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Nigeria's Leading Health Journal

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ACPN tasks FG on economic revival

- Laments drop in patronage, profitability

The Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Lagos State Branch, has said that pragmatic measures

are urgently required from the Federal Government to put the nation's economy on the path of

sustainable recovery, stressing that the current economic downturn is taking a severe toll

continued on page 8



L-R: Dr Funsho Oloruntoba, general manager, Sales, Getz Pharma Nigeria; Prof. Amam C. Mbakwem, consultant cardiologist and head of unit, Cardio B, LUTH (keynote speaker); Dr Ola Adewuya, consultant cardiologist, Rjoad Hospital; and Mr Syed Khairat, general manager, Marketing, Getz Pharma Nigeria, during the recent launch of Vacutro tablets, held at Bon Hotel, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.



Ijeoma Uchegbu: Pharmaceutical nanoscientist reshaping drug delivery systems

page 16



Communication and interpersonal skills for pharmaceutical sales leaders

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For wellness, sleep is not negotiable

page 25



45 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED MONTHLY PUBLICATION (1979-2024)

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Nigeria's Leading Health Journal

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MRS KEMI OGUNYEMI

Mrs Kemi Ogunyemi is the special adviser to the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on health. A compassionate nurse, with over 30 years' experience, she was a commissioner at the Lagos State Health Service Commission for two consecutive terms. In this role, she executed recruitment and training of all health personnel in 27 Lagos State General Hospitals.



A cancer nurse specialist, with over 25 years' experience, she holds a master's degree in Healthcare Administration and another in Nursing, from the University of Phoenix, USA. Professionally registered in both the US and the UK, Ogunyemi has been at the forefront of cancer care and the promotion of healthcare services in the US, UK and Nigeria.

With extensive knowledge in hospital administration policies and strategies, Ogunyemi has been able to successfully establish healthcare units internationally and in Nigeria. She was a member of many hospital and healthcare committees during her time in the US and the UK.

She has held many positions of leadership, such as unit director, Emory University Hospital, in Atlanta, Georgia; and unit manager/lead chemotherapy nurse, Haematology/Oncology Outpatients Department, at the Royal Free Hospital, London. She also published a poster presentation on the management of patients receiving high dose Interleukin2 at the Oncology Nursing Society Conference, in Orlando, Florida, in 2005.

An adept trainer, Ogunyemi has successfully implemented the training of all employees in the secondary health facilities in Lagos State on customer service and attitudinal change. Her passion for women and children's health led to her founding of Alfo Healthcare Initiative, an NGO dedicated to the promotion of quality healthcare for underprivileged women and children.

Ogunyemi is also a public speaker and has been invited to conferences and events to enlighten and create awareness on the attainment of the well woman.

Ogunyemi, who has continued to demonstrate excellent leadership skills, has won many awards, including the Transformational Leadership Award, in 2008.

She is happily married, with children.

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Inspiration

Be grateful for what you already have while you pursue your goals.

If you aren't grateful for what you already have, what makes you think you would be happy with more? - **Roy T. Bennett**

It is only when we take chances that our lives improve. The initial and the most difficult risk we need to take is to become honest. — **Walter Anderson**

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

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**

Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success. — **Dale Carnegie**

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward. - **Vernon Sanders Law**

When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too. — **Paulo Coelho**

Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible. — **Tony Robbins**

What holds most people back isn't the quality of their ideas, but their lack of faith in themselves. You have to live your life as if you are already where you want to be. — **Russell Simmons**

You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction overnight. If you want to reach your goals and fulfil your potential, become intentional about your personal growth. It will change your life. — **Jim Rohn**

Celebrating 45 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2024)

As has been the tradition for nearly five decades, the International Women's Day was globally celebrated on 8 March, 2024. The theme for this year's edition is "Count Her In: Invest in Women. Accelerate Progress". Among other objectives, the theme highlights the importance of gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and their rights to healthy lives.

In affirmation of this, the United Nations, in its statement to mark the occasion, noted that while the world is currently facing many crises, ranging from geopolitical conflicts to soaring poverty levels and the escalating impacts of climate change, the challenges can only be addressed by solutions that empower women. "By investing in women, we can spark change and speed the transition towards a healthier, safer, and more equal world for all," the UN said.

While much of the emphasis of the commemoration has been on the inclusion of women in the social, political and cultural decision-making processes, it is also important to highlight the need to prioritise women's health and put up measures that address health issues militating against their growth and development. Indeed, as IWD is aimed at celebrating the achievements and contributions of women worldwide, it also serves as a reminder of the significant disparities that persist, particularly in healthcare access and outcomes.

For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO), recently reported that "Globally, a woman dies of pregnancy-related causes every two minutes," adding

Prioritising women's health for accelerated progress

that "most of these deaths are preventable with the right care at the right time." Similarly, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) disclosed that the lowest levels of ante-natal care are observed in sub-Saharan Africa and South-Asia.

The Nigerian situation is particularly concerning and should jolt all stakeholders in healthcare to take the theme of the IWD 2004 seriously. Statistics continue to show that women in the country encounter a myriad of health issues stemming from various factors, which include socio-economic inequalities, cultural norms, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Maternal mortality rates remain alarmingly high, with Nigeria accounting for a significant proportion of global maternal deaths. According to the WHO, Nigeria contributes about 19 per cent of the global maternal deaths, despite having only 2 per cent of the world's population. This staggering statistic underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve maternal health outcomes.

One of the primary reasons behind these high maternal mortality rates is the lack of access to quality maternal healthcare services. Many women in Nigeria, especially those living in rural areas, face barriers such as distance to health facilities, lack of transportation, and financial constraints. Additionally, cultural

and religious beliefs and practices often deter women from seeking timely medical assistance during pregnancy and childbirth, leading to preventable complications and deaths. Some of these beliefs include prohibition of certain medical procedures, such as blood transfusion. Efforts must be made to dislodge such deep-rooted impediments. Healthcare is a fundamental human right and should supersede any religious or cultural belief that violates its life-saving interventions.

