinic ultimately became a huge success and has now metamorphosed to the present Fertility Research Unit of the College of Medicine, UCH, Ibadan.

Not only did the family planning clinic become the model for the integration of family planning into the departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in tertiary institutions

nationwide, but its messages and services (as coordinated by Delano) spread from Ibadan to other cities, as well as rural areas across Nigeria and many parts of Africa. Delano soon became a consultant to many other African countries, with much of her work being funded or part-funded by international agencies like USAID, Pathfinder International and the Ford Foundation.

Unsurprisingly, the first family planning textbook to be ever produced in Nigeria for clinical services was solely authored by her. In all, she has presented no fewer than 98 scholastic papers, authored 16 books and co-authored over 14 others, all aimed at improving knowledge and enhancing performance to reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity rate in the country.

Birth of ARFH

In 1989, Delano co-founded the popular non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation, Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH), with renowned obstetrician and gynaecologist, Prof. O.A. Ladipo. The association is known for programmes that mobilise people for behavioural and attitudinal changes that promote best sexual and reproductive health practices in order to reduce diseases burden, particularly sexual and reproductive health issues.

Over the years, the association has expanded its activities to accommodate issues, such as adolescent sexual health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other non-communicable diseases which are currently devastating families and communities in Nigeria and globally.

Awards and recognitions

Chief (Mrs) Delano, has received numerous awards and recognitions for her impactful efforts. In 1993, she was honoured by WHO with the Sasakawa Health Award for innovative work in health development. In 1997, she was honoured by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria with the "Florence Nightingale Award", in recognition of her achievements in elevating the status of the nurse/midwives in other fields of endeavour other than nursing.

In 2000, she received the Pathfinder Millennium Award by Pathfinder International, in recognition of her contribution to Pathfinder's success in improving the quality of life of the under privileged and its programming in Nigeria. In 2001, she was honoured with the 20th Century Distinguished Award by the West African College of Nursing in Monrovia, Liberia, in recognition of her contribution to Nursing Education and Nursing Services.

Delano has received several other awards and recognitions that are too numerous to mention here. These include the chieftaincy title, "Ekerin Iyalode of Ake", for her contributions to the development of Ogun State.

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Handling rejection (4)

(Continued from last edition)

It's been you all the while

A lot of times, the reason we feel rejected is simply because of the standards we have set for ourselves or others. Some of us indirectly have a lot criteria we have set for our friends to meet before we consider them loyal or loving. Its not that we do these things deliberately, we just find out that somehow, we have created a system in our subconscious that only gives us the permission to be happy with those we consider close to us, provided the imaginary targets of loyalty have been met by them.

For example, if your friend does not buy your "aso ebi" for the wedding of your daughter then she must be disloyal, whether or not her financial capabilities at such an instance matters. That is how irrational and sentimental we humans can be at times.

In another instance, you may expect your bestie to post your birthday picture on her Whatsapp status or Instagram handle, failing which, you label her as unfaithful and disloyal. So you start feeling unhappy, because of that sense of rejection.

Sometimes we just need to limit expectations from other people. The reason your expectations from others are so high is because there is something broken in the inside of you that you are trying to fix; yet, you find it hard to agree with anyone who brings it up. It's all about your personal value system.

A lot of events in life will not make it to front burner conversations or matters to discuss if we would fix our value system. Stop waiting for others to value you to feel important. Start by valuing yourself.

Nothing is going to feel that lacuna in your life, nothing. It's never going to be the quest for material things, never.

When was the last time you really questioned why you want what you want? Why do you feel happier because your last post had more likes on your Instagram handle, whereas the previous one only managed to survive 10 views? Could it be your thirst for validation from others especially because all through your life, you were starved?

Is it not interesting to know that sometimes we go the extra mile in sorting people's needs, not necessarily because this is in tandem with our religious values but because we cannot really stand the pain of the rejection that comes with "disappointing" the other person. There is this superhero syndrome of always delivering, no matter how herculean the task is. You are

By Dipo MacJob (Dr Write)

known to be a "fixer" and the last thing you want is not to maintain that reputation.

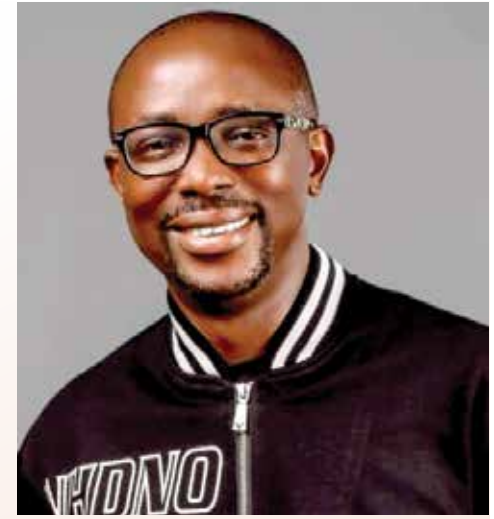
Wake up! Feel the pain but, at the same time, be assured of the gain because no situation leaves you the same way it met you. It either makes you or breaks you.

In conclusion, it is important for you to know that no one in this world would live through life

without experiencing some form of rejection or the other, which would not likely be a one-off because no one has a universal appeal.

However, the question is, has yours come? If it has, how are you handling it? learn to see "rejection" as a projection or protection, and not as an objection.

Is it not interesting to know that sometimes we go the extra mile in sorting people's needs, not necessarily because this is in tandem with our religious values but because we cannot really stand the pain of the rejection that comes with "disappointing" the other person. There is this superhero syndrome of always delivering, no matter how herculean the task is. You are known to be a "fixer" and the last thing you want is not to maintain that reputation.



To be continued in the next edition

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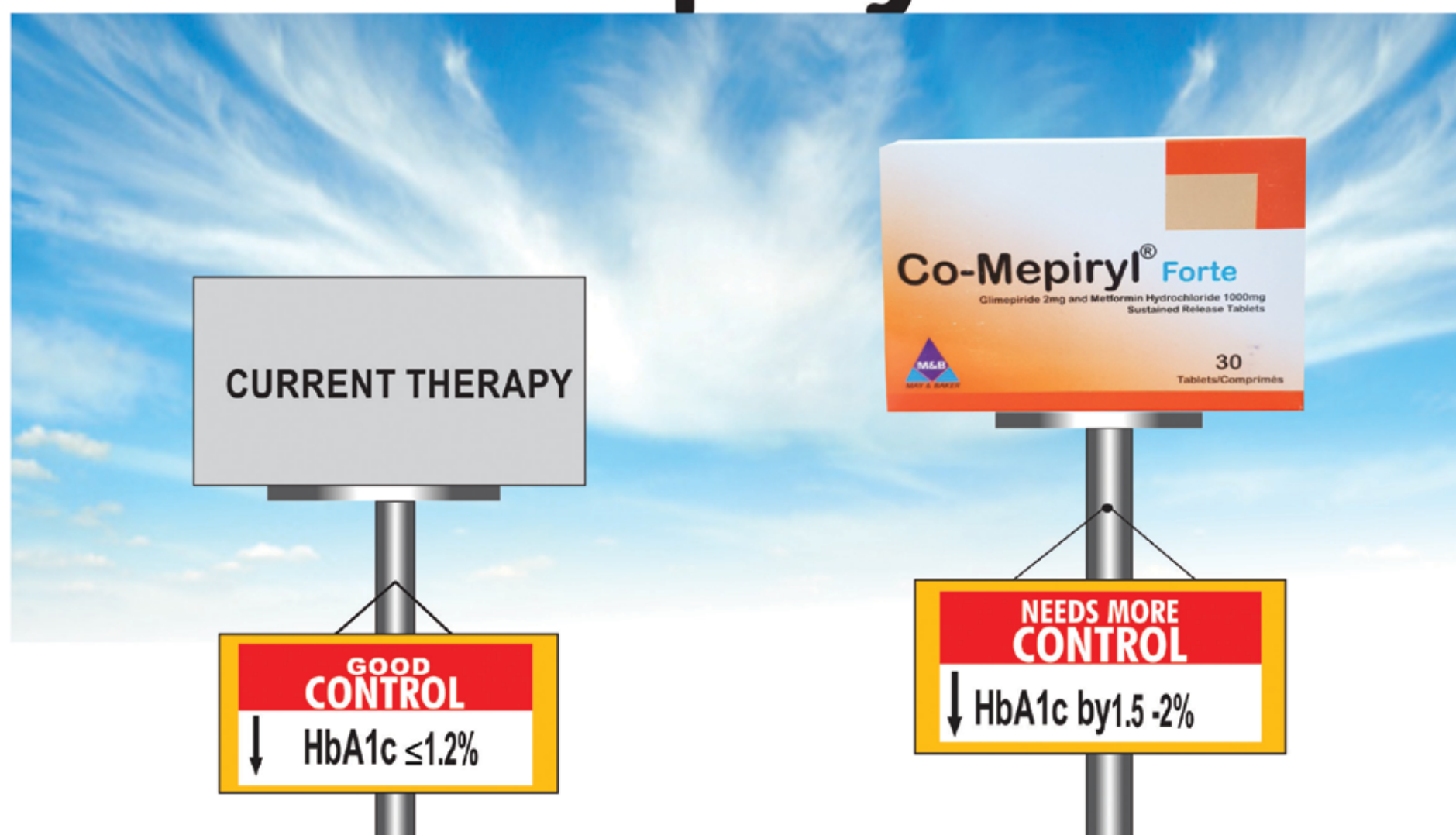


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New trends in the management of diabetes mellitus

Before diving into the significance of World Diabetes Day, let's journey back to its origins. Established by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the day was inaugurated to address the growing concerns related to the escalating health threats posed by diabetes.

World Diabetes Day as observed on every November 14 is also the birth anniversary of Sir Frederick Banting, the genius behind the discovery of insulin in 1921 with Charles Best. Although, the day is not merely a day of remembrance; it's a call to action. The overarching objective is to increase awareness, enhance care, and promote prevention among the general population.

Diabetes remains a pivotal global health challenge, therefore, once a year, the world unites in a singular mission, raising awareness and fostering change. This unity finds its voice in World Diabetes Day 2023.

It is a non-communicable disease that affects millions across the globe. Yet, not all are aware of its repercussions or preventive measures, so the Day provides a platform for everyone – from medical professionals to the general public – to learn, share, and act.

Each year, a unique theme is chosen, and for World Diabetes Day 2023, the focus is on 'Empowering Global Health'. This theme not only centres on individual health but also stresses the importance of

communities working together to combat this global issue.

What is Diabetes

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood glucose. Hyperglycaemia, also called raised blood glucose or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

According to the WHO, 8.5 per cent of adults aged 18 years and older had diabetes in 2014. In 2019, diabetes was the direct cause of 1.5 million deaths and 48 per cent of all deaths due to diabetes occurred before the age of 70 years. Another 460,000 kidney disease deaths were caused by diabetes, and raised blood glucose causes around 20 per cent of cardiovascular deaths.

Between 2000 and 2019, there was a 3 per cent increase in age-standardized mortality rates from diabetes. In lower-middle-income countries, the mortality rate due to diabetes increased by 13 per cent.

By contrast, the probability of dying from any one of the four main non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancer,

chronic respiratory diseases or diabetes) between the ages of 30 and 70 decreased by 22 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019.

Types of Diabetes

There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant).

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake). This reaction stops the body from making insulin. Approximately 5-10 per cent of the people who have diabetes have type 1. Type 1 diabetes can be diagnosed at any age, and symptoms often develop quickly. If anyone has type 1 diabetes, he or she would need to take insulin every day to survive. Currently, no one knows how to prevent type 1 diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes

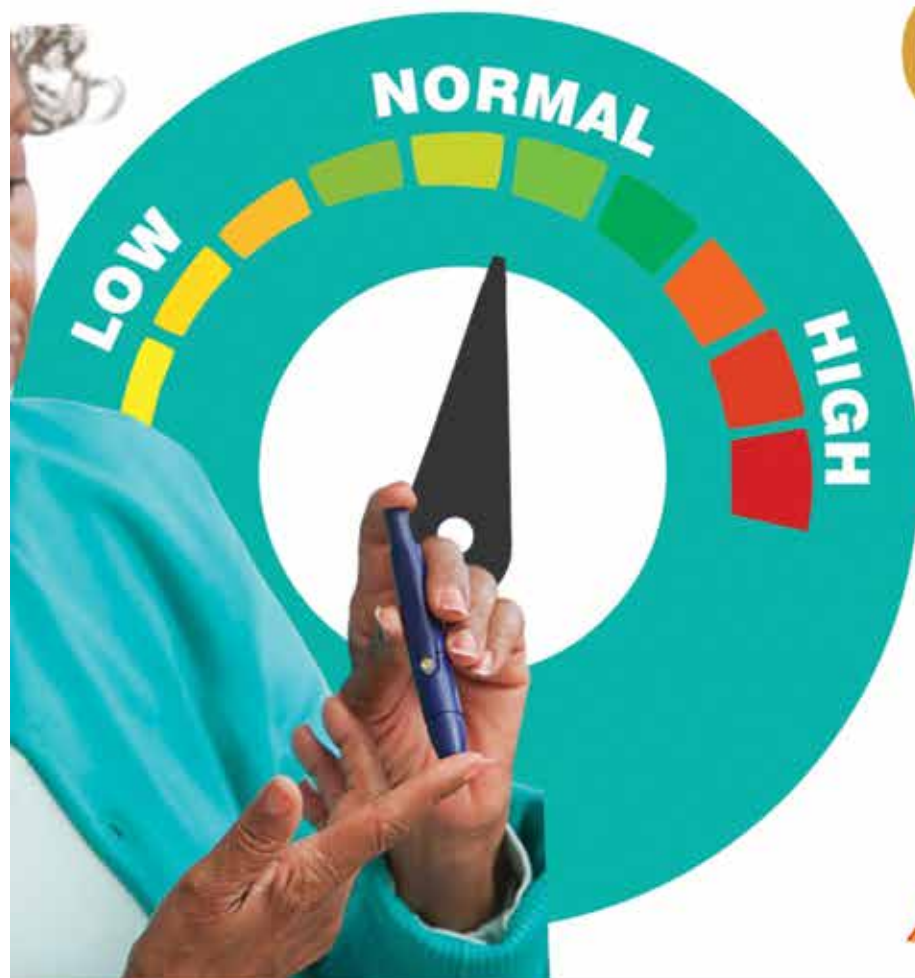
With type 2 diabetes, the body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels. About 90-95 per cent of people with diabetes have type 2. It develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults (but more and more in children, teens, and young adults). It is difficult to notice its symptoms, so it's important to get blood sugar tested if anyone is at risk.

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as:

- Losing weight.

continued on page 13

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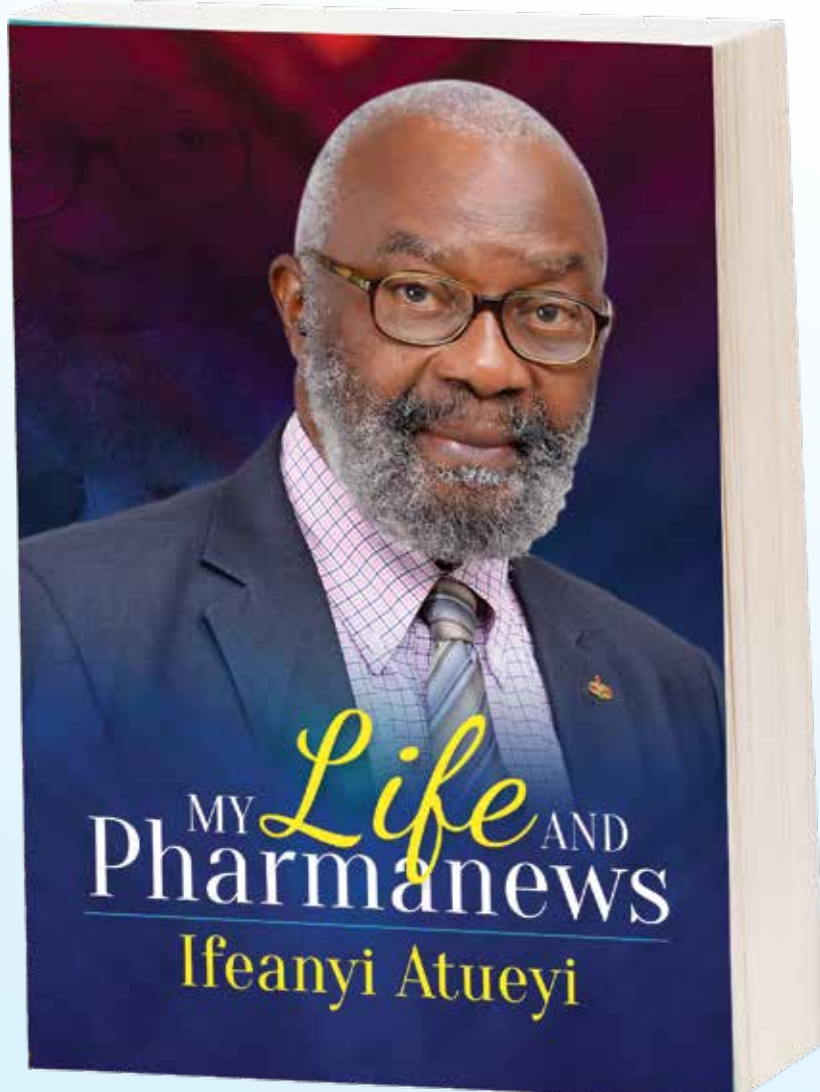
PHARMANEWS IS BORN (5)

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

Having got a clear picture of what I was to do, I again found myself becoming full of life and energy. All at once, it appeared that I had found what I had been searching for all my life and I was ready to put all I had into it. I reflected that it had taken me 20 years (from 1958 when I did my WASC to 1978) to know God's purpose for my life and 40 years (1939 when I was born to 1979) to embark on my calling. I made up my mind immediately to resign as soon as the company resumed in January, so I could focus on actualising my dream.

Let me mention here, that I was quite conscious of the importance of the PSN journal and considering the respect I had for it and the PSN leadership; I made sure that I was not going to do anything that would put **Pharmanews** on the path of collision with the journal. It was

for this reason that I avoided the word "journal" in the name of the publication. And it was also for this reason that



I chose to concentrate more on industry news (PSN journal carried mainly articles) and

blue or green as the official colour of the publication and I went for blue – which has

remained the official colour.

However, aside from Juli and some other trusted persons that I informed, I practically kept the vision to myself to avoid distraction, discouragement and opposition. I knew some colleagues would not be happy with me but I chose to be happy with myself and to follow my destiny.

On resumption in January, I tendered my resignation letter which did not come as a surprise to my boss. When he asked me which company I was joining, I told him my plan was to go into publishing. He burst into laughter and then asked me sarcastically, "What will you be doing to take care of yourself and family while publishing?"

In the meantime, I continued to go to work to comply with my mandatory notice of three months. However, after some weeks, my boss told me that I could go without waiting for the three months' resignation notice to elapse. Again, this was a way that God used him to accelerate the pursuit of my vision. The implication was that, while I had been thinking of publishing the first edition of **Pharmanews** in July, the concession granted me gave me ample time to plan for an earlier take-off in May.

Continues next edition

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

New trends in the management of diabetes mellitus

continued from page 11

- Eating healthy food.
- Being active.

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. If anyone has gestational diabetes, the baby could be at higher risk for health problems. Gestational diabetes usually goes away after the baby is born. However, it increases the patient's risk for type 2 diabetes later in life.

The baby is more likely to have obesity as a child or teen and develop type 2 diabetes later in life.

Prediabetes

In the United States, 96 million adults, more than 1 in 3 have prediabetes. More than 8 in 10 of them don't know they have it. With prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. Prediabetes raises the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Diabetes Risk Factors

Type 1 Diabetes

This is thought to be caused by an immune reaction, the body attacks itself by mistake. Risk factors for type 1 diabetes are not as clear as for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, however, the known risk factors include:

- Family history: Having a parent, brother, or sister with type 1 diabetes.

- Age: One can get type 1 diabetes at any age, but it usually develops in children, teens, or young adults.

In the United States, White people are more likely to develop type 1 diabetes than African American and Hispanic or Latino people. Currently, no one knows how to prevent type 1 diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes

One is at risk for type 2 diabetes if you:

- Have prediabetes.
- Are overweight.
- Are 45 years or older.
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes.
- Are physically active less than 3 times a week.

- Have you ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed over 9 pounds?

- Are an African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, or Alaska Native person. Some Pacific Islanders and Asian American people are also at higher risk.

If one has non-alcoholic fatty liver disease you may also be at risk for type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with proven lifestyle changes. These include losing weight, eating a healthy diet, and getting regular physical activity.



Prediabetes

You're at risk for prediabetes if you:

- Are overweight.
- Are 45 years or older.
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes.
- Are physically active less than 3 times a week.

- Have you ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a

baby who weighed over 9 pounds?

- Are an African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, or Alaska Native person. Some Pacific Islander and Asian American people are also at higher risk.

It can be prevented or reversed with proven lifestyle changes. These include losing weight, eating a healthy diet, and getting

regular physical activity.

Gestational Diabetes

You're at risk for gestational diabetes, if:

- Had gestational diabetes during a previous pregnancy.
- Have given birth to a baby who weighed over 9 pounds.
- Are overweight.
- Are more than 25 years old.
- Have a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Have a hormone disorder called polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).
- Are an African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander person.

Gestational diabetes usually goes away after giving birth but increases the risk for type 2 diabetes. The baby is more likely to have obesity as a child or teen and to develop type 2 diabetes

continued on page 15

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New trends in the management of diabetes mellitus

continued from page 13

later in life.