It must also be emphasised that reproductive health issues, including access to contraception and family planning services, remain inadequately addressed in the country. Limited awareness and education about reproductive rights and healthcare options contribute to unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, putting women's health and lives at risk. Added to these is the prevalence of gender-based violence, which not only inflicts physical and psychological harm but also has long-term implications for women's health. Survivors of gender-based violence often suffer from trauma, depression, and other mental health disorders, yet access to mental health support services remains limited in many parts of Nigeria.


To address these challenges, concerted efforts are needed

at multiple levels. Firstly, the Nigerian government must prioritise women's health on the national agenda and allocate adequate resources towards improving maternal healthcare infrastructure, expanding access to family planning services, and implementing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health programs.

Additionally, community-based initiatives aimed at raising awareness about women's health issues, combating harmful cultural practices, and promoting gender equality are crucial for driving positive change. Empowering women with knowledge about their health rights and facilitating their access to healthcare services can significantly improve health outcomes and contribute to overall societal development.

Moreover, partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and international stakeholders are vital for implementing sustainable solutions and scaling up successful interventions. By working together, we can create a supportive environment where every Nigerian woman has the opportunity to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

As Nigeria joins the rest of the world to mark this important day, all stakeholders must reaffirm commitment to prioritising women's health and well-being in the country. By addressing the systemic barriers and inequalities that impede access to healthcare services, we can pave the way for a future where Nigerian women can thrive and contribute to building a healthier and more equitable society.



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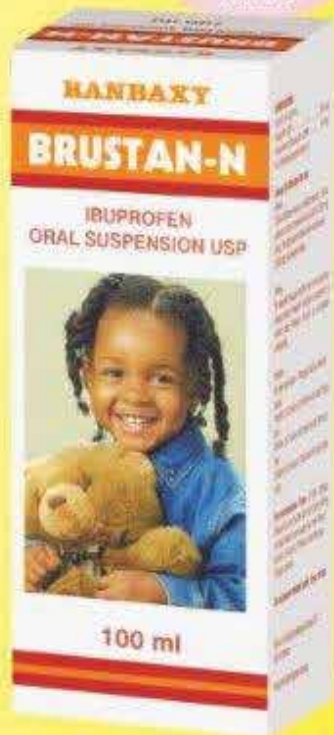
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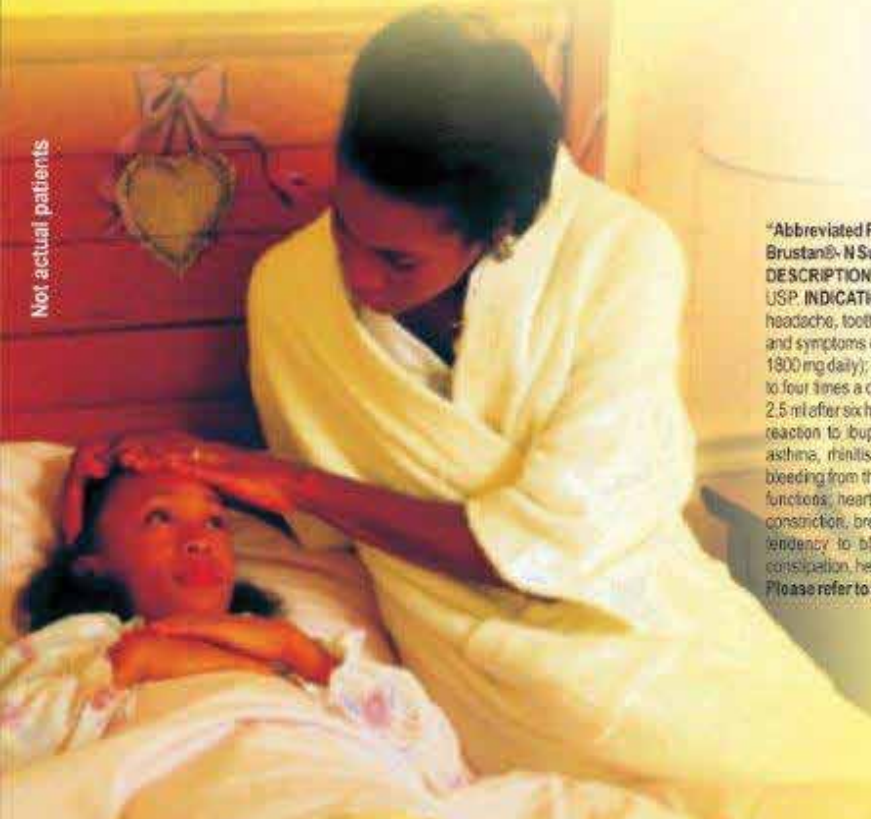
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Blessings of open and closed doors

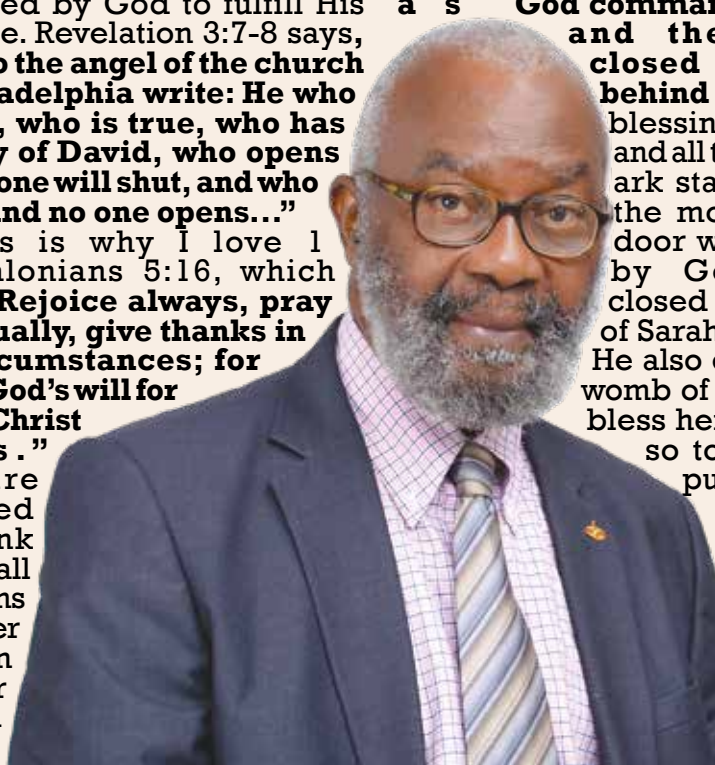
By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

In life, we experience all sorts of doors opening and closing. It is a blessing when we have open doors, which signify good things coming our way. It may be in having a promotion at our workplace, finding the right wife or husband, getting a lucrative contract, or obtaining a scholarship for further studies. Any of these things can make life better and the future brighter. Therefore, everyone desires and prays for open doors.