Before getting pregnant, gestational diabetes can be prevented with lifestyle changes. These include losing weight, eating a healthy diet, and getting regular physical activity.

Diabetes Symptoms

- Urinate a lot, often at night
- Are very thirsty
- Lose weight without trying
- Are very hungry
- Have blurry vision
- Have numb or tingling hands or feet
- Feel very tired
- Have very dry skin
- Have sores that heal slowly
- Have more infections than usual

Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes

People who have type 1 diabetes may also have nausea, vomiting, or stomach pains. Type 1 diabetes can be diagnosed at any age, and symptoms can develop in just a few weeks or months and can be severe.

Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes symptoms often take several years to develop. Some people don't notice any symptoms at all. Type 2 diabetes usually starts when one becomes



an adult, though more and more children and teens are developing it. Because symptoms are hard to spot, it's important to know the risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Symptoms of Gestational Diabetes

It usually doesn't have any symptoms. If you're pregnant, your doctor should test you for gestational diabetes between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy. If needed, you can make changes to protect your health and your baby's health

Causes of diabetes

Different causes are associated with each type of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes

For some reason, the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. Genes may play a role in some people. It's also possible that a virus sets off an immune system attack.

Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes stems from a combination of genetics and lifestyle factors. Being overweight or obese increases the risk, too. Carrying extra weight, especially the belly, makes one cell more resistant to the effects of insulin on the blood sugar.

This condition runs in families. Family members share genes that

make them more likely to get type 2 diabetes and to be overweight.

Gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes occurs as the result of hormonal changes during pregnancy. The placenta produces hormones that make a pregnant person's cells less sensitive to the effects of insulin. This can cause high blood sugar during pregnancy.

People who are overweight when they get pregnant or who gain too much weight during pregnancy are more likely to get gestational diabetes.

How is diabetes treated?

Although there is no cure for diabetes it can be managed with lifestyle changes and medicines.

Type 1 diabetes

If you have type 1 diabetes, you will need to have insulin replacement. This may be through injections or an insulin pump. This helps control your body's blood glucose levels.

There's nothing you can do to prevent type 1 diabetes. However, your lifestyle choices after your diagnosis can lower your risk of getting complications.

continued on page 17

EXPRESSIONS of PAIN

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Low Back Pain

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Osteoarthritis of Superficial Joints

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

INDICATIONS

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

DOSEAGE AND APPLICATION

Adults: VOLINI GEL should be rubbed gently into the skin. Depending on the size of the affected site to be treated 2-4g (a circular shaped mass approximately 2.0-2.5 cm in diameter) should be applied 3-4 times a day. Elderly: The usual adult dosage may be used. Children aged 14 years and over: If this product is required for more than 7 days for pain relief or if the symptoms worsen the patient/parents of the adolescent is/are advised to consult a doctor.

VOLINI GEL should be applied only to intact, non-diseased skin and not to skin wounds or open injuries.

CONTRAINDICATIONS/WARNINGS & PRECAUTIONS/UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS

VOLINI GEL is contraindicated in, asthmatics, or other allergic-type reactions after taking aspirin, other NSAIDs or with known history of allergy to any ingredient of the gel, setting of coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery; pregnancy and in children and adolescents less than 14 years of age. Concomitant use of oral NSAIDs or products containing diclofenac if required should be done with caution. VOLINI GEL contains propylene glycol, which may cause mild, localized skin irritation in some people. Menthhol may give rise to hypersensitivity reactions including contact dermatitis. Ingestion of significant quantities of menthol is reported to cause symptoms similar to those seen after ingestion of camphor including severe abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, vertigo, ataxia, drowsiness, and coma.

* Ref: Volini Gel prescribing information

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PCN decries non-adherence of pharmacists, others to regulations

continued from page 1

effectively engage the services of the security agencies and the judiciary for stiffer enforcements, irrespective of whose ox is gored.

PCN Registrar, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, who made the disclosure to *Pharmanews* in an exclusive interview, mentioned practising without registration, defiance of the 200 metres rule, fronting, register-and-go syndrome, and financial malpractice, as top among the rampant violations.

He added that, to restore sanity to the profession, the council is presently investigating 45 pharmacists for various offences, while six foreign universities in West Africa have been barred from offering pharmacy training programme, owing to failure of their graduates to demonstrate sufficient capacity as trained pharmacists.

Ahmed acknowledged that despite the progress made in the course of the year, the council has encountered some challenges, internally and externally. He revealed that, while the internal issues are being addressed within the agency, the external ones relate to pharmacy practice and its regulatory activities.

According to the registrar, aside from the top issues of non-adherence to regulations, other issues confronting the council include "incessant appeals for waiver to practice, in contravention of extant regulations; litigations and injunctions restraining PCN from performing regulatory activities; security challenges, which hamper field operations, such as as enforcement and inspection activities; inadequate work tools and logistics; regulation of the open drug markets; and sanitisation of the uncoordinated drug distribution channels."

The PCN scribe however explained that the council has learnt to adopt aggressive enforcement activities, in collaboration with the law enforcement agencies across the nation. He also noted that advocacy visits and courtesy calls on relevant ministries, departments, agencies, as well as government functionaries, for better collaboration and support, had been of great assistance.

Other measures that have proved effective to the PCN, according to Babashehu, include domestication of global best standards to establish home-grown standards that are affordable and enforceable, careful implementation of the National Drug Distribution Guidelines (NDDG) for sanitisation of the drug distribution channels, as well as collaboration with state governments and mega drug distributors on construction of Coordinated Wholesale Centres across the country.

Regarding progress made so far in the implementation of the PCN Act, the registrar said this includes "implementation of the decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal, in which four pharmacists had their practising licences suspended for varying number of years, depending on the degree of offences. Similarly, two pharmacists have been reprimanded for various



Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed
PCN Registrar

infractions.

"Forty-five pharmacists are currently being investigated for various offences by the Investigating Panel of the PCN. Six foreign universities have been blacklisted for Pharmacy training programme, owing to failure of their graduates to demonstrate sufficient capacity as trained pharmacists. All the universities are within West Africa."

He also added that "the National Enforcement Team closed 5,130 unregistered facilities in 2022, while reconfiguration of the Governing Council was also completed."

In assessing the performance of the council within the past one year of his tenure, the registrar listed passage of the PCN Bill into law on 16 August, 2022, as his greatest achievement.

Other achievements, according to him include: "Issuance of three regulations on key issues which have been duly approved by the then Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Osagie E. Ehanire; review of PCN's five-year strategic plan (2023-2027), with the support of the PSN Foundation; registration of pharmaceutical and sales representatives in pharmacy; implementation of National Drug Distribution Guidelines (NDDG); review of the Four-Part Compendium of Minimum Standards for the Assurance of Pharmaceutical Care in Nigeria, now renamed Compendium of Minimum Standards of Practice in Nigeria, covering nine practice areas; implementation of online pharmacy and ongoing review of the PCN online regulation, with the support of salient advisory."

Disclosing his vision for the council in the years ahead, Ahmed noted that it is encapsulated in a 10-point agenda which he intends to achieve before the expiration

of his tenure.

According to him, "My vision for PCN can be summarised

into the following priority areas: Launch and implementation of a reviewed Strategic Plan (2023-2027) as a roadmap for the PCN. The strategic plan will address emerging global trends in regulations; re-engineering of the registry for effective coordination and quality service delivery that meets stakeholders' expectation; implementation of Good Pharmacy Practice (GPP) concepts in various areas of Pharmacy; enhancement of stakeholders' engagement through effective collaboration; effective engagement of the judiciary and security agencies; and improvement on complaints handling to ensure customer satisfaction."

He added that his administration would equally ensure "effective implementation of the Task Shifting and Task Sharing (TSTS) policy, to ensure primary healthcare services delivery at community pharmacies; strengthened inspectorate and monitoring activities, as well as enforcement; commencement of PharmD in all accredited colleges/faculties of pharmacy; and improved collaboration with development/implementing partners and NGOs."

On the role of the PCN in cushioning the effects of the economic downturn on pharmaceutical companies, the registrar assured pharmacists that the council would continue to undertake advocacy for the improvement of conditions that support local drug manufacturers.

Such conditions, according to him, include access to forex and various interventions that support the growth of the manufacturing sector.






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New trends in the management of diabetes mellitus

continued from page 15

Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes can sometimes be controlled by lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet and being physically active.

Eventually, you may need to take medicines to control your blood glucose levels. Your doctor may prescribe tablets or injectable medicines (insulin or others). These will help to keep your blood glucose in the target range.

Gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes can often be managed by keeping blood glucose levels within a healthy range for pregnancy.

This involves a healthy eating plan and regular physical activity.

You may need medicine if you don't get good glucose control with lifestyle changes alone.

Blood glucose monitoring

Regular blood glucose monitoring is crucial to diabetes management. This helps you to understand the relationship between your blood glucose, food, exercise and insulin in your body.

It also helps you keep track of potential treatment side effects, such as hypoglycaemia (a sudden drop in blood sugar).

Can diabetes be prevented?

While type 1 diabetes can't be prevented, there is clear evidence that you can delay or stop type 2 diabetes.

Healthy habits that can help prevent type 2 diabetes include:

- healthy eating
- keeping a healthy weight, or losing weight if you are overweight or obese
- regular physical activity

Complications of diabetes?

Diabetes is a complex disease that can affect your whole body. Some complications of diabetes are below.

- Heart disease and stroke: people with diabetes are up to 4 times more likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke.

- High blood pressure: people with diabetes may get high blood pressure (hypertension) due to changes to their body chemistry.

- Foot problems: having diabetes increases your risk of foot and leg ulcers and amputations — see a podiatrist regularly.

- Vision problems: diabetes is the leading cause of preventable blindness in working-age adults.

- Kidney disease: diabetic kidney disease is the most common cause of kidney failure.

Prevention

Lifestyle changes are the best way to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

To help prevent type 2 diabetes and its complications, people should:

- reach and keep a healthy body weight
- stay physically active with



at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day

- eat a healthy diet and avoid sugar and saturated fat
- not smoke tobacco.

Diagnosis and treatment

Early diagnosis can be accomplished through relatively inexpensive testing of blood glucose. People with type 1 diabetes need insulin injections for survival.

One of the most important ways to treat diabetes is to keep a healthy lifestyle.

Some people with type 2 diabetes take medicines to help manage their blood sugar levels. These can include insulin injections or other medicines. Some examples include:

- metformin
- sulfonylureas
- sodium-glucose co-transporters type 2 (SGLT-2) inhibitors.

Along with medicines to lower blood sugar, people with diabetes often need medications to lower their blood pressure and statins to reduce the risk of complications.

Additional medical care may be needed to treat the effects of diabetes:

- foot care to treat ulcers
- screening and treatment for kidney disease
- eye exams to screen for retinopathy (which causes blindness).

WHO response

WHO aims to stimulate and support the adoption of effective measures for the surveillance, prevention and control of diabetes and its complications, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. To this end, WHO:

- provides scientific guidelines for the prevention of major noncommunicable diseases including diabetes;
- Develop norms and standards for diabetes diagnosis and care;
- builds awareness of the global epidemic of diabetes, marking World Diabetes Day (14 November); and
- Conduct surveillance of diabetes and its risk factors.

In April 2021 WHO launched the Global Diabetes Compact, a global initiative aiming for sustained improvements in diabetes prevention and care, with a particular focus on supporting low- and middle-income countries.

In May 2021, the World Health Assembly agreed on a Resolution on strengthening prevention and control of diabetes. In May 2022 the World Health Assembly endorsed five global diabetes coverage and treatment targets to be achieved by 2030.

The Challenges of Diabetes in Africa

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has revealed that the lack of testing equipment and access to quality treatment is worsening the situation of diabetes in Africa which already accounts for the highest mortality rate due to the endemic condition, adding that more than half of Africans living with diabetes are undiagnosed.

According to the analysis released by the WHO, in commemoration of World Diabetes Day 2022, the African region also has a higher average of deaths before the age of 70 from diabetes, saying it accounts for 58 per cent more than the global average of 48 per cent, the analysis says.

The WHO's estimate is that only 46 per cent of people living with diabetes in Africa know they have the condition.

The failure to diagnose the disease early enough is exacerbating the situation in the region which already accounts for the highest mortality rate due to the endemic conditions.

The report noted that in Nigeria alone, experts in the health sector have revealed that over 11 million people live with diabetes and a majority of them are unaware. Those who are aware of their status do not know how to manage their condition, they noted.

The WHO says that the lack of testing equipment, inadequate number of health experts, poor access to health facilities, and the

general lack of awareness of the disease are some of the barriers to diabetes diagnosis. "Without testing, diabetes becomes a silent killer," Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa says.

She added that "while countries face several barriers to tackling diabetes, the rising prevalence of the disease is a wakeup call to reinforce health care, improve diagnosis, access to life-saving diabetes medicines and prioritize diabetes as a major health challenge."

Currently, 24 million adults are living with diabetes in Africa and these figures are projected to rise to 55 million by 2045, the report says.

Access to care in Nigeria

'Access to care' is this year's theme for World Diabetes Day, which spotlights people living with diabetes' lack of access to affordable treatment and quality care. It is also urging the international community and global leaders to improve preventive measures against the disease.

A report published by The Conversation revealed that the prevalence of diabetes has steadily increased in Nigeria. It noted that only 1 per cent of the population had the disease in 1960 to about 6 per cent in 2021.

It added that the numbers of people living with chronic illness are relatively higher in urban areas. This may be due to the lack of testing facilities and equipment in rural areas that have left diabetic people untested.

"There are few opportunities for Nigerians to know whether they already harbour diabetes or are at risk of developing it," the report explains. "Screening, information and basic care should be available through primary healthcare facilities, but these are not functioning properly in most parts of Nigeria. They are not well staffed and resourced."

According to the WHO, from 2011 to 2021 Africa recorded a "five-fold rise" in Type 1 diabetes among children and adolescents, with confirmed cases rising from 4 per 1000 children to nearly 20 per 1000.

Article compiled by Adebayo Oladejo, with additional contributions from medicinenet.com, News Medical Lifesciences, Wikipedia, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, WHO, Healthline, www.worlddiabetesday.org, Medical News Today, NAN, The Punch, The Vanguard, Premium Times, Guardian, Pharmanews, and Others.



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Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd Celebrates Triple Milestone, Pioneering Healthcare Excellence

Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited, a prominent force in the Nigerian pharmaceutical manufacturing sector, joyfully commemorates three significant milestones, illustrating its steadfast dedication to health, longevity, and innovation for progress almost four decades into operation.

Under the leadership of Managing Director Mr. Gautam Hathiramani, Dana Pharmaceuticals proudly introduces its latest addition to their paediatric care segment – DanaCee, a delightful Vitamin C syrup meticulously crafted for young taste buds. Engineered to transform wellness into an enjoyable experience, DanaCee is a flavourful supplement for children. Brimming with the essential goodness of Vitamin C, DanaCee ensures that children receive vital nutrients with a smile.

“Our commitment to children’s health inspired the creation of a supplement that not only bolster their immune systems but also makes nutrition enjoyable. DanaCee is offered in a kid-friendly orange flavor, making it an exciting addition to daily routines,” affirms Mr. Bharat Vaswani, the Country Manager.

Concurrently, Dana Pharmaceuticals marks the 27th year for its flagship paracetamol brand, Paradana®; a cornerstone in the company’s pharmaceutical lineup that has played a pivotal role in shaping the healthcare landscape. The celebration, held at the same venue, pays homage to the enduring success of Paradana® Paracetamol, reaffirming Dana Pharmaceuticals’ unwavering commitment to healthcare. Paradana®, which is also available in syrup

form, is yet another product that is pleasantly flavoured to ensure that children do not feel the bitterness of their medicine.

In addition, Dana Pharmaceuticals showcases its dedication to innovation with the relaunch of Ferrodan Plus Capsules, a blood enhancer, featuring contemporary pharmaceutical packaging. The redesigned packaging reflects Dana Pharmaceuticals’ responsiveness to customer feedback and industry requirements, providing innovative and reliable pharmaceutical solutions and options.

As Dana Pharmaceuticals marks these milestones, the company extends its gratitude to the millions of Nigerians who have consistently chosen Paradana® as their preferred analgesic painkiller. The company also expresses appreciation to patrons, medical professionals, distributors, and partners for their unwavering support in the value chain of healthcare delivery. The triple celebration stands as a testament to Dana Pharmaceuticals’ commitment to advancing pharmaceutical care, pushing the boundaries of innovation, and maintaining uncompromising quality standards over the past decades.

About Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited: A distinguished member of the Dana Group, Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited has been a trailblazer in the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector for over 37 years, operating three ISO 9001:2015 certified, state-of-the-art factories, delivering genuine and high-quality healthcare solutions nationwide.

Dana Pharmaceuticals Triple Milestone Event Highlights at the launch of Danacee Vitamin C Syrup, 27 Years of Paradana® Paracetamol, and Ferrodan Plus Relaunch in New Packaging; recently held at Ivy Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos.



L:R- Pharm Chinenye Chukwuneta, Sup. Pharmacist, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Abuja; Mrs Ayeni Funmilayo, Kolsh Nig. Ltd; Mr Sani Ismaila, Regional Sales Manager, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Minna.



L:R- Mr Bharat Vaswani, Country Head, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Chief Paulinus Anowai, MD Rafor Pharmacy; Pharm. (Mrs) Oluranti Adedeji, Chief Technical Officer, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Mr Suraj K. Vaswani, National Sales Manager, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd



L:R- Mr Keitan Shetty, DGM, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Kano; Mr Jude Ibekwe, MD Fal Pharmacy; Mr Suraj K. Vaswani, National Sales Manager, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd



L:R- Mr Adetoba Adekunle, Sales Rep, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Ibadan; Alh. Ibrahim Olayiwola, MD Godwin Pharmacy; Mr Raphael Olasupo, Regional Sales Manager, Lagos/West, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd.



L:R-Mr Philip Nwosu, Sun online editor; Chief Paulinus Anowai, MD Rafor Pharmacy; Mr Bharat Vaswani, Country Head, Dana Pharmaceuticals; Pharm Gloria Eromosele; Pharm Samuel Adebayo, Sup. Pharmacist, Dana Pharma; Mr Ernest Onuoha, DGM Sales, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd.



L:R- Pharm Martin Okereke, Superintendent Pharmacist, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Onitsha; Mr Godson Ifeanyichukwu Nwaizu, MD Charity Nwaizu Pharmacy; Mr Ernest Onuoha, DGM Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Aba.

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COVID-19: Variants and latest information

By Patrick Iwelunmor

One of the most notable characteristics of viruses is their ability to change and evolve as they spread from place to place. As this change and evolution become distinctively different from the original virus, they become known as variants.

In order to identify the variants of a virus, scientists usually map the genetic materials of the original virus, through a process known as "sequencing". Through this method, they look out for differences in the materials to check if they have changed. Since the discovery and spread of the SARS-COV-2 Virus, the virus that causes COVID-19, many variants have emerged and have been identified in many countries across the world.

A variant of SARS-COV-2 is considered one of interest when it undergoes mutations that are assumed or known to cause substantial changes and is circulating widely, such that it causes many clusters of infected people or is found in many countries. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has continued to monitor many of these variants of interest, in case they become variants of concern. A variant of interest becomes one of concern when it spreads more easily, causes more severe disease, escapes the body's immune response, changes clinical presentation or defies the efficacy of known tools, such as public health measures, diagnostics, treatments and vaccines.

Since May 2021, WHO has been making use of the Greek alphabet for the purpose of discussing variants in the media and public space. This is particularly because the apex health body wants people to easily keep track of variants, without having to link their names to the places where they were first identified, as variants can emerge anywhere in the world at any time.

Moreover, due to its best practices policy in naming new diseases, WHO has indicated that some letters may not be used, if they stigmatise any categories of people or cause confusion in major languages. Still, WHO labels for these variants do not and cannot replace their scientific names, bearing in mind the fact that these scientific names convey important scientific information to researchers and scientists.

The Omicron variant B.1.1.529, which was first reported to WHO on 24 November 2021, was also classified a variant of concern on 26 November of the same year. The classification followed the advice of the Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution, based on information from South Africa, which indicated that the virus had a large number of mutations and had caused harmful change in the epidemiology of



COVID-19.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Omicron variant is that it has a large number of mutations, meaning that the virus acts differently from other variants that are in circulation. There is limited information about Omicron, even though studies are ongoing towards ascertaining the nature of the variant, how it spreads and the severity of diseases it causes.

It will surely take some time to determine whether or not Omicron responds to therapeutic measures or whether re-infection with the variant causes more or less severe diseases.

WHO is also working with Technical Partners towards understanding the potential impact of Omicron on vaccine effectiveness.

The Delta variant is a variant of concern. It was classified by WHO on 11 May 2021. It is presently the most dominant variant circulating globally and spreads more easily than earlier strains of the virus. Delta is responsible for more cases and deaths worldwide. It has been established that all the COVID-19 vaccines currently in use are safe and effective in preventing severe disease and death against the Delta variant.

Precautions against COVID-19 variants are simple and only require the cooperation of the public. As long as these precautionary measures are adhered to strictly, chances of infection would be drastically reduced. The following are measures to guard against infection by any of the variants:

- Keep a distance of at least 1 metre from others
- Wear a well-fitted mask over your mouth and nose
- Open windows
- Cough or sneeze into a bent elbow or tissue
- Clean your hands frequently
- Get vaccinated, as soon as it is your turn

Studies are still ongoing on how these variants impact vaccination. Current available data show that COVID-19 vaccines are still very effective in preventing serious illness and death against all current variants of concern. Though no vaccine is 100 per cent effective, the COVID-19 vaccines are very effective and have provided high levels of protection against severe illness and death. This is the main reason persons are advised to get vaccinated as soon as it is their turn.

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API production plant: Emzor seals 14 million euro deal with EIB

- As bank tags project “new dawn” in Africa’s pharma sector

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



Seated L-R: Group Managing Director, Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Dr Stella C. Okoli, OON; Managing Director, Access Banking Plc, Mr Roosevelt Ogbonna; Director for International Partners, EIB Global, Diederick Zambon. Standing L-R: Chairman of Emzor Pharmaceuticals, Mr Emeka Okoli; CEO APIFA, Mr Frankline Keter; Head of regional office for West and Central Africa, EIB, Mr Roger Stuart and some EU Ambassadors, at the official signing of a financing agreement for Emzor Pharmaceuticals at the Presidential Villa.

As part of efforts to boost local production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) thereby moving Nigeria closer to medicine self-sufficiency, foremost indigenous pharmaceutical giant, Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries Limited, has signed a 40 million euro financing deal with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Based on the details of the deal, which was finalised at the European Union-Nigeria Strategic Meeting, held at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, on 19 October, the funding is to specifically support the production of API in Nigeria.

Speaking at the meeting, the Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, said, “Today marks yet another milestone in the annals of the EU-Nigeria development cooperation. The EU-Nigeria relations is one of the most vibrant development partnerships, in terms of volume, thematic interventions, modalities, and geographical spread in the deployment of resources.

“The EU-Nigeria Strategic Dialogue is happening at the take-off of the current administration in Nigeria and presents opportunities for proper articulation and consolidation of priorities in our partnership.”

Statements released by the Emzor management indicate that its API production factory in Shagamu is set to begin production of up to 400 metric tonnes of API per year, with effect from the first quarter of 2024. The factory is expected to produce Artemether, Lumefantrine, Sulfadoxine, and Pyrimethamine.

The company added that its partnership with EIB is a significant step towards accelerating treatments against malaria and healthcare access across Nigeria and the African continent, thereby reducing the dependence on the importation of essential medicines.

On its part, EIB has described the API Project embarked upon by Emzor

as a new dawn in the development and growth of Africa’s pharmaceutical industry.

The bank’s Investment Officer, Project Finance Division, Corporate Finance and Global Activities Department, Arthur Delor, made the assertion on 6 October 16, during a special tour of the Emzor’s expansive factory in Shagamu, Ogun State.

According to Delor, “the Emzor’s API project is a trailblazer in Africa and a new dawn in the development of the pharmaceutical industry on the continent. It is a great leap in the sector and the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. It will ensure production of high quality products and its affordability in Africa. The API Project will indeed make a great impact and will resoundingly facilitate development of standards in the industry.”

Speaking further, the EIB representative declared that the bank “is glad to contribute to the project. This is because it will support global development. We believe that it is time for developing countries to start to be developed. Africa should be less dependent on importation. In this regard, local manufacturing is one of the best ways to take Africa out of its current challenges. Africa, as a place, should start to contribute to global development, not just to depend on others; and our choice of Emzor is very appropriate to pioneer this project in Africa.”

Delor further expressed optimism that Emzor “is well established and well positioned to make Africa, especially Nigeria, a hub of quality products and supply chain. Emzor has a legacy of efficiency and good standards. It is a pharmaceutical industry with adequate facilities and resources to make a big change in Africa’s pharmaceutical development and growth.”

In his opening remarks at the event, the Chairman of Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries, Emeka

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Egbujiobi to institute annual grants for pharmacy scholars

By Patrick Iwelunmor

Consultant cardiologist, pharmacist and specialist at Beloit Memorial Hospital, Wisconsin, United States, Dr Leo Egbujiobi, has disclosed plans to set up annual scholarship grant/awards of excellence to be funded by his foundation, as part of his support to the Nigerian pharmacy education landscape. The project is to commence from next year, 2024.

Egbujiobi made this disclosure in an exclusive interview with Pharmanewsonline, at the just concluded 17th Annual Scientific Conference of the National Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA) held in Columbus Ohio, USA, recently.

"Every year, the Egbujiobi family will donate a thousand dollars for a pharmacy scientific student in honour of Prof. Adeboye Adejare and another thousand dollars in honour of Dr Teresa Pounds for a pharmacist doing clinical training. The people working for my interest will legally build it as a foundation because it has to be funded by me," he said.

Expatriating on the awards, Egbujiobi, who is regarded as

one of the best cardiologists in the United States, said about the funding: "It has nothing to do with NAPPSA finances. The process starts from next year. My people will work with the scholarship committee in deciding who qualifies. So, the certificate will be Prof. Adejare Award for Excellence in Pharmaceutical Science funded by Egbujiobi. The other one will be Dr Teresa Pounds Award for Excellence in Clinical Pharmacy Training.

Commending the contributions of NAPPSA to the development of the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry, Egbujiobi, who also served as NAPPSA President from 2017 to 2019, said no nation of the world has ever achieved notable development without the support of its diaspora community.

"In the history of the world, there is no country that develops without the involvement of the diaspora. It took the American Jewish Congress for the Jews to be solid. Look at Northern Ireland. It took the Irish Americans, the Indians and the Chinese who came to America for training to go home," he said.

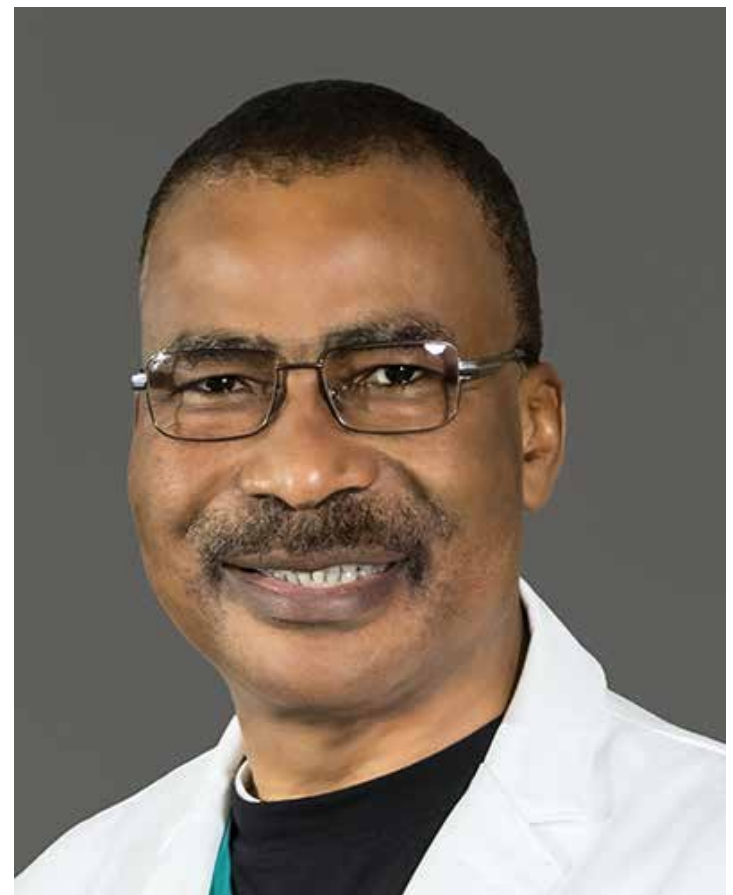
On how Nigeria can get it

right in terms of sustaining the culture of knowledge transfer for development, Egbujiobi believes that Nigerian leaders must surround themselves with capable and dedicated people who can drive the kind of transformational change the country requires.

"Whatever we do here in the diaspora, if we are not able to transfer the skill, the knowledge and the education, then, we have not achieved anything," he said.

Egbujiobi called on NAPPSA members to continue supporting the association and emphasised the significance of knowledge sharing and his commitment towards the success of NAPPSA.

"Knowledge not shared is knowledge lost. We should



Dr Leo Egbujiobi

continue to come for NAPPSA. I have no other article for sale except knowledge. I am one of the founding members of NAPPSA from day one. Any success for NAPPSA is good news to me because that has been the dream since 2006," he added.

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Wellness

with

Dr Patrick Ijewere

(Specialty: Internal Medicine, from John Hopkins University)
Tel: 0809 771 4455
Email: thenutritionhospital@gmail.com

Robert Ferris (CNBC, 2015).

Have you ever read that you can survive without food for days and even a few weeks? Have you also read that you can survive without water for days? However, guess how long you can survive without air? You guessed right - a couple minutes! Yet we take it for granted.

Our creator placed us in paradise of air, nature and organic natural food. This air was in an ecosystem that created and recycled it through seasons, climate, plants and creatures. This air sustains all life forms. Yet, we humans in our earthly understanding or misunderstanding, take it for granted. Today, we pollute the air as if we created it.

What exactly about air are we most concerned? The content and quality. Does it have the quality that sustains health and wellness? And what are we doing deliberately or inadvertently to sustain or compromise the air quality?

A U.S.-based nonprofit group called Berkeley Earth has released a report, based on data collected by network of sensors across China, that said more than 80 per cent of Chinese people are regularly exposed to pollution that far exceeds level deemed safe by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency."

emissions data suggests that there was a temporary decrease in the average global CO₂ emissions in 2020, but the trend was not sustained. Preliminary numbers find CO₂ emissions increased again in 2021" - Mengpin Ge et al (World Resources Institute, 2020).

What about the air here in Nigeria? We see the obvious air pollutants from automobiles (cars, trucks, buses and motorbikes) and generators (domestic and industrial). These are the obvious sources of outdoor air pollution that can easily become indoor pollution. However, do you know that we are equally, if not worse, exposed daily to air pollutants and poor air quality indoors - that is, within our homes and offices?

Indoor air

There are several considerations regarding indoor air. Let us discuss the sources or causes of indoor air pollution, and the measures we can take to protect our indoor air quality.

Off-gases

Furnishings - Carpets, leather chairs and tables, curtains, blinds, etc. Whenever you buy new furniture or redo interior furnishing, understand that there are chemicals

Wellness and air quality - Is your car or home air making you sick?

used in the process of making these items. These chemicals diffuse over time. They are called off-gases and many are hazardous to health. Hence, in the

factories where these chemicals are manufactured and where the furniture items are made, the staff are often required to wear protective nose air-filter masks. Therefore, whenever you buy new furnishing, air out the room often.

Clothing - new and dry-cleaned clothing. Remember the fresh smell of clothes from the dry cleaner? That is from chemicals. So, air out newly dry-cleaned clothes in well ventilated areas, to diffuse and dilute the chemical odour. Even your laundry detergent has an odour or aroma. With clothes, after washing, rinse properly to reduce the chemical odour of the detergent to a minimum.

Your car, a gas chamber. A recent study found that chemicals used to make seat cushions, armrests, floor coverings, wire insulation and other interior auto components are gradually released into the car air, and in higher quantities on hot days.

Indoor chemicals

Many household cleaning chemicals are based on chlorine, ammonia or other chemicals. They are mostly irritants and very toxic to the lungs and the body. Sodium laurel sulfate is a popular item in cleaning chemicals and soaps. It is an irritant; so, use minimally and rinse off with copious amounts of water.

Body chemicals - cosmetics, Antiperspirants, perfumes, colognes, nail polish etc. Remember that any chemical that gets on the skin enters the body and is circulated to all your organs through the bloodstream. So, use them minimally. Many of these ingredients are now classified as carcinogens, probable carcinogens or endocrine disruptors (disrupt your hormonal balance).

Insecticides, moth balls, fumigants - the odour of these items speaks volumes. Avoid them and allow hours for the air to clear before entering the area.

Paints - these linger for days. Ensure thorough airing out before entering.

Air fresheners - these are used in our homes and in a lot of offices, banks, pharmacies, hotels etc. The name "air freshener" is probably the most deceptive name in the air quality business. They do not freshen the air; they conceal the bad air. They add more chemicals that smell nice and mask the foul or pungent chemicals in the air. So, the bad or toxic air is still present, just covered up nicely.

Remember: "Sweet smelling chemicals can be as toxic to the body as foul smelling chemicals."

(Continues next edition)

Dr Patrick Ijewere is host, "Wellness Half-Hour", Inspiration 92.3 FM, Lagos: Sundays 1pm - www.wellnesshourng.com. For Personal consultations, comprehensive health check-up, seminars, wellness coach, interviews call: 08096604455. To sign up for our newsletters, visit: www.caribhealthng.com

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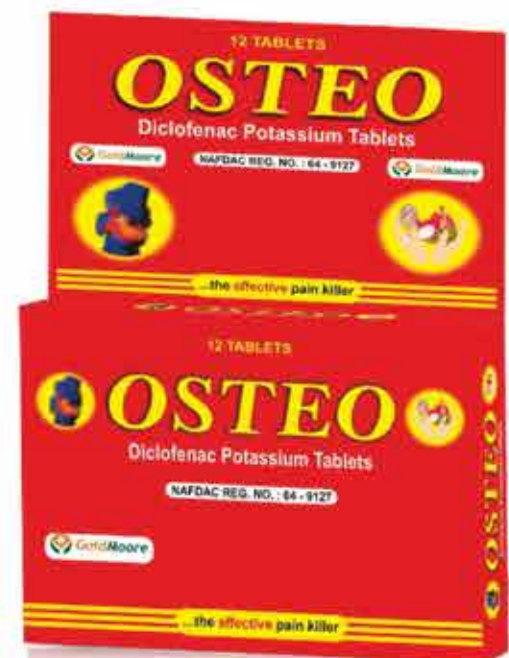
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DEANS' Corner

PROF. LATEEF KASIM

Professor Lateef Saka Kasim is dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogo Iwoye, Ogun State. The professor of Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry is a council member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN).

An indigene of Ogun State, in south-west Nigeria, Kasim had his secondary education at Saint Anthony's Grammar School, Esure, Ijebu-Imusin, and later went to the University of Jos, where he bagged his Bachelor of Pharmacy degree in 1990.

Kasim obtained a master's degree in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry in 1994 from the University of Lagos. In 1995, he joined the service of Olabisi Onabanjo University. In 2003, he was a visiting scholar to the University of Strathclyde, UK, where he carried out his PhD bench work in natural products chemistry, particularly in the isolation and characterisation of bioactive compounds. He later bagged his PhD in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry in 2006, from the University of Lagos.

Kasim rose through the ranks

at Olabisi Onabanjo University and became a professor in 2019. He was the acting head of his department from 1996 to 2000. He was also a sub-dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy from 2004 to 2006.

Kasim was the acting dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy from 2011 to 2014. He eventually became the dean in 2021, a post he holds to date.

To his credit, Kasim has more than 40 publications in national and international journals. He has also attended national and international conferences where he presented papers.

Kasim has served Olabisi Onabanjo University in different capacities. He served as a member of the Students' Disciplinary Committee, as the Appointment and Promotion Committee. He is also a member of the University Senate. He has supervised many MSc and PhD

Kasim has served Olabisi Onabanjo University in different capacities. He served as a member of the Students' Disciplinary Committee, as the Appointment and Promotion Committee. He is also a member of the University Senate. He has supervised many MSc and PhD students.

students.

Kasim has also served as a member of the Provost and Deans' Committee, an editorial board member of the university journal, a member of the university committee for the review of promotional guidelines for the university, and others.

The dean has also served meritoriously as an external examiner for postgraduate and undergraduates courses at the University of Lagos; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Uyo; and Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.

A professional to the core, Kasim is a member of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria

(PCN). He is a member of the Accreditation Committee of PCN, as well as being a member of the Pharmacy Education Committee.

Aside from the PSN, Professor Kasim is also a member of the Science Association of Nigeria (SAN) and the Pharmacognosy Association of Nigeria (PAN).

He is happily married and the marriage is blessed with four children.



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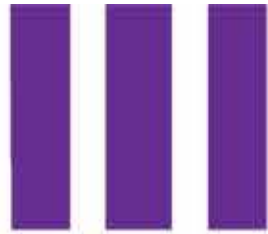
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API production plant: Emzor seals 40 million euro deal with EIB

continued from page 21

Okoli said that the main objective of the project is to set up a factory in Nigeria to produce APIs for antimalarial products. He said the organisation currently produces antimalarial FPPs and is targeting API production as part of its growth strategy, backward integration and supply chain security. He added that the company also wants to help in pioneering the mass production of APIs in Africa, ensuring commodity security and access to quality products across the continent.

"Emzor has partnered with an Indian company, Mangalam Drugs & Organics Limited, a world renowned WHO/FDA-approved producer of antimalarial APIs, intermediate, and other specialty chemicals. Emzor has already signed an agreement with Mangalam, which will advise and manage the implementation of the project as a tech transfer partner," he said.

In his remarks at the event, the Chief Executive Officer of API for Africa (APIFA), who is also an Emzor partner in the project, Frankline Keter, described the project as an opportunity for APIFA that is based in Kenya to achieve its main objective.

According to him, "At APIFA, our main aim is to facilitate the local production of APIs and other health products and technologies (HPTs) in sub-Saharan Africa. We do this by working with a multitude of critical stakeholders from the private sector, public sector, research institutes, and civil society, to address a major market challenge, the lack of not only API manufacturing capacity in sub-Saharan Africa but also affordable medicines.

"It is a great privilege to witness this ceremony. This is a big deal in Africa: Emzor is setting the pace.



L-R: CEO APIFA, Mr Frankline Keter; Communication Manager, West and Central Africa, Isabelle Vovor; Group Managing Director, Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, Dr Stella C. Okoli, OON; Investment Officer, Project Finance Division, EIB, Mr Arthur Delor; and Chairman of Emzor Pharmaceuticals, Mr Emeka Okoli, at the Emzor factory tour, with officials of European Investment Bank (EIB).

This project will not only boost African Continental Free Trade but also encourage and support local producers to invest. What is left for us is to celebrate and congratulate ourselves on this great season in Africa."

Also speaking at the event, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries, Dr Stella Okoli, encouraged government to do more in helping local manufacturers.

She said, "Government has a lot to do in supporting local manufacturers. It is a fact that the prosperity of the nation resides with local production.

This is how the dwindling economy can be successfully revived.

"As a company, we are playing our part and we shall continue to do so. From day one, we have determined not to let our country down. We are here to do the right thing in the pharmaceutical industry, producing high quality drugs. And we are advancing to the next level, by pioneering API manufacturing in Africa."

Information further released by Emzor revealed that the company's fourth factory, named "Emzor Manufacturing Campus", seated on

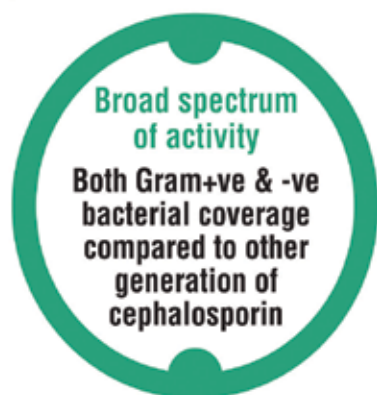
a 60-hectare site in an industrial zone on Lagos -Ibadan/Abeokuta Benin interchange in Shagamu, Ogun State, is currently housing an Oral Solid Dosage (OSD) Plant, Cephalosporin Plant, Intravenous Fluids (IVF) Plant, Penicillin Plant, Gas Plant, and other support utilities. The factory at present, produces close to 20 billion tablets annually.

The company further revealed that, while the API plant is being funded with a loan grant of 14 million Euros by the EIB, the grant forms about 54 per cent of the entire financial implication of the plant construction.



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Pfizer, UCH collaborate on adult vaccination policy

By Temitope Obayendo



L-R: Pfizer's Country Brand Manager, Vaccines, Chioma Ozoemena; Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Dr Abiodun Moshood; Pfizer's Access Account Manager, Olufemi Ogungbemi; and Deputy Director of Administration & Head, General Administration Dept, University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Mrs S.O. Oki.

Poised to enhance quality healthcare for patients, in tandem with best global practice, multinational biopharmaceutical company, Pfizer, in collaboration with the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Oyo State, has introduced a policy on adult immunisation.

The pharma company disclosed in a statement made available to **Pharmanews** that the policy is meant to focus on vaccination for adults.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) identifies immunisation as a key component of primary healthcare and an indisputable human right. It says vaccines are critical to the prevention and control of infectious disease outbreaks, as they underpin global health security and will be a vital tool in the battle against antimicrobial resistance.

Cluster Lead for West Africa/ Country Manager Nigeria, Pfizer, Pharm. Olayinka Subair, explained that, while paediatric age has been targeted for majority of vaccination over the years, adults may be at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases, as some childhood vaccines can wear off over time.

He said Pfizer has a long history in vaccine research and development through the development of innovative delivery systems and technologies.

"We've created scalable solutions that address prevention of deadly bacterial infections. The key to maintaining and building on these advances is constant vigilance and continued access to immunisations is essential to preserving the progress we've made against vaccine-preventable conditions and strengthening our ability to address emerging health threats," Subair affirmed.

Most of the high-income countries, he noted, have developed policy to enhance universal vaccination of adults. He averred that despite the universal immunisation coverage in high income countries, Nigerian adults are yet to be reached.

The Chief Medical Director of University College Hospital, Ibadan, Oyo State, Prof. Jesse Otegbayo, expressed the hospital's delight in partnering Pfizer in spearheading an adult vaccination policy for the institution.

He disclosed that the Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices (ACIP) of the Centre for Disease Control has developed an approach for the administration of the vaccine, referred to as H-A-L-O approach.

"This is an easy-to-use chart that can help healthcare providers make an initial decision about vaccinating a client/patient based on four factors – the client/patient's health condition-H, age-A, lifestyle-L, and occupation-O", he stated.

Otegbayo however admitted that, in some situations, vaccination can be done without considering these factors.