When a door opens for good, we rejoice and praise God. But when we consider a door closed, we consider it a thing of regret and sadness. But the doors are opened or closed by God to fulfill His purpose. Revelation 3:7-8 says, **"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens..."**

This is why I love 1 Thessalonians 5:16, which says, **"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."**

We are enjoined to thank God in all situations - whether of an open or closed door



-because God uses both to fulfil His purpose for our lives. Romans 8:28 (NKJV) says, **"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."**

When we have an open door, we must be sure that it is from God. Of course, when God opens a door for you, it must not contradict His Word. For instance, not every opportunity to make money is an open door from God. Any means of getting more money that makes you lose interest in regular fellowship or service in church cannot be from God.

This is why I admire people who have made it materially and still remain faithful in serving God. They know that God is the source of their wealth. Deuteronomy 18:8 says, **"And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."**

A door which God opens for you will require you to depend on Him. God who opens the

door for you must be first in your life and you must always need Him to prosper. The direction, guidance and protection of God are necessary to enjoy an open door from Him.

The same God who opens a door also closes it for your own good. If you think over your life, you have cause to thank God for closing certain doors. Therefore, certain doors are closed for your own good or blessing.

I think of Noah's ark, which God gave the specifications for its building. Genesis 7:16 (NASB) says, **"Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered a s God commanded him;**

and the LORD closed the door behind him." The

blessing of Noah and all those in the ark started from the moment the door was closed by God. God closed the womb of Sarah for good. He also closed the womb of Hannah to bless her. He does so to fulfil His purpose

In 1978, God closed a n d opened g i a n t doors in my life. As the marketing

manager of my company, I desired to excel and make a career in marketing management. After several local trainings, I applied and got admission for a six-week course of the International Marketing Institute (IMI), Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. However, my boss did not approve it and withheld the financial support. Luckily, with the grants from IMI and my own resources, I was able to make it.

On my return, I lost the favour of my boss and our relationship became sour. That closed my door of prospering in the company. I looked around for other marketing openings but found no suitable one. The door was closed.

God Himself then opened the door of pharmaceutical journal publishing, which He had already planned for me. It was then that I realised that even the marketing programme I had attended was to equip me for my own business.

God kept away all financial expenses - boarding, tuition and airfare - from my company so that it would not claim His glory for my training.



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July	- Hepatitis
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Keep hope alive

By George O. Emetuche, CES

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence. - Hellen Keller

My father once told me a folktale about a man who was banished to the evil forest because he had a protruded stomach. In their land, having a protruded stomach was a taboo. So, his people left him in the evil forest, to die. Consequently, the man sat on the ground in the forest; waiting on hope. He was in that mood when a poor man, who felt his world was coming to an end because of his financial condition, walked in. The man was finding it difficult to meet up with paying his bills, so he decided to end his life by hanging, and the best place to do that was the evil forest.

Unknown to the angry poor fellow, the man who had a protruded stomach was sitting beneath the tree he wanted to hang himself on. So, when he went up to commit suicide as planned, he heard a voice saying, "Please mind my stomach, I don't want to get hurt!"

On hearing the voice, the poor man changed his mind and decided to go home. He concluded that if the man his community had abandoned in the evil forest to die could still be hopeful, there was no need for him to commit suicide. The best thing was to go home and continue to do his best and hope that, someday, everything would be alright.

In all, be hopeful

The business outlook is tough. Inflation rate in January 2024 was 29.9 per cent. At the time of this writing, 1 USD exchanges for N1700. This is a record low performance of the naira. The purchasing power of Nigerians is growing weaker and businesses are struggling to survive. Where do we go from here? Who will bell the cat? My simple answer is: in all, be hopeful.

Hope brings sunshine. Hope keeps you moving. Hope is a motivator. Of course, I agree with James Cameron who said, "Hope is not a strategy. Luck is not a factor. Fear is not an option." Yes, this thought is true but I also believe that hope is the way to go because it is a great motivation for the entrepreneur, the sales professional and, indeed, for everyone. Hope is needed in the journey of life. Without hope, we lose hope! Where there is no hope, there is no tomorrow; there is no future.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going

You must keep hoping and keep doing your best. There's a slang in Nigeria that keeps folks going and that slang is, "e go better"; that is, "it will get better." *E go better* keeps life going. It helps the individual to continue to push forward.

The mindset of *e go better* kills fear and energises the individual to keep fighting his battles. No matter the economic outlook, be happy and hopeful. My Igbo people say "*oga adi mma*" - it shall be well.

Life is a gift. Life is paramount. Once you have life in you, you are a success. Be hopeful. I know it's tough out there. I know it's not rosy.

A lot is happening at the same time! Insecurity is unfortunately becoming the new normal. Vices of all sorts are on the increase. I think the devil himself will be shocked at the level of wanton killing in the land. The devil won't be needing a "personal assistant" in Nigeria because some demented folks are doing his job perfectly!

When you hear all this bad news, what do you do? This question may seem easy but a lot of people may find it difficult to answer. Like I said, be happy and hopeful. It is in a great storm that you realise a good captain.

I have come to the conclusion that giving up to life challenges isn't an option. When folks give up, they give in.

Keep keeping on

It is no longer news that adversity will come. This is why we are humans. The main topic of discussion is how you

handled the adversity. Did you surrender to your challenges, or did you feed the hopeful you from within - to continue to move towards the brighter side?

Keep hope alive. As a sales professional, believe you can meet and exceed your target. Go to the field with the right mindset and keep doing your best. As a businessperson or professional, you may not get results the way you planned sometimes. Outcome of things may decide to be in the opposite side, but that's still not the end of the world. I have seen difficult situations turn around for good because the person involved didn't lose hope.

Hope is an amplifier. It makes the big picture even bigger! Vision, mission, goals, objectives and strategy may not work on their own if there's no element of hope and action. You need to "invest hope" in the things you want to



see. You need to take the right actions to achieve your goals. Hope is a necessity on the ladder of success.

Keep hope alive always!

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Inquest

with
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It has been established that the act of crying offers many therapeutic benefits to the human system. Psychologists and experts in mental health believe that the outpouring of bottled-up emotions does the body so much good and prevents the human mind from the ignoble descent into self-destruction.

It is better to empty ourselves of emotions, whether joyful or sorrowful, through teary downpours than to leave them trapped in our minds and allow them to dissipate through other inglorious ways. For example, the tears of joy shed by a victorious athlete help him to react positively to the unexpected success and thereby balances his emotional architecture with a reminder that the attained glory is not entirely a product of his own making but more of either the intervention of divinity, luck or chance. Philosophically speaking such a scenario helps him to remain humble and sober in the face of life's unending paradoxes.

On the other hand, for the one who is faced with defeat or who finds himself swimming against the melancholic tides of human existence, the act of crying rids him

of the negative burden of bottled-up emotions. By letting those tears out, he purges himself of all the bad feelings that accompany his inability to surmount the challenge at that point in time. The foregoing therefore admonishes us all to react to the vicissitudes of life with temperance and modesty.

It is very significant for Nigerians, at this point of our socio-economic experience, to imbibe some psychological principles that can help us remain positive-minded, irrespective of the unsavory and heart-breaking developments that have continued to create tensions and unease in our national life. To be honest, the level of hunger and inflation in the country has not augured well for most families. The skyrocketing prices of goods and services, especially food and basic necessities, is not the best of developments. Everywhere you go, you will encounter persons either begging for help or asking for food to eat.

While we understand that the times are hard and that we cannot avoid these sad experiences as a nation, we must summon the courage to face the current realities head-on. One of the ways to free ourselves from the shackles of the

Health benefits of crying

prevailing circumstances is to reflect on life philosophically and cry out our pains privately.

The act of crying is, in itself, not a sign of weakness but one of

strength, knowing that when we refuse to do so, we may bottle up emotions that have the tendency to break us down mentally. There is courage in crying when we shed our pains away and move on in life with a positive mindset. After all, as long as we are alive, whatever we have lost can come back to us in a hundred fold.

Fellow Nigerians, please "Cry The Beloved Country" and remain positive that brighter days are coming. The more you cry in your privacy, the more you realise that your success or failure depends not entirely on your own making but on some other extraneous factors such as the God-factor. The more you shed those tears of success or failure, the more you become emotionally mature and intelligent, knowing that the humility in victory and the pride in failure are essential ingredients in the journey of life.

For those who are financially down and are unable to manage the pain of insolvency, rather than drink yourself to stupor or engage in unnecessary outbursts with mockers, retire to your closet and cry away your pains while reminding yourself that life is full of ups and downs. You will eventually be better off, as you would have

mastered the art of managing the tragic encounters of this life.

What crying does to your mental health cannot be quantified. Here are some of those things you can achieve when you cry anytime life throws wicked punches at you:

Crying helps your body to rest and digest.

Crying detoxifies your body. Crying dulls pain by releasing oxytocin and endorphins.

Crying improves your mood by regulating your brain's temperature.

Crying rallies physical support by attracting the intervention of people around you

Crying helps you to overcome grief, even if it involves the loss of a loved one.

Crying restores our emotional balance. Researchers at Yale University believe that crying helps to achieve emotional equilibrium

Crying helps your baby to sleep. Remember, when you are stressed and your baby tries to worsen the situation, by crying profusely, it falls to sleep and helps you overcome your emotional worries.

In our journey through life, we must put aside the togas of ego and arrogance. When necessary, let us let those teary drops out. It has nothing to do with gender, tribe or race. Crying is the bravest act for those who wish to truly conquer their fears in life. Even Jesus wept!

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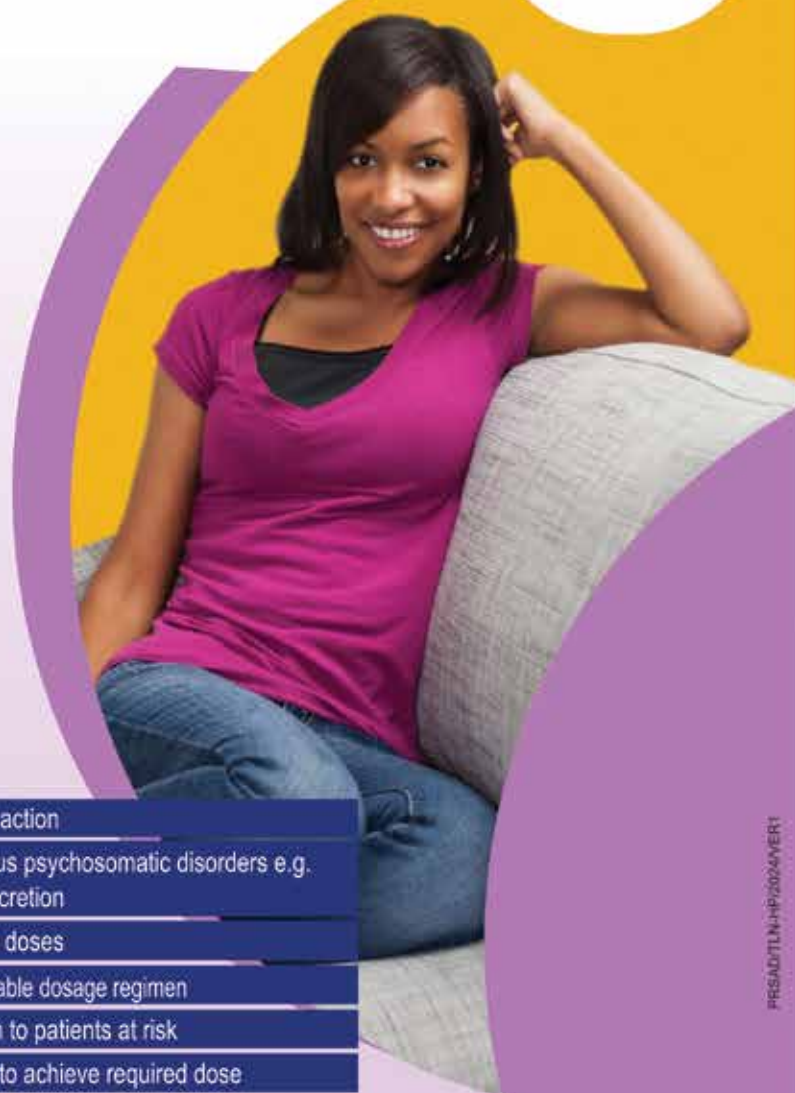
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Maintaining a healthy pancreas to avoid diabetes and digestive issues