According to Subair, recommended vaccines for adults can be divided into those for the general population and those indicated for individuals with specific risk factors, such as pre-existing chronic diseases or multi-morbidities, compromised immune system, travel, or potential occupational risks such as exposure of healthcare workers.

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GIPAA celebrates diamond jubilee in style



Pharm. Jimi Agbaje, addressing participants at the conference

The diamond jubilee anniversary of the Great Ife Pharmacy Alumni Association (GIPAA) held amidst pomp and pageantry, as alumni from all works of life were hosted to a welcome cocktail by the Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Prof. Francis Abiodun Oladimeji, at the faculty foyer.

The dean assured the alumni that Ife was fully ready to host the biggest homecoming/reunion of Great Ife pharmacists for the milestone 60th anniversary of the faculty.

The opening ceremony, held at the prestigious Oduduwa Hall, showcased a galaxy of Great Ife Pharmacy stars from across the globe and was chaired by the distinguished former chairman of

Neimeth Pharmaceuticals Limited and immediate past President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa.

Also present at the event were the Grand Patron of GIPAA, Prince Julius Adelusi-Adeluyi; Vice-Chancellor, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Prof. Adebayo Simeon Bamire; PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh; and Founder/Group Managing Director of Drugfield Pharmaceuticals Limited,

Pharm. Olakunle Ekundayo.

Delivering the keynote address, titled "Evolving digital innovations: New opportunities for the practice and business" President, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Albany New York, USA, Prof. Toyin Tofade, who joined virtually, urged the pharmacists to embrace digital innovations in all the areas of their practice, as a means of advancing the profession. Tofade is the very first Black African woman in history to head an American university.

The anniversary also witnessed the turning of the sod ceremony of the N400, 000,000 ultra-modern hostel legacy project for Great Ife Pharmacy students by Prince Adelusi-Adeluyi and other dignitaries at the Student Village.

According to the Global Chairman of GIPAA, Pharm. (Otunba) Olalekan Asuni, the project will commence from 2024 and will be delivered in 24 months to the students.

Other events organised during the diamond jubilee were the induction of the 2021/2022 graduating class by the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) and GIPAA's medical outreach for the Modakeke Community, at the Civic Centre, Modakeke, with a very huge turnout.

The closing banquet and awards night, chaired by Pharm. Olujimi Kolawole Agbaje, saw the presentation of awards to deserving GIPAA sets who returned to give back to the faculty in different set projects.

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Bond conducts free sensitisation, screening on heart disease

By Adebayo Oladejo

In commemoration of this year's World Heart Day (WHD), Bond Chemical Industries Limited, has carried out a health outreach, which included free awareness campaign, drug distribution and healthcare screening, in the ever busy Mushin Market of Lagos State, which connects Ilupeju, Oshodi and its environs.

The event, which witnessed a large turnout of participants from within and outside Mushin had volunteer health workers from the Ikeja Unique Lions Club, DOAM Foundation, Bond's staff, as well as pharmacists and experts on the ground to provide consultancy services and conduct free screening, such as blood pressure check, blood sugar test, malaria test, among others.

The theme for World Heart Day 2023 is "Use Heart, Know Heart", which encourages a proactive approach to heart well-being, allowing organisers to choose areas such as the environment, healthcare access, mental health, or priority risk factors.

Speaking with *Pharmanews* at the outreach, Pharm. Stephen Onojomete, chief pharmacist, Federal Medical Centre, Ebute Metta, Lagos, noted that the exercise was aimed at reducing deaths caused by cardiovascular diseases, adding that the large turnout showed how much the gesture by Bond was appreciated by the people.

According to Onojomete, who is also the president of Ikeja Unique Lions Club, the risk factors for heart diseases are well known and largely preventable, adding that being overweight and obese, tobacco use, alcohol intake and insufficient physical activity are significantly modifiable and preventable risk factors for heart disease and other non-communicable diseases.

He further said, "I have heard some arguments that cardiovascular disease is only for the rich, and I disagree vehemently as it is a disease of everybody. It doesn't have much to do with financial status; whether rich or poor, everyone is prone to it. There are people who eat late-night food, and have uncontrolled lifestyles, so it can happen to anybody.

"The economic condition is also another factor as everybody is thinking, stressed and overburdened. So, emotional issues can also open the door to it."

Emphasising on this year's theme for WHD, the experienced pharmacist stressed that the heart is the engine of the body, saying if the heart stops working it becomes a big problem.

Also speaking, Pharm. Isaac Melfah, product manager, Bond Chemical Industries Limited, noted that Bond, as a responsible organisation, values relationships with its clients. He added that, as a company that is corporately and socially responsible, it is aware that sometimes, finding the solution to



Some of the experts attending to an octogenarian beneficiary.

the client's health problems goes beyond medications to offering basic advice on lifestyle changes

that could eventually help to improve their health.

According to Melfah, "With

this outing, Bond Chemical, according to our slogan, 'We Give Hope', is here to give hope to our host community and its inhabitants so as to let them know that when there is life there is hope and to also tell them that it is only those who have good health that can have a fulfilling life."

Speaking more on why Bond organised the health outreach, the product manager stressed that the company has over 100 products, which cut across analgesics, anti-hypertensives, antibiotics,

multivitamins, eye drops, syrups and many others, adding that its

continued on page 40

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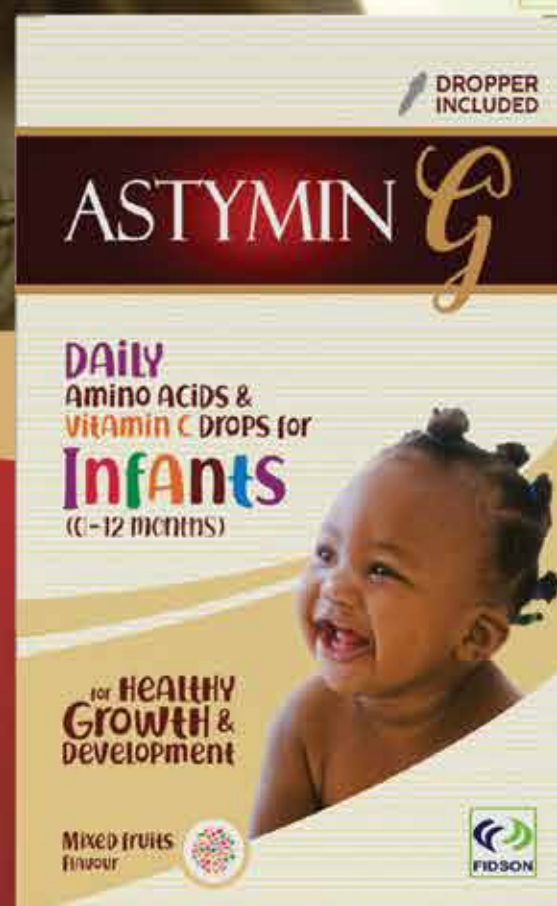


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Bond conducts free sensitisation, screening on heart disease

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Pharm. Stephen Onojomete, addressing a cross-section of the participants.

Also speaking, the duo of Mrs Ruth Nwachukwu, programme officer, and Mrs Catherine Olukotun, product team lead and health coordinator, DOAM Foundation, noted that regular health exams and tests can help detect health problems before they become complicated and sometimes untreatable.

A resident, Mrs Florence Debeodero, thanked Bond for organising the free health screening, adding that a lot of people are going about with serious ailments because they cannot afford to pay for medical check-ups to determine their health status.

"This exercise by Bond Chemical will help a lot of people know their health status and seek for help on time—before it is too late," she said.

Another resident, Mrs Modinat Opaleye, a 53-year-old trader, disclosed that, while she understood the importance of regular

corporate head office is located in the heart of Mushin, thus necessitating the gesture. He emphasised that, through the outreach, the host community would feel its impact, and in

the long run, the people of the community would live healthy lives.

Melfah further stated that statistics from the World Health

Organisation (WHO) show that CVDs are the leading non-communicable diseases and are the foremost cause of death globally, taking an estimated 17.9 million lives each year.

checkups, she had never had the opportunity to get herself screened before, until the gesture by Bond.

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2. Alzheimer's Disease - Inflammation in the brain is a factor... Anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin) decrease inflammation and help suppress Alzheimer's disease.
 3. Anti-biotic induced hearing loss - amino-glycoside anti-biotics combine with Iron in the body to form free radicals which damage cells found in the inner ear. Salicylates prevent the formation of these free radicals and so can be administered along with amino-glycosides to minimize that side effect.
 4. Prostate - Researchers in Mayo clinic in the U.S. have found that aspirin [Micropirin] and indeed other NSAIDS may prevent or delay benign prostatic hyperplasia- a condition of enlarged prostate which may cause urinary symptoms in men as they age. e.g., frequent urination, trouble starting urination, awakening frequently at night to urinate, weak urine stream and urgent need to urinate.
 5. Respiratory system - Medscape medical news in Jan. 2007 published that men taking low dose aspirin every other day have a 22% lower risk of receiving an initial asthma diagnosis. Ref. Am.J.Resp./ critical care med. This means that Micropirin may have a role in the reduction of development of asthma in adult males.
 6. Gynaecology - Aspirin has been shown to lower the risk of pre-eclampsia in pregnant women. Ref. ACOG Journal.

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ADVERSE REACTION/ CONTRA-INDICATIONS

The adverse reactions of high dose aspirin like; tinnitus, dizziness, loss of hearing, nausea, vomiting, dyspepsia, G.I. disturbances etc. have been either minimized or completely eliminated in **MICROPIRIN** firstly because of its low dose, and more importantly by the Technology of enteric coating. The idea is to make **MICROPIRIN** as near perfect as possible. However, there is need for caution in established cases of allergy to aspirin, asthma and stomach bleeding.

Aspirin is generally not recommended for children below the age of 12 years because of the incidence of Reyes syndrome.

Also, **MICROPIRIN** should be used with caution on those taking anti-coagulants and on hemophiliacs. Use during the last months of pregnancy should be monitored.

INTERACTIONS

1. Use with steroids, pyrazolones derivatives like phenylbutazones or alcohol or NSAIDS may increase the risk of G.I. ulceration.
2. Also use with NSAIDS may lower the plasma concentration and therefore the effectiveness of NSAIDS.
3. Micropirin may increase the hypoglycemic action of sulphonylureas when they are used together.
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Celebrating 44 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2023)

continued on page 46

20 skills most successful entrepreneurs have developed

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem
(Continued from last edition)

"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

9. Time management:

Entrepreneurs often have to juggle multiple responsibilities; so effective time management is critical. Negotiation skills are crucial when dealing with various stakeholders, such as suppliers, investors, and partners. Entrepreneurs should aim for mutually beneficial agreements, while maintaining a firm grasp on their own interests and limits.

Risk management:

Successful entrepreneurs take calculated risks and manage them to avoid catastrophic failures. Entrepreneurs are risk-takers by nature, but they also need to assess and manage risks effectively. This involves identifying potential risks, evaluating their impact, and developing mitigation strategies. Diversification of revenue streams and having a contingency plan for unexpected events can reduce the impact of risks.

Creativity and innovation:

Being able to think creatively and come up with innovative solutions can set a business apart from

competitors.

Decision-making:

Entrepreneurs make countless decisions daily, ranging from small operational choices to major strategic moves.

Market research:

Understanding market trends, customer needs, and competition is essential for making informed business decisions.

Technical skills:

Depending on the industry, entrepreneurs may need technical skills related to their products or services.

Customer focus:

Prioritising the needs and feedback of customers is key to building a loyal customer base.

Entrepreneurs often have to juggle multiple responsibilities; so effective time management is critical. Negotiation skills are crucial when dealing with various stakeholders, such as suppliers, investors, and partners. Entrepreneurs should aim for mutually beneficial agreements, while maintaining a firm grasp on their own interests and limits.

Emotional intelligence:

The ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others is valuable in negotiations, team dynamics, and customer relations.

Resilience:

Entrepreneurs often face setbacks and failures, so resilience and the ability to bounce back are crucial.

Salesmanship:

Convincing investors, customers, and partners of the value of their business is a fundamental skill for entrepreneurs.

Delegation:

Knowing when and how to delegate tasks to others is important for efficiency and growth.

Legal and regulatory awareness:

Understanding relevant laws and regulations is necessary to avoid legal issues.



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

These skills are interconnected, and successful entrepreneurs often blend them together to create a solid foundation for their businesses. Additionally, they continually hone these skills through education, experience, and feedback from mentors and peers.

ACTION PLAN: Keep learning new skills necessary for your personal growth and business development. Go for short courses, attend seminars and webinars, read books and articles.

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.hubpharmafrika.com, and the principal consultant of SK Institute, www.sesankareem.com.ng.

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

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Medicines scarcity, poor working environment driving pharmacists out of Nigeria – Anukwu

In this exclusive interview, the immediate past Chairman of the Nigerian Association of Industrial Pharmacists (NAIP) and Chief Operating Officer of Alpha Pharmacy and Stores, Pharm. Ignatius Anukwu, speaks with Moses Dike on the significance of this year's World Pharmacists Day to pharmacy practice globally, with particular emphasis on Nigeria. Excerpts:

What is the significance of this year's World Pharmacists Day to you and why does Alpha Pharmacy and Stores seem to attach much meaning to it?

From a historical perspective, World Pharmacists Day was established by the International Pharmaceutical Federation to be marked every 25 September. And this year, like every other, the FIP selected a theme for the celebration. This year's theme is "Pharmacy Strengthening Health Systems".

For us at Alpha Pharmacy and Stores, this theme resonates with us in the sense that when you cast your mind back to three years ago when we had COVID-19, the health system was challenged. It was pretty much challenged.

Maybe we can take on three dimensions - the availability of medicines and other health commodities, the capacity of the human capital in the healthcare space, and the burden of the disease itself at the time. When you look at what happened in Nigeria and many other countries, the health system, as it was known, was so challenged that, most times, the hospitals could not cope. We had many people trooping to pharmacies and because of the nature of the disease itself, many were scared to go to hospitals in the first place. So many people in the communities depend on pharmacies.

So we found out that the numbers that went to pharmacies for either counselling or to procure their medicines were higher. And we found out that the pharmacies were playing more roles, either in advising the patients or providing immune boosters or giving medications that would help them to manage their circumstances. Also, when the vaccines were available, pharmacies were designated as centres where vaccination would happen.

Now, three years after, a lot of things are being discussed. How can we strengthen the healthcare system, so that, God forbid, should this kind of thing come again, we will be better prepared? It is in light of this that the FIP has chosen this theme. And the summary of what they are saying is that pharmacists can do more. So, stakeholders can demand more from pharmacists.

While we are increasing what we do, we are also making the other healthcare practitioners have more time to do other things. All for the good of the patients. The whole idea is for the patients. So, if we can give more value to the patients and the other healthcare practitioners can give more value to the patient, the patient is winning all the more.

For us at Alpha Pharmacy, this excites us. It gives us a sense of responsibility - that, as pharmacists, we are contributing and are also ready to contribute more. It makes us to dedicate ourselves and recommit ourselves to our calling, to our service, to our profession. We recognise ourselves and we know others recognise us.



Pharm. Ignatius Anukwu

You mentioned that in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health systems were challenged. But for us here in Nigeria, we are witnessing a new sort of challenge, which is the brain drain of healthcare professionals, including pharmacists. In light of the World Pharmacists Day, how would you want government and other stakeholders to look at the plight of health workers, especially pharmacists, and ensure that this post-pandemic brain drain is curbed?

The challenge of brain drain is not only in Nigeria, but it is impacting us more. Why so? Because we have the capacity, the human capital. Our pharmacists can compare to pharmacists all over the world; same goes for other healthcare practitioners. But now, it's like when you have a gradient, there is a flow. So if you have a gradient at a higher level, the water will flow to the lower level. That's also how it's happening.

Now, there is a demand for the services of the pharmacists. Some countries are willing to pay more. Some countries are willing to provide better environments for the pharmacists to work and better tools. And this also presents an opportunity for the pharmacists to go in search of greener pastures and more. So it's a natural thing. People will naturally move.

But the sad thing is, while other nations are building themselves and realising that they need to serve their populations better, we don't seem to be rising to the occasion. Already, in Nigeria, the number of pharmacists per patient is nothing to write home about. We can't even begin to check because we have roughly about 13,000 pharmacists serving over 200 million people.

Now, there are countries that are conscious of this and they do not want that ratio to tip so much.

So they are willing to open their borders and invite well-educated, trained professionals with better capacity to come. Thus, while it's benefiting the West and other countries in Europe, it seems not to be benefiting us. Even some other African countries don't seem to have the number of pharmacists that we have. This is why it is affecting us.

Actually, we should be more conscious of not losing these pharmacists. It takes about 19 years to produce a pharmacist - from primary school to youth service - before he or she will begin to add value to society. So, the fact that you lose an investment of 19 years is not a joke. For example, here in our pharmacy, just in one month, we lost seven pharmacists. They are travelling out of the country. In other months, it could be three or four; but, in August, it was quite high. And there is no end to it because livelihood in Nigeria is getting even more difficult.

Everybody wants the best for himself and his family. So, now, it's no longer something that we can leave for the government alone because, as it seems, government is not even prepared. Government doesn't even seem to have a policy to mitigate this exodus. I don't know if they have even begun to have workshops to think of what to do.

Therefore, my appeal is to the private sector. Let the private sector rise to the occasion. Pharmacists are not only employed in public sector. They're also employed in private sector. Let the private sector begin to see what to do to see that pharmacists are better treated; that they have all the support they need to do their job and do it well.

And it's also not so good that pharmacists who want to serve the community are not able to serve because there is a scarcity of medication. If I'm a pharmacist and people come to see me and

I know what to give them and I don't have it to give them, then I'm not giving them any service. We know that all of this started during COVID. Supply chain was affected. Some countries banned exports to other countries.

In Nigeria, we import almost 70 per cent or more of the medications. Even those we produce in Nigeria, we still import the inputs and the APIs. The availability of the commodities will make the pharmacists more relevant. When you don't have the medicines, pharmacists are not relevant.

I would like to take you back to the issue of pharmaceutical care. Some questions are being asked in some quarters to know if what is referred to as pharmaceutical care is not encroaching into the territory of the medical profession. What's your view on this?

Pharmaceutical care does not encroach into the medical profession in any way. Pharmaceutical care refers to how the pharmacist makes sure that the medication you take is most appropriate for you, and he follows you up to be sure that you are deriving the best benefit from it. The pharmacist helps you through the time that you are taking that medication to see that the untoward effects that may come from the medication are better managed. So pharmaceutical care has nothing to do with any medical profession.

The pharmacist is there to receive prescriptions from the doctor. When the prescription comes from the doctor, he has to evaluate it. And there are some things he checks - such as drug-drug interaction, and drug-food interaction. Then he checks for compatibilities, side effects and all of that.

Now, in dispensing the medication, he also advises the patient on how to take the medication. He lets the patient know the side effects he may be experiencing and what to do when those side effects happen. He is also going to tell the patient to comply with the dosage, and what the outcome of such will be. He can also follow up with the patient. Sometimes, by checking on the patient, he may be able to have something to discuss with the doctor. For instance, "Can you consider some other medications that can still deliver the same value but with reduced side effects?" So, it has nothing to do with the job of the medic.

One of the things that have resonated seriously during our interaction with pharmacists and patients is the high cost of drugs. Now that we are talking about strengthening the healthcare system and drugs is a major

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Bridging medical supplies gap in Nigeria requires multi-faceted approach - Mezu-Nwaba

Dr Nina Mezu-Nwaba, is a pharmacist and captain with the United States Public Health Service. She is the deputy office director in the office of Neurological and Physical Medicine Devices, Centre for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She has over 27 years of experience and over 22 years of clinical, scientific, and regulatory experience at the FDA, Centres for Disease Control (CDC), Indian Health Service (IHS), and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). She has also served as the deputy programme director for ASPR/CDC White House COVID Testing Task Force, where she played a critical role in establishing COVID test sites in New York during the Omicron surge and other public health emergencies.

In this exclusive interview with **Temitope Obayendo**, she recommends ways to tackle the medical equipment shortage challenge in the Nigerian healthcare system. She also acknowledges the critical roles of pharmacists in the healthcare landscape, urging the Nigerian government to emulate the example of the United States government in having greater engagement with pharmacists for patients' best outcomes. Excerpts:

Kindly share with us crucial impacts you have made in your roles over the years.

I established FDA's Opioid Overdose Response and Naloxone training and continue to serve as the lead coordinator for the training team. We have trained over 7000 people globally since 2018, and partner with health departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide free naloxone.

My innovative approach to healthcare has resulted in several firsts, including conducting the first opioid overdose response and naloxone training in Pikesville Rotary Club in Maryland, USA (2018) and Abuja, Nigeria (2019). I also conducted cardiopulmonary resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator training in USA and Nigeria.

I mentor and teach over 300 pharmacy students and interns annually on FDA regulations and pharmacy practice; and I also work with high school students to provide health education and guidance on career choices. As the President of Pikesville Rotary Club, I co-led projects to provide essential supplies (care packages) to sick children, benefiting over 500 patients.

Over the past 20 years, I have conducted and organised numerous medical missions and health fairs in both the United States and Nigeria, benefitting over 2500 people annually. I have also collaborated with the United States Pharmacopeia to train regulators from various African countries on medical device regulations.

Outside of professional pursuits, I enjoy cooking, travelling, mentoring, volunteering, and spending time with family. I am one of ten children of Dr S. Okechukwu Mezu and Prof. Dr Rose Ure Mezu, and have been married for 29 years to Edward Nwaba. We have four highly accomplished adult children - Dr Adaure, Edward (Jr) Esq., Dr Amanda and Ginika - with careers in medicine, public health, and law.