By Mrs Chima Ejimofor

The pancreas plays a crucial role in the body's digestive and endocrine systems.

1. Digestive function: It produces digestive enzymes (such as amylase, lipase, and proteases) that help break down carbohydrates, fats, and proteins in the small intestine to aid in digestion.

2. Endocrine function: It secretes hormones such as insulin and glucagon, which regulate blood sugar levels. Insulin helps lower blood sugar levels by facilitating the uptake of glucose into cells, while glucagon helps raise blood sugar levels by stimulating the liver to release stored glucose into the bloodstream.

3. Hormonal regulation: In addition to insulin and glucagon, the pancreas secretes other hormones such as somatostatin, which helps regulate digestion and nutrient absorption in the small intestine, and pancreatic polypeptide, which helps regulate pancreatic secretions and gastrointestinal function.

4. Bicarbonate production: The pancreas secretes bicarbonate ions to neutralise the acidic chyme (partially digested food) that enters the small intestine from the stomach. This helps create an optimal pH environment for the action of digestive enzymes.

5. Regulation of digestive enzyme activation: The pancreas produces inactive forms of digestive enzymes, which are activated once they reach the small intestine. This prevents premature activation of enzymes within the pancreas itself, which could lead to damage to pancreatic tissue.

Overall, the pancreas is essential for maintaining proper digestion and regulating blood sugar levels in the body. It has multifaceted importance in maintaining overall health and well-being.

The pancreas can be damaged by various factors, leading to different conditions, such as:

1. Pancreatitis: This is inflammation of the pancreas, which can be acute or chronic. Acute pancreatitis is often caused by gallstones or excessive alcohol consumption, while chronic pancreatitis can result from long-term alcohol abuse, certain medications, or other underlying conditions. Pancreatitis can lead to severe abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and potentially life-threatening complications.

2. Pancreatic cancer: Pancreatic cancer is a serious and often aggressive form of cancer that originates in the cells of the pancreas. It can cause symptoms such as abdominal pain, weight loss, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), and digestive issues. Early detection and treatment are crucial for improving outcomes in pancreatic cancer.

3. Diabetes: Damage to the pancreatic cells that produce insulin can lead to diabetes mellitus. Type 1 diabetes results from autoimmune destruction of these cells, while type 2 diabetes often involves a combination of insulin resistance and inadequate insulin production. Both types of diabetes can have serious health consequences if not properly managed.

4. Pancreatic cysts: These are fluid-filled sacs that can develop in the pancreas. While many pancreatic cysts are benign and asymptomatic, some may become cancerous or cause complications such as infection or obstruction of the pancreatic ducts.

These are just a few examples of conditions that can damage the pancreas. Maintaining a healthy pancreas involves adopting lifestyle habits that support overall health and well-being. Here are

some tips:

1. Healthy diet: Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit intake of processed foods, sugary beverages, and high-fat foods, which can contribute to obesity and increase the risk of pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer.

2. Limit alcohol consumption: Excessive alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for pancreatitis and can also contribute to pancreatic cancer. Limit alcohol intake to moderate levels or avoid it altogether.

3. Maintain a healthy weight: Being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing pancreatitis, diabetes, and pancreatic cancer. Aim to maintain a healthy weight through a combination of healthy eating and regular physical activity.

4. Exercise regularly: Engage in

regular physical activity, such as walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling, for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Exercise helps control weight, improve insulin sensitivity, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

5. Quit smoking: Smoking is a significant risk factor for pancreatic cancer and can also worsen pancreatitis. If you smoke, seek support to quit smoking and avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.

6. Manage stress: Chronic stress can negatively impact overall health, including pancreatic function. Practice stress-reducing activities such as meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, or hobbies you enjoy.

7. Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Adequate hydration supports digestion and overall health.

8. Regular health check-ups: Schedule regular health check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor



your overall health, including blood sugar levels and pancreatic function. Early detection and management of any potential issues can help maintain a healthy pancreas.

9. The use of high quality nutritional supplements (Continues next edition).

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

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ACPN tasks FG on economic revival

continued from front page



Pharm. Lawrence Ekhatior, immediate past chairman, Lagos ACPN (middle), flanked by Pharm. Paul Owolabi, immediate past vice-chairman (left), and Pharm. Charles Oyeniyi, immediate past secretary, at the AGM.

on its practice.

Speaking during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association, held at the indoor hall of the PSN secretariat, in Ogudu, Lagos, the immediate past chairman of ACPN, Lagos State, Pharm. Lawrence Ekhatior attributed the current inflation and high interest rate for financing business operations in Nigeria as some of the factors responsible for the challenges of low patronage and profitability at the community pharmacy level.