I have received numerous awards for contributions to public health, including the Surgeon General's Exemplary Medal, Outstanding Service Medal, PHS Commendation Medals, Citations from FDA, and awards from Maryland Governor, senators, congressmen, Rotary International, and other local and international organisations.

You are a pharmacist and a captain. What informed your decision for the two professions?

Certainly, my decision to pursue both professions of



Dr Nina Mezu-Nwaba

pharmacist and an officer in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps was informed by my passion for community service and a strong commitment to public health. After being offered a job at the FDA as a civilian, I received a call from a former classmate at the University of Maryland Pharmacy School, inviting me to join the USPHS Commissioned Corps. He described it as a pharmacist's best-kept secret and emphasised its commitment to the service of health. Given my deep-rooted dedication to community service, the decision was clear for me.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps stands as a vital voice for the Federal Government on public health priorities. Led by the US Surgeon General, this distinguished group is tasked with safeguarding, promoting, and advancing the health of our nation and it is one of the eight uniformed services. The USPHS Commissioned Corps has approximately 6,000 highly skilled public health professionals who serve underserved and vulnerable populations both within the United

States and internationally.

The Corps comprises professionals from diverse backgrounds, including dentists, physicians, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, veterinarians, and other health specialists. Notably, our roles are twofold: we engage in work at government agencies while also being available for activation to respond to public health emergencies, both domestically and internationally.

USPHS officers have been at the forefront of critical efforts, such as combating the spread of Ebola in West Africa, responding to the devastation brought about by hurricanes like Harvey, Irma, Maria, Michael, and Florence, and playing a pivotal role in containing the spread of the Coronavirus.

In essence, my decision to pursue both professional pathways was driven by the opportunity to combine my expertise as a pharmacist with my dedication to service in a capacity that allows me to contribute significantly to the health and well-being of communities, particularly those that are underserved and in need

of care. I am a huge advocate for preventive care. I believe in health education being the key to reducing negative effects of health.

How would you describe the place of medical devices in healthcare system?

Medical devices play a fundamental role within the healthcare system, permeating various aspects of our daily lives. From the moment we wake up until we retire for the night, we interact with multiple medical devices.

To fully grasp the significance of medical devices, it's essential to provide a comprehensive definition of what they encompass. According to the U.S. FDA, a product qualifies as a medical device and falls under FDA regulation if it meets the criteria set forth in Section 201(h) of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. This Act defines a medical device as "an instrument, apparatus, machine, implant, in vitro reagent, or a related article, including its components or accessories, that fits one or more of the following criteria - (a) recognised in official reference sources like the National Formulary or the United States Pharmacopoeia, or supplements to them; (b) intended for use in diagnosing diseases or conditions, as well as in curing, mitigating, treating, or preventing diseases in humans or animals; three, intended to affect the structure or function of the body or other animals, and which does not achieve its primary intended purposes through chemical action within or on the body of man or other animals and which is not dependent upon being metabolised for the achievement of its primary intended purposes. The term "device" does not include software functions excluded pursuant to section 520(o)."

Given this definition, a lot of everyday items fall within the scope of medical devices, ranging from thermometers and blood pressure kits, to syringes, drug/device combination products, testing kits for various ailments, and even hospital beds. Transitioning to healthcare settings, medical devices drive the medical interventions critical to life, spanning from life-sustaining tools to devices for acute and chronic treatments.

For instance, within the neurological and physical medicine device arena, one encounters critical devices designed to address conditions such as stroke, embolism, depression, and seizures. Even the essential tool of wheelchairs falls within this category. Therefore, the landscape of medical devices extends beyond mere instruments; it encompasses a vast array of technologies that collectively enhance patient care, contribute to diagnoses, enable treatments, and ultimately improve quality of life.

From your years of experience, how can the Nigerian healthcare system be adequately equipped with medical equipment, as it is practiced in advanced climes?

Nigerian healthcare system can be adequately equipped with medical equipment, similar to practices in developed countries,

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Okpa: More than just a delicacy

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



Vigna Subterranea

Okpa is a delicacy that is popular in eastern Nigeria. It is made with Bambara nuts or Bambara beans. Being one of the healthy snacks available in Nigeria, *okpa*, as it is called in Igbo language, is known as *epa-roro* in Yoruba, and *kwaruru* or *gurjiya* in Hausa. It is also called "lion's food" or "the king's meal".

Constituents

Okpa is rich in crude protein (amino acids, such as lysine, valine), carbohydrate, fibre and energy. It is said to contain vitamins and minerals such as calcium, potassium, phosphorus, manganese, iron, magnesium, fluoride, zinc, selenium, sodium and copper.

Preparations

Okpa is available as the dried nuts, which may be boiled or roasted. It is popularly eaten and sold as the nuts pudding, which is cooked using the steaming method. It is also available in powder form, which can be used to thicken soups.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses

Okpa is a source of protein in the diet of predominantly vegetarian people. It is said to boost blood level, prevent bone diseases, boost the immune system, help to prevent cancer, and eliminate insomnia.

The valine in *okpa* not only aids in the healthy growth of children, normal regulation of the immune system and the body's nitrogen, but also in the management of stress, repairs of the tissues of the muscles, and increase in metabolism. Because of its high content of all the essential nutrients needed in food, it helps in the prevention of malnutrition and other health problems such as kwashiorkor and rickets, which are triggered or caused by poor and inadequate dieting.

Okpa helps in digestion and serves as an appetite suppressant, which is good for weight management (weight loss). It also helps in reducing the chances of getting cancer and other health issues because of the presence of antioxidants that protect the body from harmful food chemicals.

The minerals contained in the Bambara nuts/pudding (*okpa*) such as calcium, protect the body from bone diseases, such as arthritis, osteoporosis, among others. Lysine, a constituent

of *okpa*, helps in the proper absorption of calcium in the body.

Other health benefits of *okpa* include prevention of diarrhoea and other irritable bowel movement syndromes,

regulation of the menstrual flow - which includes both prolonged and heavy

flow cycles, management of ulcers, lowering "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, promoting child development, and serving as a healthy food for toddlers.

Adverse effects

Although this food crop has no known negative effects, excessive intake can lead to weight gain.

Economic uses and potentials

Okpa is an important component of animal feed and a major source of biological nitrogen fixation in a cropping system. Studies revealed that an estimated 0.2 million tonnes of Bambara groundnut was produced globally in 2018 production year; a larger proportion of this was from West African countries, with a total production of 0.14 million tonnes from an estimated area of

0.18 million hectares. Presently, one paint bucket (about 3kg) of Bambara nuts costs N6,000 -N7,000; a pack of 500g costs N2,000.

A study in southeastern Nigeria showed that *okpa* processing in the area is profitable, with respondents making an average of N4,450.00 per day. *Okpa* has the potential to improve food security in Nigeria. There are potentials in the cultivation, processing, distribution and sales of *okpa* for the agricultural, transport, food and pharmaceutical industries.

It is recommended that government should invest more in *okpa* cultivation, processing and research. This will boost food and job security nationwide.

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Healthcare providers task Lagos govt on full implementation of NHIA Act

- Say providers must be remunerated adequately and timely

By Adebayo Oladejo

Healthcare providers, under the aegis of the Healthcare Providers Association of Nigeria (HCPAN), Lagos State Chapter, have tasked the Lagos State Ministry of Health and the Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA) to fully commit to implementing the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Act 2022 and the LSHS Act 2015, especially by improving and harnessing private sector participation.

The professionals gave the charge at the recent HCPAN Scientific Conference and Annual General Meeting, held at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Alausa, Lagos, with the theme, "Advancing Health Insurance Uptake Towards Universal Health Coverage: Collaborative Role of Healthcare Providers."

In her opening speech at the AGM, Chairman of the association, Pharm. Abiola Paul-Ozieh, noted that health insurance has the potential to redeem the comatose health sector in Nigeria, if well managed, saying Lagos State, as the "Centre of Excellence", occupies a crucial position in the realisation of this goal.

Speaking further, the HCPAN boss noted that in terms of access to healthcare, private health facilities account for about 60 per cent of services provided in the country, stressing that this shows that the group plays a crucial role in the health sector, through ensuring accessibility to healthcare services.

Speaking on the theme of the Conference, Paul-Ozieh stressed that Nigeria is committed to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) within the shortest possible time, adding that UHC, which is currently a global trend, has been identified as a major strategy for improving health outcomes, as well as ensuring the sustainability of such improvements and accelerating overall socio-economic development.

According to her, "A key thrust in UHC is that individuals should be able to access healthcare regardless of their ability to pay, which implies protection from the financial risk of being ill."

While advocating continuous quality improvement of the LSHS to ensure more coverage, better quality services and patient satisfaction, the HCPAN boss pledged the group's unwavering support to the state government for positive contribution, collaboration and cooperation towards the realisation of UHC in the state. She added that, as healthcare providers, they hope for better health services and health outcomes for a robust, integrated public-private sector contribution.

Paul-Ozieh further said, "We posit that healthcare providers must be remunerated according



Dr Victor J.K. Benebo, the keynote speaker (middle), receiving an award plaque from Pharm. Madehin Gafar, national treasurer, PSN, and Pharm. (Mrs) Abiola Paul-Ozieh, chairman, HCPAN.

to their services adequately and timely, and we also posit that for a robust health system and implementation of Lagos State Health Scheme or Insurance, there must be segregation of facilities into primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities. Also, for effective and efficient delivery of healthcare services, we posit that there must be separation of professional roles."

In his keynote address, Dr Victor J.K. Benebo, the pioneering Managing Director, Phillips Health Management Services Limited, noted that the new NHIA Act 2022 has given a significant impetus towards the attainment of UHC, saying it is an improvement to the NHIA Act 2004, which was generally perceived by health sector stakeholders as having a legally weak framework.

He further noted that the new NHIA Act is a critical aspect of the needed reform in healthcare financing in Nigeria, stressing that if well implemented, it has the potential to reduce OOP expenditure from the current 77 per cent to 30 per cent, which is one of the goals of UHC.

Speaking on the roles of the healthcare providers in driving UHC, Benebo stated that healthcare is majorly driven by the private sector, which serves as the first port of call for over 80 per cent of patients, adding that in total, the private sector currently accounts for around 65-70 per cent of all healthcare provision in Nigeria.

According to Benebo, "Innovative partnerships and collaborations between stakeholders have proven to be effective in addressing challenges facing the healthcare system, and the importance of continued collaboration between all players within the health ecosystem remains critical to the attainment of Universal Health coverage.

"Therefore, collectively, we must recognise and support the role of innovation, enabling strong health systems and multi-stakeholder partnerships to improve readiness, resilience and the country's future health security."

Other stakeholders present at the programme were Mr Tosin Awosika, consultant to LASHMA; Dr Gloria Okoekhian, chairman, Nigeria Optometric Association; Pharm. Lawrence Ekhator, chairman, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria; Dr Remi Durojaiye, chairman, Nigerian Society of Physiotherapists; Dr Afolabi Ogunderu, chairman, Association of Private Dental Practitioner of Nigeria; Abimbola Adekoya, Chairman, Guild of Medical Laboratory Directors; Olawale Oladapo, chairman, Association of General Private Nursing Practitioners; Dr Makinde Akinlemibola,

chairman, Association of Nigeria Private Medical Practitioners, as well as operators of Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs), medical practitioners, pharmacists, and laboratory scientists, among others

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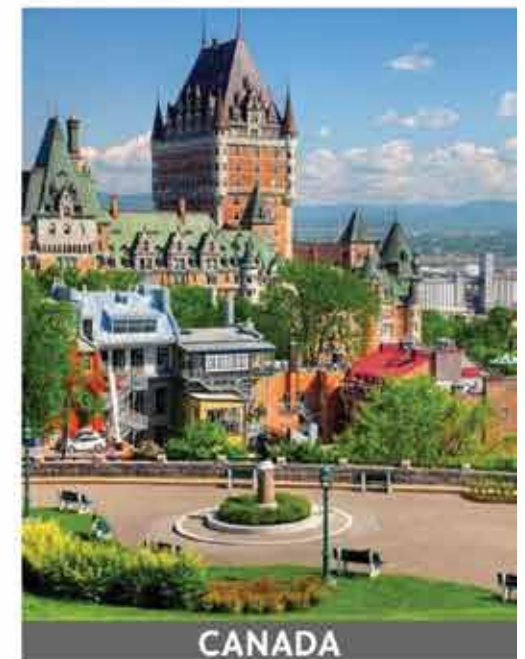



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Iyiola, others task healthcare providers on preventive care, selfless service

- As Folasade Lawal marks 60th birthday

By Adebayo Oladejo

The immediate past Chairman, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Lagos State Branch, Pharm. Iyiola Gbolagade, has lent his voice to the call on healthcare practitioners across the country to prioritise preventive healthcare.

Speaking at the 60th birthday ceremony of Pharm. Folasade Olufunke Lawal, founder, Victory Drugs Limited, held at the Church of the Pentecost Hall, Festac, Lagos, Iyiola averred that the aim of preventive care is to prevent a disease from occurring, or reduce its progression and impact, if it does occur.

The former PSN boss further urged healthcare providers to emulate the uncommon dedication of the birthday celebrant, by embracing preventive care, adding that the celebrant is not just a gift to her family, but to the pharmacy profession.

The glitzy ceremony, which was well-attended by healthcare providers, featured free medical consultation, health education, cardiovascular risk assessment, blood pressure and blood sugar check, anthropometry, mental health, wealth creation and vaccine education to guests numbering over 200.

Iyiola, who eulogised Lawal's contributions to community



Pharm. Mrs Folasade Lawal

pharmacy practice in the country, said the Victory Drugs boss is a pioneer of what could be called community pharmacy impact practice, saying she takes rendering pharmaceutical services to people beyond merchandise.

He continued, "Pharm. Lawal has impacted lives, and looking at the way she decided to celebrate her birthday, you would notice that it was a unique way. A lot of people have celebrated

birthdays of this nature by going to one of the exotic halls to party and make merry, but she preferred to touch lives with her birthday by embracing preventive care, as against pump and pageantry. This is highly commendable."

Expressing similar sentiments, Dr (Mrs) Mesiana Ekanem, an anaesthetist and critical care expert, who was one of the experts at the medical screening, described the celebrant as a bundle of knowledge, who is

very passionate about preventive healthcare provision.

According to Ekanem, "She has a unique way of relating with her patients. She follows them up once they have been diagnosed and if there is a need for them to be referred, she would do that."

"I got to know her about three years ago and the first thing that struck me about her was that she knows everything and she has an answer to every question, not just a solution, but an accurate one. To the extent that she relates with all members of the healthcare team freely."

In an emotion-laden voice, Dr Ilerioluwa Lawal, one of the children of the celebrant, who also participated in the free medical screening, described Lawal as someone who is favourably disposed to collaboration and peaceful coexistence, as against confrontation and rivalry, in the healthcare sector. He described her as an amazing person professionally and as a mother.

In his words, "She is the kind of person who can bring all healthcare providers, including doctors, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, nurses and others under the same roof and help them to coexist and see things from each other's perspectives; which is exactly what we need in the healthcare industry, rather than seeing people who should

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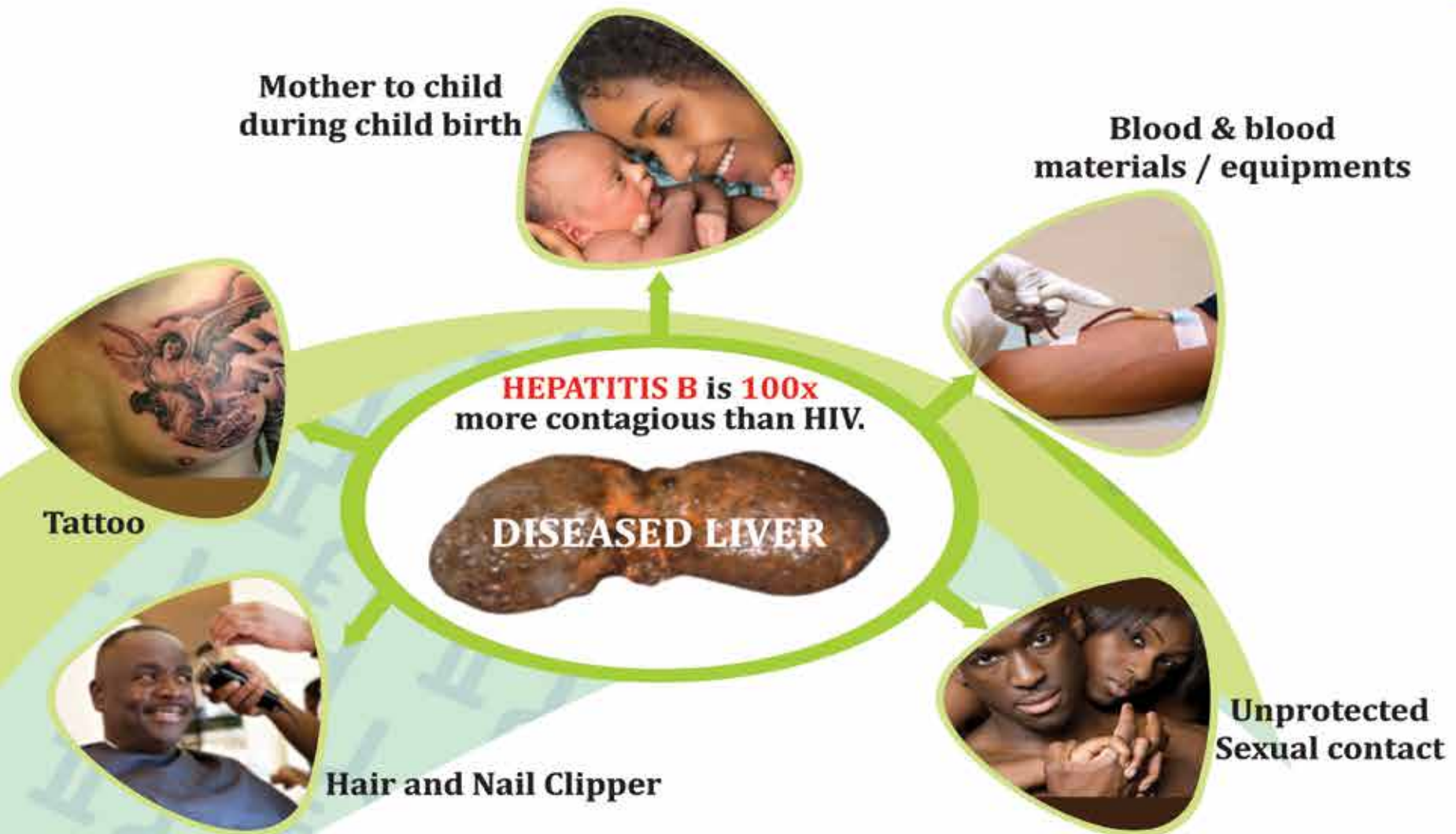
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Iyiola, others task healthcare providers on preventive care, selfless service



Pharm. (Mrs) Folasade Lawal, celebrant (middle), flanked by two of her children, Oluwatobi Lawal (left), and Dr Ilerioluwa Lawal (right), at the occasion.

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be working together fighting one another.”

The younger Lawal, who has just completed his internship at the Lagos State University Teaching

Hospital, noted that Mrs Lawal can be adamant, when it comes to the things she believes in. He cited the birthday celebration, as an example, saying she had vehemently rejected the idea to throw a lavish birthday party for

her, while opting instead for free medical screening and ensuring that the event successfully held.

In her remarks, the celebrant recalled an event in 2018, when she was diagnosed with a tumour in her colon, which was later found to be cancer after removal. She

said it was great news for her that it was discovered at an early stage, stressing that the experience further fuelled her passion for preventive health.

According to her, “That is one of the reasons we have a table on colon health at the fair and we have experts to talk to people about it. I decided to invest more in preventive healthcare. Mine was divine, so the best is to catch it early because it takes up to 10 years for it to develop into cancer, so the best is to catch it early.”

Lawal, who was full of smiles, further said, rather than engaging in jamboree, she always looks out for opportunities to preach preventive health and do very productive things.

“I just want something that will better impact people, because if I throw a party today, people would come but what happens after eating and drinking? They all go home and forget about today. In fact, they might eat what they are not supposed to eat. So I’d rather organise activities that impact people positively,” she said.

Medicines scarcity, poor working environment driving pharmacists out of Nigeria – Anukwu

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component of the healthcare system, how do we enhance the availability and affordability of drugs, especially in Nigeria?

This is purely economics. In this country, about eight or nine years ago, the naira was about 167 to a dollar. Today it’s hitting N1000 to a dollar. If you have a medication that we are not able to produce in Nigeria and have to import, and the cost of that medication is one pound or one dollar, what it means is that, nine years ago, it would have been sold at about N200 – which includes consideration of tariff, customs duty, freight etc. And, maybe, by the time it moves from the wholesaler, to the retailer, to the consumer, there is another N100 added. So that makes it about N300 Naira.

Now, let’s consider the present – one dollar is 1000 naira. By the time the drug gets into Nigeria, it is 2000 naira. By the time it gets to the patient, it will be 3000 naira. The same one dollar. Therefore, it’s not that the pharmacist has anything he’s doing with the medication; it’s just economic factors. And it’s quite painful that even as the cost of things are going up, the people who need them do not earn in that way.

It’s affecting all of us because nobody is earning at the rate that inflation is going. So it’s a natural thing that you now begin to choose what you have to spend your money on. This means that, if people are not so critically ill, they may choose not to spend, or they may look for different brands or whatever.

However, if these medications are produced in Nigeria, because of the local content, they can become cheaper and more affordable. So, government should encourage the pharmaceutical sector to produce more in Nigeria. And then also, by the grace of God, if our economy improves, the prices of these medications will come down.