Speaking further, Ekhatior noted that the current economy has been harsh on community pharmacists, adding that the galloping inflation that the country is currently experiencing is not making the practice profitable.

According to him, "You buy a product today, and before the end of that day or the next day, the price has changed. And by the time you sell, it will be difficult to restock because of price changes."

He continued: "Many of our colleagues are finding it difficult to restock because the capital is being eroded by inflation, and this is going to spill over to the consumer. So, we are calling on the Federal Government to quickly nip this in the bud, because we don't want a situation where people are forced to go for inferior products, all in the name of not having the purchasing power."

"Another policy of the FG that should be reviewed is import duties from the Customs, as the

agency increases import duties daily, which according to them is based on the dollar rate. It should be noted that such will affect the price of drugs.

"So, we are calling on the government to realise that, since drugs are essential needs, their importation, just like that of food, should be put on a special pedestal, so that it can be given a special concession."

While reacting to the establishment of a Coordinated Wholesale Centre (CWC), by the Kano State Government, in collaboration with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme, Ekhatior tasked the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwoolu, to do the same in

Lagos, adding that if truly he is interested in the wellbeing of Lagos populace, the onus is on him to emulate the establishment of the modern pharmaceutical market.

Speaking in the same vein, the national secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. Gafar Madehin, noted that as a member of the pharmacy ecosystem, the current economy is having a serious impact on the practice, especially at the community level, adding that the continuous changes in prices are taking its toll on the business.

He said, "The healthcare products that we deal with are majorly imported, so the value of the dollar is affecting the prices. And we have seen over the past two to three months that the prices have not stabilised."

"On the issue of patronage, healthcare is a basic need of man; so people who need to seek healthcare still come. But the only impact is that many of them buy less because of financial strength."

"On the issue of profitability, this is a trying period for us because when we buy, we put a specific margin of profit. But what we have discovered is that, for the past few months, by the time you sell and you want to restock, you will found out that the prices you are getting the goods have doubled. So, in the real sense of the word, profitability is difficult because we have to add more money to restock."

Speaking on the way forward, the PSN scribe tasked the Federal Government to pay more attention to the healthcare sector, adding that there are different ways that the healthcare needs of the citizens can be subsidised, including an effective national health insurance policy.

Lagos ACPN elects new executives - As Ekhatior bows out for Ajayi

By Adebayo Oladejo

It was a carnival-like arena at the indoor hall of the PSN Secretariat, Ogudu, Lagos, as the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Lagos Chapter, elected Tolulope Ajayi as its new chairman, having garnered a substantially higher number of votes to defeat his only opponent, Pharm. Jonah Okotie.

While announcing the result of the election, which was held during the Annual General Meeting of the association, Chairman of the Electoral Committee, Pharm. Celestine Mbamarah, noted that the total votes cast were 272, out of which three were

voided votes, adding that Ajayi had 195 votes to defeat Okotie, who had 74 votes.

He added that other elected executives - namely, Pharm. Charles Oyeniyi, vice chairman; Pharm. Mosunmola Dosumu, secretary; Pharm. Mojisola Aladesanmi, assistant secretary; Pharm. Ezewanne Chukwudi, treasurer; Pharm. Imade Roy-Ekekwe, public relations officer; and Pharm. Chioma Omattah, editor-in-chief - were elected unopposed.

Speaking after the swearing-in, the new ACPN boss, Ajayi, remarked that despite the tensions associated with elections, the association



The newly sworn-in Lagos ACPN Chairman, Pharm. Tolu Ajayi, other members of the new executives, and immediate past chairman, Pharm. Lawrence Ekhatior, at the AGM.

remains united.

According to him, "There is no winner and there is no loser; only Pharmacy has won. So I invite everyone to team up with this administration to achieve the change that we desire in Lagos ACPN as we all know that Pharmacy flows in our body."

He added: "As vast as Lagos ACPN is, we need to team up and do the work together. We are here to consolidate on the gains and labours of our heroes past and collaborate to move community pharmacy in Lagos

to greater heights."

Ajayi promised to leverage the success of the immediate past chairman, Pharm. Lawrence Ekhatior, whom he described as a well-bred person.

The newly elected chairman is a graduate of Pharmacy from Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife. He is the founding CEO of Shekinah Specialties Limited. He has over 22 years of experience in pharmaceutical product marketing and pharmaceutical care services in the country.

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Largest trade event in Africa dedicated to medicine is free to attend

Pharma West Africa Exhibition and Conference opens in Lagos on March 20th



A new international trade exhibition dedicated to boosting the medicines supply chain is expecting more than 2,500 pharmacy and pharmaceutical industry professionals in a few weeks.

Pharma West Africa is free to attend and will run from March 20th-22nd at the Landmark Centre, Lagos, instantly becoming the largest event of its kind across the entire sub-Saharan Africa region. More than 120 exhibitors from Nigeria and around the world will be representing thousands of medicines brands as well as equipment, technology and other items associated with the pharmaceuticals sector.

A three-day Conference, also free to attend, will run alongside the Exhibition and has been accredited for professional learning for pharmacists and other pharmaceutical professionals. It will be chaired by Ahmed Yakasai, former Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Chairman and CEO/Founder of Pharmaplus Nigeria Ltd., with the third day being hosted by the Pharmaceutical Wholesalers Association of Nigeria (PWDAN). Conference topics will include medicines and universal health coverage, branding, regulatory updates from ECOWAS countries and opportunities and challenges for medicines manufacturing in Nigeria.

Pharma West Africa is being launched by BtoB Events, the name behind three of Nigeria's largest trade exhibitions, Beauty West Africa, Food & Beverage West Africa and The West African Automotive Show (WAAS). This new event is partnering with all of the major pharmaceutical bodies and societies across the region as well as NAFDAC, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control.

BtoB Events Managing Director Jamie Hill said: "Pharma West Africa will quickly establish itself this year as the largest event in the region for pharmaceuticals. In addition to 120 international exhibitors, we are bringing together over 2,500 pharmaceutical professionals in one place under one roof for three days supporting networking and new business partnerships.