Bridging medical supplies gap in Nigeria requires multi-faceted approach - Mezu-Nwaba

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by adopting a multi-faceted approach and collaboration among various stakeholders. This includes engaging with local and international manufacturers to build capacity, working with other regulatory agencies with proven record, forging partnerships with international organisations and NGOs, developing strategic procurement strategies. While the FDA is a regulatory agency in the United States, its practices can serve as a model for ensuring the quality, safety, and effectiveness of medical devices.

Another avenue to achieve this objective is by establishing a robust regulatory framework, with adequate oversight, throughout the lifecycle of the products.

More often than none, medical practitioners in Nigeria complain of shortage of equipment for practice. In what ways will this affect healthcare delivery system?

The shortage of medical equipment can significantly impact healthcare delivery and patient outcomes. Identifying the underlying causes of shortages is crucial. Healthcare systems in countries should conduct shortage assessments to enhance capacity and establish a resilient system for sourcing alternatives when needed. They should also engage with government and regulatory bodies.

Proactive measures are essential to mitigate the impact of equipment shortages and ensure high-quality patient care. The COVID pandemic highlighted the importance of innovative thinking, where healthcare systems managed to provide critical care, even with limited resources and overwhelmed facilities. This adaptability included strategies such as sharing ventilators amidst the life-threatening challenges posed by the pandemic.

It has been observed that most medical devices are beyond the reach of the poor. In case of an accident that renders a poor patient incapacitated, requiring medical device as aid, what can such a person do?

In the scenario described, it depends on what medical devices are needed to intervene. Providing medical care to underserved and socially vulnerable communities is a concern in both developing and developed countries. Many non-governmental organisations and individuals have formed partnerships and endeavoured to bridge the gap by providing free medical missions and donations of medicines and medical equipment to target communities. Most of these free medical missions are announced on the radio and various social media and through the community leaders. Although not a perfect solution, but these are ways to trickle down the much-needed services.

For poor patients in need of medical devices, options include seeking help from NGOs and medical missions, staying informed through community announcements, utilising local clinics and health facilities, exploring government healthcare initiatives, relying on donations and charitable contributions, and advocating for policy changes.

As a clinician, what is your view on pharmacists’ participation in patients’ treatment care?

Pharmacists’ participation in patient care is forward-thinking and impactful. Their clinical training and accessibility make them valuable frontline healthcare providers. By engaging pharmacists in patient care, hospitalisations and costs can be reduced while improving outcomes.

Pharmacists contribute to immunisation, disease-monitoring, and play vital roles

in healthcare delivery and preventive health education. In the USA, pharmacists played critical roles during the COVID pandemic, from immunisation, to testing, to treatment. This enhances healthcare access, eases hospital burden, and ultimately saves lives.

Having practised for over 27 years, what are the grey areas in the profession that you feel should be addressed in countries like Nigeria?

In developing countries, there are several areas in the pharmacy profession that require attention and improvement. Learning is a continuous process and continued collaboration with organisations, such as Nigerian Association of Pharmacist and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, pharmacy schools, and regulatory bodies, is crucial for addressing these challenges.

Sharing best practices through ongoing education, workshops, seminars, and conferences can help bridge gaps in areas of concern and contribute to the advancement of the profession. Learning and adapting from one another ensures mutual benefit and enhances the overall quality of pharmacy services in these regions.

How would you advise young pharmacists aspiring to be like you?

My advice to young pharmacists aspiring to follow a similar path is to discover and pursue their passion within the field. Embrace continuous learning and strive to become a well-rounded pharmacist. Having a diverse skill set will empower you to address a wide range of challenges and questions that may arise in your career. Enjoy the journey, stay dedicated to your goals, and make a positive impact in healthcare.

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Ignorance almost made me miss studying Pharmacy – President, PANS-UNIPOINT

By Adebayo Oladejo

In this exclusive interview, President of the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria Students (PANS), University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Paul Chisom Festus, speaks on the intricacies of combining politics with academics as a pharmacy student in Nigeria. He also recounts his foray into Pharmacy, as well as the achievements of his administration. Excerpts:

Many students studying Pharmacy claim to have initially opted for Medicine. Is this true for you too?

Somehow, but not exactly so. After my senior secondary school certificate exams in 2013, my teacher advised me to apply for Medicine and Surgery. I was the best science student in my set and we had little knowledge about what Pharmacy was all about. I applied for Medicine and Surgery at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, with an average score of 240, but I failed to gain admission. Thereafter, I accepted admission into Federal Polytechnic, Nekede.

Fortunately, I got to know about Pharmacy in 2016, from a medical doctor, who was a Corps member, at the hospital where I worked during my compulsory one-year industrial training. After that, I applied for Pharmacy directly and got in.

It can be tough combining studies with active involvement in other activities, how have you been coping as the president?

Well, it's evident in my results. I was a very excellent student in my 100 and 200 Level days, when my life was just all about school.

However, after my dad's death in 2019, which necessitated my taking up responsibilities in the family as the first son, and also my getting increasingly involved in politics and extracurricular activities, my grades dropped.

Since I'm naturally a good student, I will always find ways to do well but you know, the grades can never remain the same. Still, I am coping well.

What achievements have you recorded so far?

As the 14th executive president of PANS-UNIPOINT, my administration has recorded a lot of achievements, but I will mention just some of them. We secured the position of the students' union medical director, a position that had never been held by a pharmacy student in our school. Others include provision of teaching aids in classrooms to make lectures easier for students and lecturers; conducting free tutorials for students in 100 and 200 Levels, to ensure that they get a smooth sail in pharmacy school; introduction of an essay competition, tagged Poly-Mbah Essay Competition, with a prize

worth over 200,000 naira, for the students

Also, with the support of the PANS-UNIPOINT public health team and the supervision of pharmacists, we conducted a malaria outreach at the famous Choba Junction, where we reached out to over 200 residents with free malaria drugs, free malaria testing, routine drugs and health information. Also, through the office of the Director of Welfare, in collaboration with the Association of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs), Rivers State Chapter, we conducted a "Pad A Girl Programme", in two secondary schools around the university.

In addition, we gave out over 200 free sanitary pads to female pharmacy students in 100 and 200 Levels. We also introduced the maiden edition of the Lecturers' Appreciation Day, on 6 October, 2023, among several other achievements.

Are there peculiar challenges associated with studying Pharmacy in UNIPOINT?

Well, the only challenge I know of, which is not peculiar to us in



Paul Chisom Festus

UNIPOINT, is the lack of enough time to assimilate the numerous bulky materials available to us as pharmacy students.

Student molestation and "sex for grades" are significant issues in universities. How would you react to this as it affects the Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIPOINT?

It is alien to us here. I have never seen or heard of such.

Where do you see PANS-UNIPOINT in the next five years?

I see PANS becoming a chapter of reference in the country and an association where the student-lecturer relationship is further strengthened.

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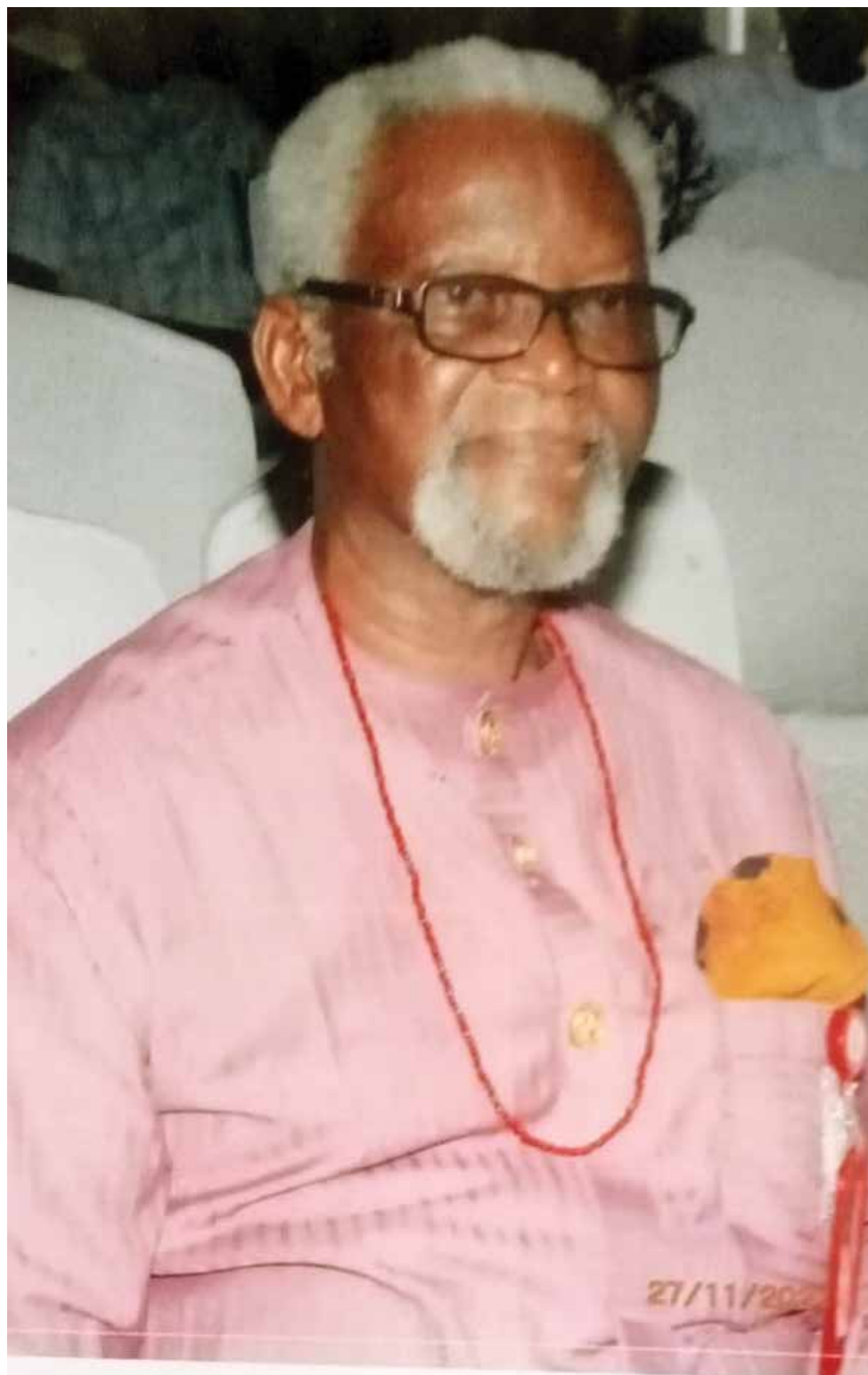
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....Championing Healthy Living

Becoming a pharmacist is fulfilment of my lifetime dream - Nwoke

Pharm. Dick Nwoke is a nonagenarian pharmacist and community leader, with many years of experience in pharmaceutical marketing, teaching and community service. In this interview with **Pharmanews**, Nwoke talks about his education, career and community service. From His wealth of experience, he also offers valuable lessons to the younger generation on how to make the best use of their calling as healthcare practitioners. Excerpts:



Pharm. Dick Ihegaranya Nwoke

It is our pleasure to welcome you to our Senior Citizen column. Kindly tell us about yourself, your early childhood, education and the events that have helped to shape your adult personality.

Thank you very much for this opportunity. My name is Dick Ihegaranya Nwoke. I was born in November 1933, into the royal family of Paramount Chief Onyekwere and Ugoeze Nworinma Nwokehuru, of Amachara, Umuopara, Umuahia.

I had my elementary education at three different Methodist primary schools. These were Amachara Infant School, from 1944 to 1945; Umuopara Central School, Umuabali, from 1946 to 1950; and Umukabia Central School, where I obtained my First School

Leaving Certificate in 1951.

I gained admission into Methodist College, Uzuakoli, in 1952, and successfully completed my secondary education in 1956. My five year stay at the college was eventful, gainful and memorable, in terms of academic grooming, leadership experience and quality discipline.

I held several leadership positions while at Uzuakoli. I was assistant house prefect of Aggrey House in 1955, and later became the senior prefect of the college as a Form 5 student in 1956, even though there were seniors in HSC class that same year. As a senior prefect, I worked under the highly disciplined Mr W.H Spray, a retired British soldier, who was the principal at that time. I am glad to say that studying at the college, which we fondly called

“UZUMECO”, for short, was one of the early favours of God, for which I remain eternally grateful.

I gained admission into the University of Ife in 1964 to study Pharmacy and graduated in 1972, having spent three years out of school, as result of the civil war. While at Ife, I was a member of the Students Union parliament and vice president of the union for the 1964/1965 academic session.

How did you come about Pharmacy as a course of study, especially in those days when there were few or no role models? Did you have any role models in your younger days who guided you to make the choice? If you were not a pharmacist, what else would you have loved to become?

In 1962, having obtained my A Level papers, I got a job with Pfizer Pharmacy Company at Aba. I served under Pharmacist

Emmanuel N. Achara, who had studied Pharmacy in Nottingham, UK. Working under Pharmacist Achara spiked my interest in Pharmacy. I must also add that one of my seniors in my hometown, Pharm. Dick O. Onuigbo, who ran a popular pharmacy, called “Urban Chemists, Aba”, had a strong stimulating influence, which was equally catalytic in my choice of Pharmacy as a profession.

Tell us about your work experience, and which employment you found most interesting.

My work experience started before I became a graduate pharmacist. I had a stint of teaching at Ibadan Grammar School, under Rev. A. A. Alayande, as principal, in 1958. I also taught at Abeokuta Grammar School in 1959, under Rev. O. Oni, while preparing for my G.C.E A Levels.

After graduation in 1972, I took up appointment as a medical rep at a Swiss pharmaceutical company, called Ciba-Geigy, in 1973. I was there till 1980. During this period, I attended several training courses, both within and outside Nigeria. Also, during that time, I won the CIBA Prize for the best rep in West Africa and earned a three-week holiday to Switzerland. I rose to become a manager in CIBA before leaving the company in

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New Heights pharmaceuticals Ltd, a leading healthcare company, and the official business partners of OMRON Healthcare BV Europe in Nigeria, in conjunction with Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) Lagos state branch organized a free training program for Pharmacists under the Omron Academy platform on current trend in managing hypertension and cardiovascular risks associated with high blood pressure. This event held at Ikeja, country club on the 17th of October, 2023. The theme for the training is "Modern Trend in Hypertension Management".

Mr. Ebenezer Olayinka, Head of Business development of New Heights Pharmaceutical Ltd speaking to Pharmanews during the training, said that "OMRON has in the past partnered with the leading medical societies to develop the content for continued training and development for healthcare professionals (Physicians, Pharmacists, Nurses and other healthcare providers) every medical society has a medical board that has reviewed and approved the content. Our cardiovascular courses are endorsed by the following leading medical societies:

European Society of Hypertension, International Society of Hypertension, British and Irish Hypertension Society, Atemwegsliga (Germany), German Hypertension Society (DHL), Egyptian Hypertension Society and Most, importantly Nigerian Cardiovascular Society", he said.

Pharm. Omaruaye CEO of New Heights Pharmaceuticals speaking at the event encouraged Pharmacist to promote the use of only clinically validated medical devices by Nigerians when checking their numbers in the management of high blood pressure.

Below are some of the highlights of the event.



Pharm Ogheneochuko Omaruaye, Chief Executive Officer, New Heights Pharma Ltd



A cross-section of dignitaries; participants; facilitators & staff of NHP



L-R: Mr Obinna Okechukwu, West Africa Sales Manager Omron; Mr Olayinka Ebenezer, Head of Business Dev & Strategy (NHP); Dr Ramon Moronkola, Consultant Cardiologist (Facilitator); Pharm Folasade Lawal, (Facilitator); Pharm Shina Opanubi, (Facilitator); Pharm Omaruaye, CEO, New Heights Pharm



A cross-section of dignitaries and some of the participants during the training



some staff members of New Heights Pharma



A cross-section of some participants at the training



A cross section of dignitaries, facilitators and some of the participants at the training



L-R: Mr Obinna Okechukwu, West Africa Sales Manager (Omron); Mr Olayinka Ebenezer, Head of Business Dev & Strategy (NHP); Pharm Boluke Adeyeye, CEO Boluke Pharmacy; Pharm Lawrence Ehkartor, ACPN chairman, Lagos; Pharm Omeire Dorcas, Unilag Med; Dr Ramon Moronkola, Consultant Cardiologist (Facilitator); Pharm Folasade Lawal, (Facilitator); Pharm Shina Opanubi, (Facilitator); Pharm Omaruaye, CEO, New Heights Pharm

The annual conference of the Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA) was held in Columbus, Ohio, USA, from 20 to 24 September, 2023. Below are pictures from the event:



L-R: Dr Deanna L Kroetz, dean of the School of Pharmacy, Ohio State University, Receiving a copy of NAPPSA's American Journal of Pharmacotherapy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (AJPPS) from Dr Teresa Pounds; and Dr Tony Ikeme.



L-R: Dr Deanna L Kroetz, The Dean of the School of Pharmacy, Ohio State University; Pharm. Emma Ezirim; Dr Teresa Pounds; Dr Tony Ikeme; Pharm Kenechi Ibe.



A cross-section of the participants at the 5k Run.



A cross-section of participants at the 5k Run.



L-R: Prof. Ahmed Mora; Dr Obi Adigwe; Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed; Pharm. (Mrs) Stella Aribiana and Prof. Azuka Oparah.



L-R: Pharm. Adolphus Akaniru; Mrs Maureen Akaniru; Dr Teresa Pounds; Dr Nina Mezu-Nwaba; Dr Anayo Ukeje; and Dr Angela Kanu, during the 5K Run.

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ACPN, Simba sign MoU for provision of solar power to community pharmacies

By Adebayo Oladejo

To ensure that its members across the nation have uninterrupted access to electricity supply, the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Simba Power, a subsidiary of Simba Group.

Speaking at the signing of the MoU at the Simba Group corporate head office, in Lagos, the National Chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, said the goal of the agreement was to ensure that community pharmacists continue to provide top-notch services to the community that they serve, especially with regard to the storage of sensitive products, adding that it is important that community pharmacies have steady power supply throughout the day.

According to him, "We have signed this agreement with them to the extent that pharmacists can sign up for 1.5KVA, 3KVA and 5KVA solar generators, such that with stable power supply, cold chains of sensitive products are not broken, which is important to us. And whenever routine immunization comes to community pharmacy, we also know that this is an essential key provision, as it is one of the key infrastructural demands for community pharmacists in Nigeria."

He added, "Energy cost has gone up; the prices of petrol and diesel have gone up. That's one of the push factors for us to sign this agreement. Secondly, if we must protect the environment, we have to look for alternative means of generating power that will not pollute the environment. Thirdly, one of the most important pushes is the fact that it will affect the profitability of our members positively. However, the last push factor is the fact that



L-R: Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN, and Mr Ravi Srivastava, business head, Simba Power, at the signing of the MoU for the provision of solar power to community pharmacies.

we want vaccination to take place in community pharmacies and, to do that, they must be able to provide adequate storage conditions for the vaccines."

When asked about affordability, Oladigbolu noted that while the initial cost may appear huge, the association has provisions in place to accommodate everybody.

"We have two categories for the inverters, in terms of battery; and in each of these two categories, we have three subcategories. We have 1.5KVA, which is the lowest, for about a million naira. Although it appears expensive, what the association intends to do is

to break down the cost, so that the huge sum does not come out of our members' pockets," he said.

The ACPN helmsman further said: "We are rendering innovative solutions to the issue of the cost and by virtue of that, we will be able to put things in place to absorb the initial shock of the cost. We are critically looking for banks that can give us huge sums of money to procure in bulk; and if we succeed, we can spread the money for our members."

On his part, the Power Business Head of Simba Power, Mr Ravi Srivastava, noted that the company is the leading name in Nigeria's power

solutions landscape, adding that the strategic partnership with the ACPN is rooted in a shared commitment to enhancing the well-being of Nigerians.

According to him, "By providing pharmacists with reliable power solutions, we ensure they can consistently serve their communities, contributing to improved health outcomes and overall well-being nationwide."

Srivastava further remarked that ACPN has a vast network of pharmacists working across Nigeria, while Simba has adequate experience in the field of selling and distributing power products like inverters, batteries, solar panels, solar inverters, and other ancillary products procured from world-renowned manufacturers.

He added that the motive behind the partnership is to power pharmacy retail stores across Nigeria, saying the

relationship between power and medicines preservation is directly proportional, especially in the areas of vaccines and insulin.

"Nigerians can anticipate improved health services as a direct outcome of this partnership. By ensuring that pharmacies have access to reliable and uninterrupted power through our solar solutions, we are enhancing the ability of pharmacists to serve their communities effectively. This means citizens can expect consistent access to safe medicines and vaccines, which is paramount for better health services and outcomes across the country", he said.

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THE JOURNEY OF AGILE ORGANISATION

Character traits of successful leaders

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

"Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing." — Warren Bennis, Ph.D.

In a debate about leadership in Africa few days ago, I realised that what Africa lacks is not leadership but leaders with the right kind of character and traits to solve the challenges of this time. As an incurable optimist, I also believe that we can start to learn the right set of character, values and traits that will enhance leadership qualities in each one of us. Leaders determine the ultimate effectiveness of an organisation, as the character and skills that they bring determine the way problems are solved and tasks are accomplished.

Leaders do not command excellence, they build excellence. Excellence is "being all you can be" within the bounds of doing what is right for your organisation. To reach excellence, you must first be a leader of good character. You must do everything you are supposed to do. Organisations will not achieve excellence by figuring out where they want to go, then having leaders do whatever they have to in order to get the job done, and then hope their followers act with good character.