"It is absolutely important for local manufacturers to come along and visit. We have many, many companies coming along here that are keen to offer contract manufacturing facilities to local manufacturers and at the same are interested in using local manufacturing facilities to manufacture their drugs to get them into the lucrative West

African market.

"For manufacturers, there are opportunities for partnerships and collaborations. There are opportunities to source new machinery and to see the latest new active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) on the market. For retailers, the exhibitors represent thousands of different pharmaceutical brands. Some will

be here for the very first time on African soil, but all are looking for business partners.

"And if you are a student or have recently graduated with a relevant degree, this is a fantastic opportunity to come and meet people to source employment, to get ahead of the competition, and to learn from those who are well-established in the medicines sector. Come to Pharma West

Africa and see how to grow your pharmaceuticals or pharmacy business.

"It really is a must attend event for everybody within the pharmaceutical industry from across West Africa to meet with the global markets. We hope to see as many people there as possible."

Businesses interested in exhibiting at Pharma West Africa, or in sponsorship opportunities, should contact the BtoB Events team via info@pharma-westafrica.com or by calling +44 2475 460143, or request a call-back via <https://btob-events.com/contact/>.

While admission to the exhibition and conference is free, it can help speed up entry to the event by pre-registering at <https://www.pharma-westafrica.com/pre-register-now/>.

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Effective management of pain, arthritis and rheumatism

Pain is a general term that describes uncomfortable sensations in the body. It stems from the activation of the nervous system. Pain can range from annoying to debilitating. It may feel like a sharp stab or dull ache. It may also be described as throbbing, pinching, stinging, burning, or sore.

Pain may be consistent, it may start and stop frequently, or it may occur only under some conditions. It may be acute, developing suddenly and lasting for a short period. Or it may be chronic, with ongoing sensations that last or return repeatedly over several months or years.

Pain may be localised, affecting a specific part of your body. Or it may be generalised, such as the overall body aches associated with the flu.

People respond to pain differently. Some people have a high pain tolerance, while others have a low tolerance. Pain is highly subjective. It lets us know when something is wrong and gives us hints about the cause. Some pain is easy to diagnose and can be managed at home. Other types of pain are signs of serious health conditions that require medical attention to treat.

According to Dr Femi Ogunyemi, a consultant in pain medicine, pain-related disorders that have lingered

longer than three to four months become a serious determinant of quality of life. Depression sets in; relationships at work, with family and friends take on new dynamics. Whatever contribution the pain sufferer made to society starts to shrink.

"The patient may begin to feel like a burden or a castaway from society. It need not be so. As far back as 1999, pain was accorded the position of 'fifth vital sign'. That is when a nurse checks the temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate periodically, the nurse must also assess the patient's level of pain.

"Today, in Nigeria, there is a paucity of truly trained pain specialists. Several Nigerian doctors have specialised in pain medicine but continue to practise in the UK and the USA where it is lucrative and full of job satisfaction," he said.

What causes pain?

In some cases, pain is caused by a specific injury or medical condition. In other cases, the cause of the pain may be less obvious or unknown.

Some common causes of pain include:

- headache
- toothache
- sore throat
- stomach ache or cramps
- muscle cramps or strains

- cuts, burns, or bruises
- bone fractures

Many illnesses or disorders, such as the flu, arthritis, endometriosis, and fibromyalgia, can cause pain. Depending on the underlying cause, the patient may develop other symptoms as well. For example, these may include fatigue, swelling, nausea, vomiting, or mood changes.

Types of pain

There are several different types of pain. It is possible to experience more than one type at the same time. If you are in pain, identifying the type of pain may help your healthcare professional narrow down the potential causes and develop a treatment plan.

1. Acute pain

Acute pain develops over a short period. It tends to occur suddenly, often as a result of a known injury, illness, or medical procedure.

For example, acute pain may result from:

- injuries such as cuts, burns, muscle strains, or bone fractures
- illnesses such as food poisoning, strep throat, or appendicitis
- medical procedures such as injections, dental work, or surgery

Acute pain tends to be sharp, rather than dull. It usually goes away within a few days, weeks, or months, after the cause has been treated or resolved.

Almost everyone experiences acute pain at some point in their lifetime.

2. Chronic pain

Chronic pain lasts or comes and goes, over multiple months or

years. It may result from a variety of health conditions, such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic migraine, or cancer. Some people also experience chronic pain following an injury, even after the initial injury has healed.

In some cases, the cause of chronic pain is hard to identify. Some people experience chronic pain when there's no other evidence of underlying injury or illness. This is known as functional pain.

3. Nociceptive pain

Nociceptive pain is caused by tissue damage. For example, it may result from injuries such as cuts, burns, bruises, or fractures. It may also result from certain health conditions that cause tissue inflammation and damage, such as arthritis, osteoporosis, or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

When nociceptive pain develops in your skin, muscles, ligaments, tendons, joints, or bones, it is known as somatic pain. When it develops in your internal organs, it is known as visceral pain.

Nociceptive pain may be acute or chronic, depending on the underlying cause. It may feel achy, throbbing, or sharp.

Nociceptive pain affects almost everyone at some point in their lifetime.

4. Neuropathic pain

Neuropathic pain results from nerve damage, which may be caused by a variety of injuries and illnesses. For example, you may experience neuropathic pain if one of the discs in your spine slips out of place and puts pressure on a nerve.

You may also develop neuropathic pain as a result of

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WAVE OF RAVES...AND RAGE

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

In what may be considered another early demonstration of the hand of God upon **Pharmanews**, the 12-page maiden edition (printed in black and white, with the exception of the masthead) came out in May, 1979.

The lead story, captioned, "THE FEDERAL CHIEF PHARMACIST SPEAKS", featured the extensive interview I had with Dr Philip Emafo, who was then the federal chief pharmacist. The inner pages contained such news items as the election of Dr Emafo as the secretary general of West African Pharmaceutical Federation (WAPF); the appointment of Pharm. Moses Azuikwe as the registrar/secretary of the Pharmacists Board of Nigeria; the appointment of Dr Bona Obiorah as adviser to the World Health Organisation; the election of Chief Andrew Egboh as Fellow of the British Institute of Regulatory Affairs; as well as the election of PSN Lagos executive committee, with Ayo Adedipe as chairman and Bunmi Olaopa as secretary.