This type of thinking is backwards. Pursuing excellence should not be confused with accomplishing a job or task. When you do planning, you do it by backwards planning. But you do not achieve excellence by backwards planning. Excellence starts with leaders of good and strong character who engage in the entire process of leadership. And the first process is being a person of honourable character.

Character development

Character develops over time. Many think that much of a person's character is formed early in life. However, we do not know exactly how much or how early character develops. But, it is safe to claim that character does not change quickly. A person's observable behaviour is an indication of her character. This behaviour can be strong or weak, good or bad.

A person with strong character shows drive, energy, determination, self-discipline, willpower, and nerve. He sees what he wants and goes after it. He attracts followers. On the other hand, a person with weak character shows none of these traits. He does not know what he wants. His traits are disorganised; he vacillates and is inconsistent. He will attract no followers.

A strong person can be good or bad. A gang leader is an example of a strong person with a bad character, while an outstanding community leader is one with both strong and good characteristics. An organisation needs leaders with both strong and good characteristics, people who will guide them to the future and show that they can be trusted.

Motivational traits

To be an effective leader, your followers must have trust in you and they need to be sold on your vision. Korn-Ferry International, an executive search company, performed a survey on what organisations want from their leaders. The respondents said they wanted people who were both ethical and who convey a strong vision of the future.

In any organisation, a leader's

actions set the pace. This behaviour wins trust, loyalty, and ensures the organisation's continued vitality. One of the ways to build trust is to display a good sense of character, composed of beliefs, values, skills, and traits:

Beliefs are what we hold dear to us and are rooted deeply within us. They could be assumptions or convictions that you hold true regarding people, concepts, or things. They could be the beliefs about life, death, religion, what is good, what is bad, what is human nature, etc.

Values are attitudes about the worth of people, concepts, or things. For example, you might value a good car, home, friendship, personal comfort, or relatives. Values are important as they influence a person's behaviour to weigh the importance of alternatives. For example, you might value friends more than privacy, while others might be the opposite.

Skills are the knowledge and abilities that a person gains throughout life. The ability to learn a new skill varies with each individual. Some skills come almost naturally, while others come only by complete devotion to study and practice.

Traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics of a person, while character is the sum total of these traits. There are hundreds of personality traits, far too many to be discussed here. Instead, we will focus on a few that are crucial for a leader. The more of these you display as a leader, the more your followers will believe and trust in you.

Traits of a good leader

A good leader is:

Honest — Demonstrate sincerity, integrity, and candour in all your actions. Deceptive behaviour will not inspire trust.

Competent — Base your actions on reason and moral principles. Do not make decisions based on childlike emotional desires or feelings.

Forward-looking — Set goals and have a vision of the future. The vision must be owned throughout the organisation. Effective leaders envision what they want and how to get it. They habitually pick priorities stemming from their basic values.

Inspiring — Display confidence in all that you do. By showing endurance in mental, physical, and spiritual stamina, you will inspire others to reach for new heights. Take charge when necessary.

Intelligent — Read, study, and seek challenging assignments.

Fair-minded — Show fair treatment to all people. Prejudice is the enemy of justice. Display empathy by being sensitive to the feelings, values, interests, and well-being of others.

Broadminded — Seek out diversity. They avoid the "danger of a single story".

Courageous — Have the perseverance to accomplish a goal, regardless of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Display a confident calmness when under stress.

Straightforward — Use sound judgement to make good decisions at the right time.

Imaginative — Make timely and appropriate changes in your thinking, plans, and methods. Show creativity by thinking of new and better goals,

ideas, and solutions to problems. Be innovative!

Attributes

Attributes establish what leaders are, and every leader needs at least three of them:

Standard-bearers establish the ethical framework within an organisation. This demands a commitment to live and defend the climate and culture that you want to permeate

your organisation. What you set as an example will soon become the rule, as, unlike knowledge, ethical behavior is learned more by observing than by listening. And in fast moving situations, examples become certainty. Being a standard bearer creates trust and openness in your employees, who in turn, fulfill your visions.

Developers help others learn through teaching, training, and coaching. This creates an exciting place to work and learn. Never miss an opportunity to teach or learn something new yourself. Coaching suggests someone who cares enough to get involved by encouraging and developing others who are less experienced. Employees who work for developers know that they can take risks, learn by making mistakes, and winning in the end.

Integrators orchestrate the

many activities that take place throughout an organization by providing a view of the future and the ability to obtain it. Success can only be achieved when there is a unity of effort. Integrators have a sixth sense about where problems will occur and make their presence felt a vision-based framework.

An organisation consists of three components:

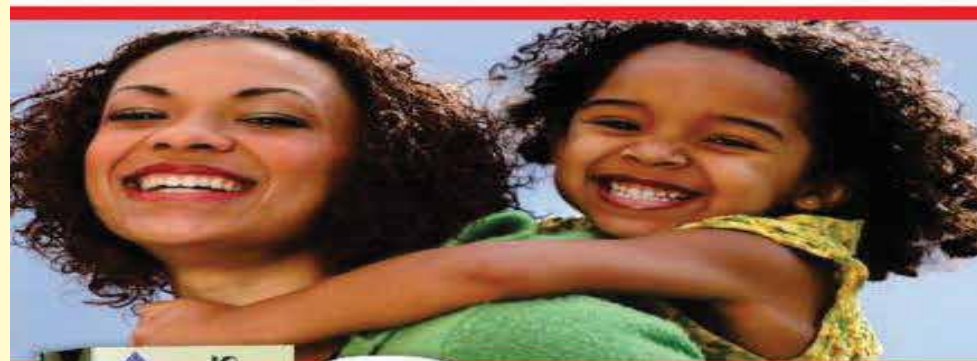
The structure gives the organisation its form and dictates the way it will interact.

The followers respond to the structure and the leaders.

The leaders determine the ultimate effectiveness of the organisation as the character and skills that they bring determine the way problems are solved and tasks are accomplished.



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

PANS inducts Atueyi, Zango into National Hall of Fame

- As winners emerge in Pharmanews inter-school contests

By Adebayo Oladejo

It was another feather of honour to the cap of the octogenarian Publisher of *Pharmanews*, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, as he was recently inducted into the National Hall of Fame of the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigerian Students (PANS). This, according to the association, is in recognition of his meritorious service to the pharmacy education and pharmacy practice generally.

Inducted alongside Atueyi at the 48th Annual National Convention of PANS, held at the 750 Hall A, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, was Dr Mohammed Zango, retired director, Medical Service Limited, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

Speaking at the event where the inductees also became life patrons of PANS, national president of the association, Chukwuemeka Victor Francis, described the two men as worthy recipients of the honour, going by their antecedents in the pharmacy society, adding that through their selfless services to the profession, they had touched many lives positively.

According to Francis, Atueyi had been supporting PANS and the pharmacy profession back in the years, even before most of the young ones today were born, adding that many debates and quiz competitions that are done over the country at the chapters level are all sponsored by Pharmanews, including the prestigious Pharmanews Essay and Debate Competition at the national convention.

"I call him one of the fathers of Pharmacy because he had mentored a lot of people and many of us look up to him as a symbol of hope, that if he could do it, then we can do it as well. To many of



The representatives of Niger-Delta University, Bayelsa State, who won in the Quiz Competition category

us, we have a father who loves us deeply," Francis said.

He continued, "In the same vein, Dr Zango has been helping PANS national in sponsoring programmes, and also helping with the pharmacy emblem nationwide. So we deem it fit to appreciate him as well. We appreciate these fathers because the more we appreciate them, the more they do for us."

The highpoint of the event was the Pharmanews Debate Contest with the topic, "AI in Pharmacies: Revolutionising Personalised Medicine or Jeopardising Patients Trust?", which saw Enugu State University emerge winners, while the Niger-Delta University, and University of Benin, came first and second runners-up respectively.

In the quiz competition, Niger-Delta University emerged winner.

At the same time, Enugu State University and the University of Uyo, came first and second runners-up, respectively.

Reacting to the recognition, Atueyi, who was represented by Mr Adebayo Oladejo, senior

reporter, Pharmanews, said he was happy that the third edition of the events was successfully held, adding that he was grateful to PANS for ensuring that the great honour done to Pharmanews two years ago at UNIUYO, where the competition started had been sustained.



Chukwuemeka Victor Francis (Right), national president, PANS, presenting an award plaque and portrait in honour of Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, to Mr Adebayo Oladejo, senior reporter, Pharmanews.

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Becoming a pharmacist is fulfilment of my lifetime dream - Nwoke

continued from page 62

1980.

After this, I took up a new appointment with Dumex Pharmaceuticals, as a marketing manager. I was there for five years before resigning to set up my own company, Dinson Pharmaceuticals Limited, based in Festac Town, Lagos. I had a wonderful experience working for CIBA GEIGY of Switzerland and Dumex of Denmark because they gave me the opportunity to travel extensively around Nigeria, Africa, Europe, Germany and USA.

I have also been active in community service. I served as the secretary general of Umuahia Development Union, from 1985 to 1996. It was at this period that I scripted a welcome address for the first executive governor of Abia State, Dr Ogbonnaya Onu. In that address, I quoted that Abia is the only state in Nigeria to appear in the Bible according to Luke 1:5. Today, that is the basis of the state's motto, "God's Own State".

I am also a life member of the Bible Society of Nigeria; a Paul Harris Fellow of the Rotary Club International; and a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management.

After several years of practice, what is it about Pharmacy that gives you the biggest sense of fulfilment?

For me, becoming a pharmacist is a life-time dream come true. My classroom knowledge of "the pharmacological basis of therapeutic action" has always enabled me to handle many domestic health challenges in my family without recourse to medical consultations in clinics.

Besides, being a pharmacist has availed me ample and privileged opportunity to travel around Nigeria and beyond - Ghana, Kenya, UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, and so on. I am grateful to God that I am a pharmacist

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

I am a football fan and I used to participate actively in football, until old age slowed me. I watch football. At the stage where I am now, most of the people I grew up with are no longer around, except a few. So it's not easy again going out or doing physical things like before.

I am a fan of good football but not a stickler to a particular team, as my children, grandchildren and other young people do these days.

I have also modified my dietary habits to help me cope with the rigours of old age. For example, I have reduced meat intake and have taken some other measures too.

Tell us about your family. Did any of your children or grandchildren take after you to study Pharmacy or other health-related professions?

While working at Ciba-Geigy, I was hoping and preparing them to study courses like Pharmacy or Medicine, without forcing my choice on them. Today, they are all doing well in their chosen professions.

Out of my six children, two are accountants. My boys are

engineers. Luckily for me, out of six children, it is my last daughter that is a medical doctor, working at a teaching hospital. Now that I am in Lagos, she has been the one taking care of my medical requirements.

Given your wealth of experience, what advice would you like to give to the younger generation of pharmacists on how to make the best use of their calling as healthcare professionals to impact humanity positively?

I am proud to be a pharmacist and I am grateful to God for making me one. Any young person whom God has helped to

actualise his dream of becoming a pharmacist, a medical doctor or a healthcare practitioner of any sort should see it as an opportunity to render service to humanity and impact the society positively.

Service is very important and that is what our profession is all about. Becoming pharmacists helps us to take care of ourselves, our families, our communities and our society, in general. This is a duty that must be done with all diligence.

The younger ones are advised to be diligent, honest and focused in their career. When all of these are in place, a fulfilling reward will follow naturally.

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We are keen to reverse medical tourism – MD, Iwosan Lagoon Hospital



Dr Ayobami Kuyoro

In an era when most privileged Nigerians embark on medical tourism abroad, the management of Iwosan Lagoon Hospital, located in Victoria Island, Lagos, says it is working hard to put an end to the trend by providing world-class and affordable healthcare services to Nigerians. The hospital recently unveiled its state-of-the-art medical facilities, during a media tour, to signpost its readiness to change the narrative in Nigeria's healthcare delivery system. In this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, Managing Director of the hospital, Dr Ayobami Kuyoro, highlights the value her facility is bringing to the table in Nigeria. A graduate of both the College of Medicine, University of Lagos and the University of Aberdeen School of International Health and Management, Kuyoro rekindles the hope that the Nigerian medical landscape can be a global hub with the right investment. **EXCERPTS:**

Can you give us a brief background to the history and operations of Iwosan Lagoon Hospital?

Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals, formerly known as Lagoon Hospitals, was established by Prof. and Prof. (Mrs) Elebute, in 1986. The organisation has since expanded to six facilities, thereby becoming one of the largest private tertiary healthcare providers in West Africa. In 2021, Lagoon Hospitals was acquired by Iwosan Investments, a private healthcare investment company dedicated to investing in the Nigerian healthcare market.

In our effort to ensure quality healthcare delivery, facilities in the Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals group became the first in Sub-Saharan Africa to receive the Gold Seal of Approval of the Joint Commission International (JCI). It is a globally recognised accreditation that provides hospitals with the capacity to improve standards of care, staff education and development

to core safety standards. The Ikeja and the Ikoyi facilities have consistently received the Gold Seal of Approval from the organisation for successive periods, signifying their continuous adherence to international best practices. This achievement serves as a testament to our dedication to deliver safe and efficient patient care.

We have just concluded a tour of your ultra-modern facility. Can you tell us what Iwosan Lagoon Hospital intends to achieve with this?

We want to show the world what we have going on here. Just as you have seen, we have a state-of-the-art facility and the innovative technology needed in the modern day hospital. You have spoken with our specialists; we have advanced expertise. We have different specialists, both from home and abroad, here.

So, we want to show the world

that we are really keen on reversing medical tourism and letting the people know that we have quality healthcare services in Nigeria. We want to build people's confidence in the Nigerian healthcare

system. This is the whole essence of the facility tour: to show the world the amazing things we are doing here in Nigeria.

Can you tell us more about the world-class specialists you have here and how do you convince Nigerians that what they look for abroad can be found here?

I will start with our consultant interventional cardiologist, Dr Olurotimi Badero. He is the only board-certified interventional cardio-nephrologist in the world and he is also a nuclear cardiology specialist. He is the director of our cardio catheterisation lab and is overseeing our cardiac programme here in the facility. We also have Dr Banji Awosika, who is a consultant nephrologist and wellness expert. They are both from the United States and are Nigerians.

During the press briefing, you talked about the Iwosan Lagoon Hospital Wellness Centre. Can you expatiate on that?

Yes, our wellness centre is coming up in a few weeks. We shall be inviting the media for its unveiling. The focus is on preventive healthcare. It is our own way of showing patients that we care for them from preventive to curative healthcare delivery. We want patients to know that they can also prevent the onset of ailments using the appropriate lifestyle components such as nutrition, exercise, yoga and so on. Our wellness centre will also encourage early detection and response to diseases, to ensure that they do not get worse before the patient seeks medical intervention.

What do you imply when you said that Iwosan Lagoon Hospital is an "excellence centre" for cardiology?

As you must have seen for yourself, in terms of technology, we are world-class - from prevention to outpatient cardiology and to non-invasive cardiology. You have also seen our catheterisation lab for non-invasive cardiology and

our theatre for cardiac surgery. The reason we invited the media is to show the world that we have these world-class facilities here. We also have the expertise to offer these services.

Lagoon hospital is a multi-specialist hospital but the Iwosan Lagoon Hospital is where we offer the best expertise in cardiology and cardiac care. Anything about your heart is what we handle here.

With the exquisiteness and sophistication of your equipment here, do you think your services will be affordable to majority of Nigerians?

The answer to the question is yes. Many persons have asked that question. For me, affordability is relative. The fact that we have provided state-of-the-art facilities does not mean our services are not affordable. The whole idea is that we have to do the right things with the right equipment and the right people, so that we have a good mix.

I will say our services are affordable and accessible to every Nigerian. It is erroneous to think that because our facilities are world-class, then people may not be able to pay for our services.

As the managing director of Iwosan Lagoon Hospital, what drives you to offer the type of strategic leadership required for excellent service delivery?

I believe in people and I also believe in investing in human resources. Nobody can achieve anything alone. Like you mentioned, with our state-of-the-art equipment, I cannot run this hospital alone. So, I strongly believe in investing in people and I think that has helped me a lot.

We need to recognise the fact that the people that work with us are the real heartbeat of the whole business and it is important to carry them along. We are different adults, coming from different places; hence the need to find a way to carry everyone along.

Everyone must have this sense of ownership and belonging, and I think that is one way to create an enabling and inspiring environment for people to be at their best. Together, we can steer the ship and work towards the same goal.

If you were to advise the Federal Government on how best to tackle the issue of brain drain in the Nigerian healthcare sector, what would you say?

Generally speaking, I think we can do better by improving people's standard of living. Make sure the basic infrastructures are available. We must ensure that the system is working well. Everything that inhibits work should be addressed. Things like power and access roads should be fixed, so that people can work without undue stress and pressure.

Once people are convinced that the system works, with the basic infrastructures in place, they will stay. No one would want to leave a system that offers the best, in terms of reward and opportunities.

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Events in Pictures



Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley Chiedu Amibor, presenting an award plaque to the Chairman, New Heights Pharma, Pharm. Paul Enebeli, at a programme organised by Delta State Chapter of the PSN, recently.



Pharm. Jimi Agbaje, presenting an award plaque to the former Chairman of GIPAA, Chief Bunmi Olaopa, at the diamond jubilee celebration of the association, held recently at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.



L-R: Dr Oluwatomi Kogo, managing director, Iwosan Lagoon Outpatient Clinic & Iwosan Wellness Centre; Dr Banji Awosika, consultant nephrologist and wellness expert, Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals; Dr Olurotimi Badero, head of the Interventional Cardiology Programme and director of cardiac catheterization Lab Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals, Victoria Island; Dr Ayobami Kuyoro, managing director, Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals, Victoria Island and Dr Adedeji Adebayo, consultant cardiologist & clinical lead, Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals, Victoria Island, at a recent media parley organized by Iwosan Lagoon Hospitals, Victoria Island.



L-R: Representative of the CEO of NIDCOM, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Mr Dipo Odebowale; dean, faculty of pharmacy, University of Lagos, Prof. Gloria Ayoola; NAFTraPh president, Dr John Ejezie; representative of PCN registrar, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, Dr Taiwo Filusi; CEO, Business School Netherlands International, Nigeria, Prof. Lere Baale; sub-dean, faculty of pharmacy, University of Lagos, Dr Foluke Ayeni and publisher, Pharmanews, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi at the 5th annual international conference of NAFTraPh in Lagos recently.



L-R: Dr Mike Nwankwo, Dr Martin Ekwealor, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, Pharmanews Publisher; Dr Ekeazu Ogu, Dr Sydney Ugwu, Dr Olu Aloba and Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, immediate past President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN); at the Scientific conference and Exposition of NAPPSA, held in Columbus Ohio, 20-24 September 2023



NAPPSA presenting the "NAPPSA Cares" cheque of \$2,000 to the Just Us Legacy Group Scholarship Endowment at the just concluded Annual Scientific Conference and Exposition of NAPPSA, held in Columbus, Ohio, USA.



Participants at the 4th Annual 5K Run/Walk during the just-concluded Annual Scientific Conference and Exposition of NAPPSA, held in Columbus, Ohio, USA.



L-R: Mr Philip Nwosu, Sun online editor; Chief Paulinus Anowai, MD Rafor Pharmacy; Mr Bharat Vaswani, Country Head, Dana Pharmaceuticals; Pharm Gloria Eromosele; Pharm Samuel Adebayo, sup. pharmacist, Dana Pharma; Mr Ernest Onuoha, DGM Sales, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd, during the Dana Pharmaceuticals Triple Milestone Event Highlights, at the launch of Danacee Vitamin C Syrup, 27 years of Paradana® Paracetamol, and Ferrodan Plus Relaunch in new packaging, recently held at Ivy Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos.

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other participants at the just
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NAPPSA, held in Columbus,
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Participants' rate success of AHAPN's 24th annual national conference

In this edition of viewpoint, our online editor, **Temitope Obayendo**, who covered the recent 24th Annual National Scientific Conference of the Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN) held at the Welcome Centre Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, interacted with participants on their assessment of the conference. Their responses are captured below:

Impressive, but limited conference duration made it inconvenient- Omale

The conference so far has been very beautiful, very well organised. The presentations, plenary session, everything is quite apt and very important. Where I had issue with the conference is the timing, it's a bit not too convenient, unlike other conferences organised for five days, this was condensed to three days. Although it is understandable, as the hosting was shifted to Lagos mid-way, so in all, they have done very well. The conference hall is quite spacious, exhibition stand are okay, and organisation is good. I think they have done excellently.

Pharm. Sam Omale,
Lokoja, Kogi State.



A successful conference but no provision for PWDs- Adesokun

In my humble opinion, I think the organisers have tried to make it a successful one. The areas of challenge are the non-timeliness of the events and lack of facilities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) because I'm one of them. Access to the conference hall was a bit difficult, as there was no elevator or ramps for PWDs to have access. Toilet facilities were not also accessible to PWDs. So I think subsequent conference organisers should factor this in.

Pharm (Dr) Oluwaseye Adesokun
Ile- Ife, Osun State.



Presentations were wonderful, but timing needs improvement- Ladigbo

The organisers of the conference tried in keeping to time, though they encountered some unexpected delays, but they endeavoured to make it up in other areas. By and large, they have done very well. For the next state hosting the conference, I will advise they make some allowance for any delay, so that the programme will not be affected. Generally, the quality of presentations has been topnotch.

Pharm. (Mrs) Abimbola Ladigbo, Lagos Island Maternity Hospital



The conference met my expectations- Aluko

The conference has met my expectations especially the way the Local Organising Committee Chairman addressed us when we came for the council meeting that we should expect to have an experience of a life time. They have really worked hard to make it a reality. Starting from the arrangement of the programme, it was superb. They treated us when, even the feeding aspect was wonderful. So I give kudos to them for the planning. The highpoint of the conference for me was the various presentations by different researchers. They touched on key issues that are germane to the development of Pharmacy in Nigeria. Topics like antimicrobial interactions, religion and compliance with drugs, were also discussed and their importance to medicine security.

Pharm. Olusanya Aluko,
Ile-Ife, Osun State.



First of its kind conference- Ogudu

This is the first time a conference that was supposed to last for a week was compressed into three days. I give kudos to all pharmacists that organised the programme, and all the events went well. Lagos is no longer for show, but for action. It was evident that the Conference Planning Committee as well as the Local Organising Committee planned very well ahead. From the registration desk, we had about 400 pharmacists in attendance.

Presentations at the conference were superb, and the speech from the keynote address speaker also put paid to the fact that there is need to empower local manufacturers, as API should be manufactured in the country, in order to reduce the burden of medicine insecurity.



Pharm (Dr) Ugochinyere Ogudu
Ikorodu General Hospital

Attendance was satisfactory despite economic hitches - Ajayi

The theme of the conference is apt, because medicine security is very important to the healthcare system, and when there is no security, it is a major threat. I will say the organisation of the conference is okay and attendance is fine, because with the economic situation in the country, one may assume not many pharmacists will attend, but it is surprising that we have crowd here.

Pharm (Mrs) Ruth Ajayi,
FCT AHAPN Chapter member



Better organised than Ilorin 2020 conference - Amosun

The conference was so well organised, compared to the last one I attended in Ilorin in 2020. The registration went well; the LOC and the National Organising Committee have done a good job. My highest point of experience is the educative part; during the lectures I learnt a lot of things professionally.

Pharm. Taiwo Amosun,
Lagos State, Amuwo Odofin, Festac.



Workplace anxiety: Identifying and managing triggers

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

The word “trigger” means different things to different people and is rarely positive. Whether you are firing a gun, upsetting someone, or starting a fight, it often begins with a trigger. A trigger is an event or action that causes something to start or sets off a mechanism (again, rarely positive).

In the last piece, we treated workplace anxiety symptoms, causes, and coping skills. However, we know that, like any psychological event, workplace anxiety, alongside its “causes” and “coping skills”, is not one-size-fits-all. Usually, it is person and situation-specific. Identifying what sets off any anxiety you feel at work or towards your job is a relevant first step in managing workplace anxiety.

At this point, let us introduce a hypothetical character, Mrs Y, who headed a department whose output was greatly deadline-oriented. She was constantly neck-deep in work and haunted by deadlines; however, as a high performer, she ensured that her team delivered before deadlines.

Unfortunately, two junior managers from her team relocated within a few months without being replaced. This gap caused delays in project execution and affected the ability to meet deadlines.

Mrs Y began to observe that whenever she received a call from someone at work, her heart rate

would increase because she was constantly expecting bad news from her team or complaints from other departments about her team not meeting certain obligations. Gradually, she developed this reaction to every phone call - work-related or not. Her enthusiasm and energy dropped; she stopped looking forward to meetings and started dreading work.

In this case, it would be tempting to say that the phone calls that delivered bad news triggered Mrs Y's anxiety, but this would be wrong. It would also be wrong to attribute it to the recent exits. What triggered the anxiety for her was her inability to deliver excellently as usual - that loud drop in her performance. All would have gone well if her team's performance - and consequently her performance - was unaffected by the exit.

The simple way to deal with it would be to identify that her trigger was the drop in her performance, and request that the executives adjust her performance indicator to accommodate the current reality of her team size. She could also impress on the executives the urgent need to replace the managers.

Another route would be to do all the above, including taking a break from work or seeking professional help. However, the focus of the intervention would be to provide an environment

to achieve goals or set realistic goals. Thus, identifying triggers is crucial to managing work-related anxiety, and there are ways to accomplish this.

Helpful tips

1. Start a journal: This does not have to be anything fancy. Immediately you suspect that you may be exhibiting symptoms of workplace anxiety, start taking notes (we discussed symptoms in a previous edition). Jot down when you start noticing them and the events that you think triggered them. Mrs Y's journal could have events like Exits, Negative Feedback, Complaints from the CEO, Failed appraisals, Missed deadlines, etc. Keeping track of your feelings provides a clear perspective and helps you analyse what makes you anxious. You could include how you think you can manage it.

2. Identify stressors: What is the one thing you constantly dwell on and cannot stop thinking about? Look out for activities or events that you dread participating in. If Mrs Y had taken time to think, she would have realised that she did not like attending meetings because they highlighted the performance of everyone, including hers.

3. Be honest about your feelings: Honesty remains the



best policy. Honour your feelings and acknowledge them to yourself freely. It will help you accurately track a journal and identify stressors.

4. Create time to reflect on past experiences: Past trauma remains a significant trigger. Let us assume that Mrs Y successfully overcame this experience. If we fast forward to a couple of years later and more than two people leave her team almost simultaneously, she could start experiencing anxiety symptoms immediately, even without any negative impact on the team's performance.

5. Talk to someone: Talking to loved ones also helps you to analyse your feelings. A trusted friend or family member can provide valuable insight into situations and experiences. You can also talk to a therapist.

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Dana marks Paradana's 27th anniversary in Nigeria, rewards distributors

- Unveils Ferrodan Plus, Danacee

By Moses Dike and Peter Ogonna



L-R: Mr Bharat Vaswani, country head, Dana Pharmaceuticals Ltd; Mr Chidibere Oguguo, Drugstoc Pharmacy; Mr Suraj K. Vaswani, national sales manager during the 27th anniversary of Paradana and launch of Danacee and Ferrodan plus, held at Ivy Hotels, Ikeja.

It was an evening of glamour at Ivy hotels, Ikeja, Lagos, as leading pharmaceutical company, Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited, celebrated 27 years of one its star brands, Paradana, in Nigeria, while unveiling its new brands, Ferrodan Plus and Danacee. The company also dished out rewards to loyal distributors, some of whom had distributed its products for more

than 25 years.

In his welcome address at the event, the country head of Dana in Nigeria, Mr Bharat Vaswani, described Paradana as a foremost brand of paracetamol that has been providing relief for millions of Nigerians for close to three decades.

According to him, "Dana

to deepen the reach of the products across the country. He added that the company had started investing in a larger distribution system across the country, by engaging more medical sales representatives and more sales executives, while increasing its reach to hospitals and pharmacies.

While introducing the new products to the audience, the

Pharmaceuticals is one of Nigeria's oldest pharmaceutical companies. We started off way back in 1986, when our group chairman established

the first factory of intravenous fluids in Ibadan, and then we moved to the second factory in Minna, Niger State in 2005.

"We have a range of more than 36 intravenous fluids, formulations and syrups that we supply and we have a strong customer database of more than 350 distributors across the country. We are NAFDAC-compliant, ISO-compliant, and getting our factories fully ready for GMP compliance and we always ensure that we meet higher quality standards."

Vaswani thanked the distributors and the members of his team, especially the sales team, for helping

company's superintendent pharmacist and area sales manager in charge of Ibadan Zone, Pharm. Ifeoluwa Ajayi, described Ferrodan Plus as a blood-booster, fortified with iron, folic acid and Vitamin B12.

According to her, the product has been formulated to help boost immunity, treat iron deficiency and improve formulation of red blood cells, especially for pregnant women and lactating mothers.

On Danacee, Ajayi said the product has been introduced to help boost immunity of children and accelerate repair of tissues. She added that it will help to facilitate the treatment of scurvy in children, caused by Vitamin C deficiency. She also urged the distributors to give the products strong support..

One of the distributors for Dana Pharmaceuticals Limited, Mr Jude Ibekwe, who is the managing director of FalPharm Nigeria Limited, praised Dana for being consistent in churning out high quality products for the benefits of Nigerians.

Ibekwe, who had been a distributor for Dana for almost three decades, said: "Dana Pharmaceuticals is improving every day and what happened here today shows that the company is relentless in his commitment to the production and distribution of high quality products."

Another distributor, Chief Paulinus Anowai, who also spoke to **Pharmanews**, thanked Dana for rewarding the loyalty and commitment of its distributors. He added that his three decades of distributorship with Dana pharmaceuticals had been pleasant and pledged his continued commitment to the company.

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Be more considerate in regulation, NAIP charges NAFDAC

continued from page 96

held at Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos State.

Speaking during the roundtable discussion at the event, with the theme, "Industrial Pharmacy Practice in Nigeria: the Pearls and the Challenges", Onuegbu specifically urged NAFDAC to put a human face on its regulatory activities.

While commending the agency under the leadership of Professor Mojisola Adeyeye, especially on the attainment of Maturity Level 3 status, he urged the leadership of the agency to be conscious of the peculiar situation in the Nigerian pharma space, and therefore ensure that the industry is not "over-regulated".

He explained that this is necessary to avoid discouraging sincere people from investing in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

"Many stakeholders in the industry have been complaining that our environment is over-regulated. Our regulation ought to have a Nigerian face; we cannot be promoting local production when regulation is making it difficult for those that want to manufacture to even start. But, as an association, NAIP will continue to engage NAFDAC," Onuegbu said.

Highlighting some of the challenges facing pharmaceutical manufacturing in the country,



Pharm. Kenneth Onuegbu
National Chairman NAIP

the NAIP helmsman lamented that with the current state of the nation's economy, there may be scarcity of essential drugs in the country, if nothing is done to urgently address it.

According to him, "Infrastructure is a major

challenge in the pharma sector. Most, if not all pharma manufacturers today, survive on artificial power, using generators. Unfortunately, the price of diesel has gone up drastically; transportation is something else. Pharma companies now spend multiple of what they used to spend to move drugs to various destinations.

"To access forex is a big challenge. The process can take a year to get the CBN-subsidised rate; hence, we resort to the blackmarket. You

can imagine that we buy a dollar for over N1,000; automatically, it will affect production. If nothing is done to address the numerous challenges, there is going to be a scarcity of essential medicines. This is why we must all join hands together to domesticate

production of medicines.

"We also have challenges with the availability of data. Everybody is holding on to information. The industry is also lacking core professionals. Government needs to tackle insecurity, epileptic power supply, forex and host of other challenges in the pharma sector, if they really want pharmaceutical companies to survive in this country."

Onuegbu also decried the attitude of the political class, saying the majority simply play politics with the industry, a development he said is dangerous to the development of the country and the wellbeing of the citizens.

He said, "Our politicians are deceiving us. The political leaders are making little or no effort to ensure that essential drugs are produced locally in Nigeria. This is why we keep importing. We are not exporting. On an individual level, few companies are making efforts.

"As an association, we are making efforts, but the government seems to lack the political will to change things. They are only playing politics with the development of the pharmaceutical industry when they are supposed to take medicine security as part of national security."

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Pharmacy leaders flay FG's decision to stop funding PCN

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budgetary and extra budgetary allocations to the council.

While they acknowledged the merits of the proposal, especially as it mirrors the situation in advanced countries, they emphasised that it is unsuitable for Nigeria's present socio-economic landscape.

In his submission, Pharm. Akintayo admitted that entrusting the regulation and control of professions to professional bodies ultimately places the destinies of such professions in the hands of those who practise them. He, however, stressed that for bodies like the PCN that play more critical and sensitive roles than providing regulations, there must be exceptions to the general rule.

In his words: "For the PCN, the mandate transcends regulating pharmacists and other workforce cadres, to the regulation and control of pharmaceutical premises, in both the public and private sectors. These include facilities for the manufacture, importation, exportation, distribution, wholesale, retail, hospital drug dispensing and sale; pharma component of veterinary practice; and much more.

"The sensitivity of these endeavours I listed, which are legally considered as Drug Matters, is the fundamental reason most nations of the world find it imperative to bring drug use matters under central or federal control. Nigeria is not an exception to this norm, and this is why Drug Matters are listed as item 21 in Part 1 of 2nd Schedule of the 1999 Constitution.

"It is under the purview of the Federal Government to ensure adequate protection of lives, in terms of ensuring easy access to safe, efficacious, and affordable drugs to consumers of health in our country."

The former PSN president further stated that while it should be a thing of joy to see the Society manage the enormous responsibilities, the capacity for effectiveness would be significantly hampered.

He added that it amounts to utter abdication of responsibility by an otherwise responsible government to contemplate such a drastic move with PCN, which he described as a unique professional regulatory council.

According to him, "Even from the purview of existing laws, the Federal Government is compelled in Section 9[1] of the PCN Act 2022 to provide budgetary and extra-budgetary allocations to the PCN. It will, therefore, be unlawful and illegal for the Budget Office to stop allocations to the PCN in public interest. I do hope the chief law officer of the country guides the Tinubu administration on this crucial issue."

While equally decrying the decision, Dr Adagadzu described it as a product of shoddy thinking, adding that he anticipates a reversal or a better arrangement.

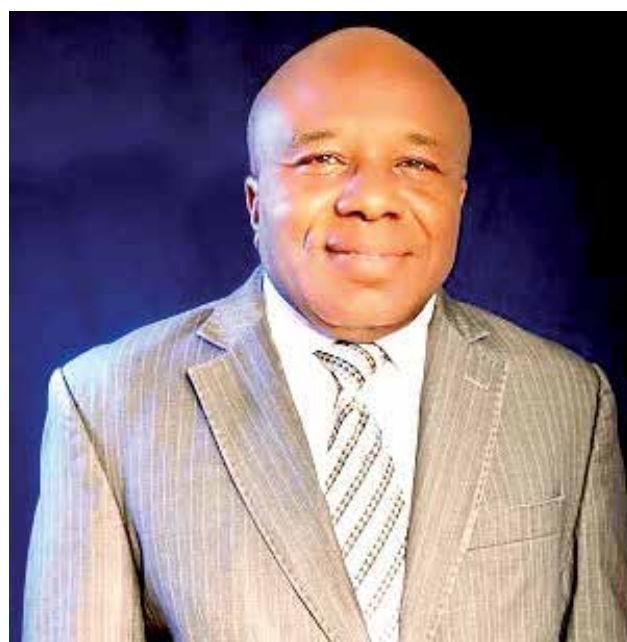
He noted that if the move scales through, it will be an added burden on pharmacists and patients, who are still grappling with already high costs of medications.



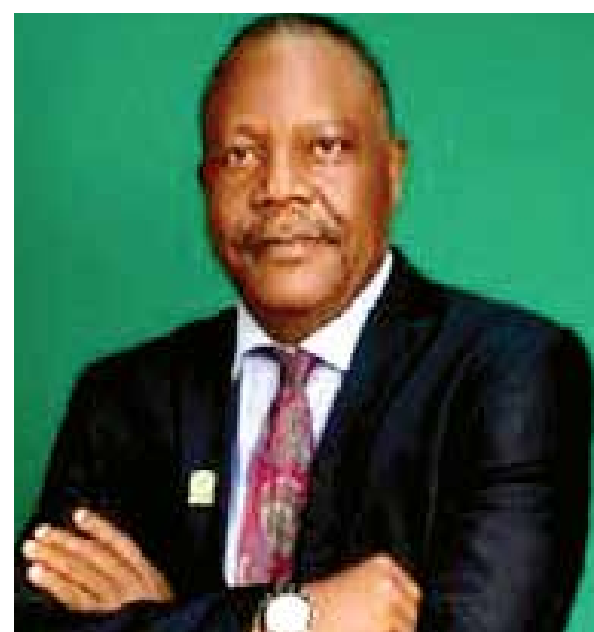
Pharm. Olumide Akintayo



Dr Joel Adagadzu



Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley C. Amibor



Pharm. (Dr) Daniel Orumwense

Adagadzu maintained that government should have made thorough findings on the inflows into the concerned agencies to ensure that they had the financial stamina to operate in the wake of the new policy.

The PSN-BOF chairman also averred that if the government insists on withdrawing allocations to the professional bodies, then it must also stop making political appointment into such agencies, as they will need some degree of autonomy to fulfil their mandates.

He said, "Sometimes government take decisions before they think it through. I don't know if this is one of those instances. But ordinarily, having worked with government for so long, I expect government to make its findings about the inflows into these agencies, to ensure that they can support themselves and still achieve the objectives they are established to achieve. I doubt if this was done in this case.

"I also know that cutting off the budgetary allocation the way they are trying to do will result in the various regulatory bodies finding ways and means of stocking up their resources. And, to me, the only way they can do so is by charging additional fees or increasing their subscriptions. This will add to the challenges already being faced by the professionals."

He continued, "If government is

no longer going to be responsible for funding, then the relationship between government and these agencies should be redefined. We can't operate at the same level as we were doing before, because government can't stop funding and still be imposing chairmen on these agencies. They will need some degree of freedom to fulfill their mandate."

Dr Amibor, on his part, appealed to the FG to reverse the decision in the interest of the public, adding that it could hamstring the PCN in carrying out its regulatory role. He urged the Federal Government to rather scale up its provision of enabling environment for local manufacturers to thrive.

Amibor mentioned that the use of diesel in powering manufacturing plants consumes the operating profits of many pharmaceutical manufacturers, while insecurity in the country has meant that most cannot deploy their personnel to many states, for fear of kidnapping.

Amibor, who is also the deputy director, Pharmaceutical Services, Federal Medical Centre, Asaba, said, "Government should provide functional infrastructures, water, good roads and so on, and improve on security. It should also provide incentives like tax rebates and patronise the end products of

local manufacturers. There is need to intensify regulation of patent medicine vendors, who continue to operate outside their mandates, by stocking all kinds of medicines, including controlled drugs."

Also lending his voice to the outcry against the new move by the government, Dr Orumwense said it is better for a neutral body like the Federal Government to maintain the operation of the PCN, saying it would assure pharmacists that there is fairness in regulating their professional activities.

Analysing the relationship between PSN and PCN presently, he insisted that the regulatory body cannot be handed over to the Society, as both currently operate like rivals, which further justifies government's handling of the PCN.

He said, "We can't leave PCN for PSN to operate, because we are already behaving like political parties presently, and the health of the people will be jeopardised, if the proposal gets implemented because costs of medications will be affected.

"However, if government agrees to pay the salaries of the workers, then it may be a little easier for the council to generate its day-to-day operational costs through the different regulatory subscriptions it generates from pharmacists and pharmaceutical companies."

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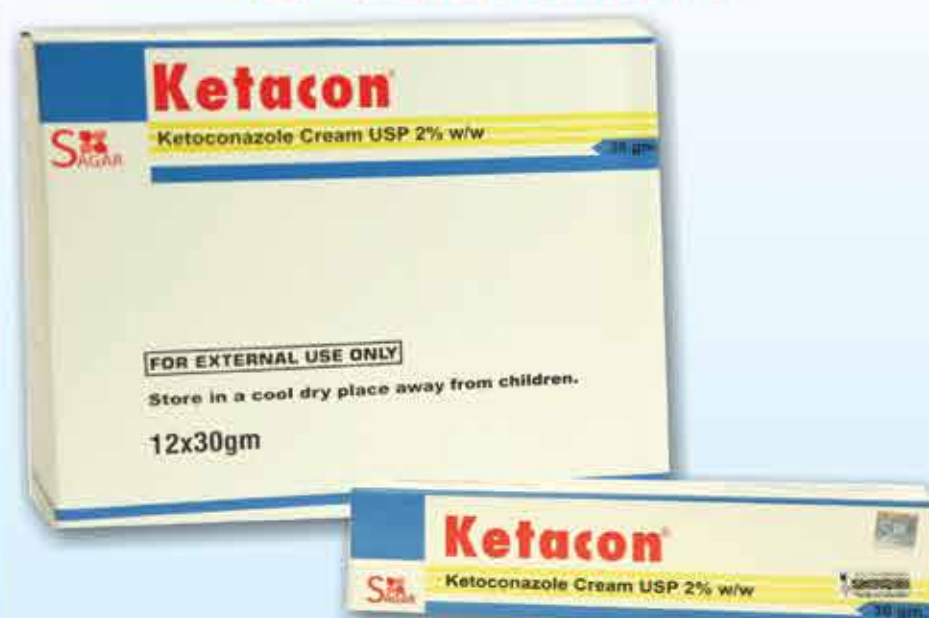
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Pharmacy leaders flay FG's decision to stop funding PCN

By Temitope Obayendo

Prominent pharmacists in the country have berated the decision of the Federal Government to stop funding the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), alongside other professional bodies by 2024, saying it will be illegal and inimical to public interest for the Budget Office to stop allocations to the council.

The personages, who included former President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. Olumide Akintayo; Chairman, Board of Fellows of PSN, Pharm. (Dr) Joel Adagadzu; public health expert, Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley Chiedu Amibor; and former Chairman, Committee of Heads of Pharmacy in Federal Health Institutions (COMHPFI), Pharm. (Dr) Daniel Orumwense, who spoke in separate interviews with *Pharmanews*, maintained that the FG has to rescind the decision, as it is compelled by Section 9[1] of the PCN Act (2022) to provide

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L-R: Dr Oluwatomi Kogo, director, Iwosan Lagoon Outpatient Clinic/Wellness Centre; Dr Adedeji Adebayo, consultant cardiologist/clinical lead, Iwosan Lagoon Hospital; Dr Ayobami Kuyoro, managing director, Iwosan Lagoon Hospital and Mr Adesegun Damazio, group head, marketing and growth, Iwosan Investment, during a media parley and facility tour of the hospital, in Victoria Island, Lagos.

Be more considerate in regulation, NAIP charges NAFDAC

- Worries over imminent scarcity of essential drugs

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

In view of the numerous challenges currently facing the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has been charged to be more cognisant of measures that will encourage production and availability of essential drugs in the country.

National Chairman of the Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP), Pharm. Kenneth Onuegbu, made the call recently, at the 5th Annual International Conference of the Nigeria Association of Foreign Trained Pharmacists (NAFTraPh),

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