There were also columns and articles contributed by the likes of Bruno Nwankwo ("Planning the Sale"), Ibukun Ogundipe

("Contemplating Pharmacists") and Eugene Okonkwo ("Communication is the Link"). Adverts in the edition came from

the introduction of **Pharmanews** somehow gives me a sense of achievement.

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enhance the position of the pharmacists by encouraging effective communication among the professionals, promoting pharmaceutical activities, the individuals and corporate bodies.

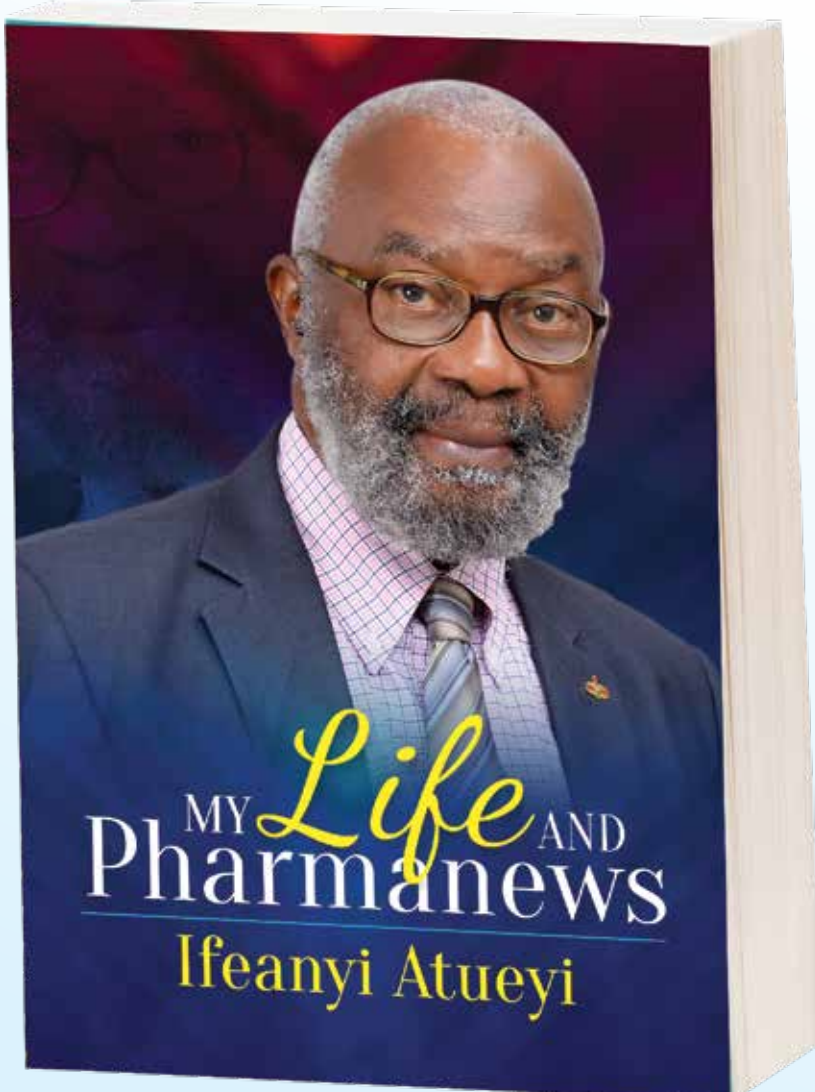
Pharmanews seeks to supplement the efforts of the existing publications relating to pharmacy and believes that by so doing, the generality of the pharmacists will benefit tremendously from our efforts to provide education, experience, pleasure and relaxation to colleagues.

As a contribution to the growth and development of Pharmacy in Nigeria, **Pharmanews** will meanwhile be distributed free of charge to all registered pharmacists. Therefore, please ensure that you receive your copy monthly.

The survival of **Pharmanews** depends on the support – moral, economic, technical, material or otherwise of the pharmacists, pharmaceutical establishments, interested individuals and organisations. I therefore strongly appeal to all concerned to keep **Pharmanews** in mind always.

Finally, I must express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues, friends, and companies who rallied round to see to the birth of the **Pharmanews**. This page will not be enough to contain the long list of such names, therefore let me not go into such enumeration here. Your names are already written in gold for posterity.

Continues next edition



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Effective management of pain, arthritis and rheumatism

continued from page 11

certain illnesses, such as shingles, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or cancer. Neuropathic pain may feel like a stabbing, shooting, burning, or prickling sensation. You may also find that you are hypersensitive to touch, movement, or hot and cold temperatures.

5. Functional pain

Functional pain is pain that is caused by no obvious injury or damage to your body. It tends to be chronic, although acute functional pain may also develop.

More than 15 per cent of the world's population has a functional pain syndrome. Examples of functional pain syndromes include:

- fibromyalgia, which causes widespread pain throughout the body
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which causes abdominal pain
- temporomandibular dysfunction, which causes jaw pain
- chronic cardiac chest pain, which causes chest pain

How is pain diagnosed?

If you seek medical attention for your pain, your healthcare professional will first do a physical examination and ask you some questions. Be prepared to describe the pain specifically, including when it started, when it is most intense, and whether it is mild, moderate, or severe.

- how the pain affects your life
- if you have other symptoms
- if there are triggers that make the pain worse
- if you have any diagnosed health conditions
- if you have had any recent injuries or illnesses
- if you have recently changed your diet or exercise routine
- if you are taking medications or supplements

Treatment of pain

Pain treatment depends on the underlying issue or injury that is causing it, if known. Acute pain will generally go away once the cause has been treated or resolved. Chronic pain can be more difficult to manage, especially if it is functional pain that results from an unknown cause.

If you have pain that is caused by an injury, it might heal naturally with time or you might need medication, surgery, or other medical attention. If your pain is caused by an infection, it might resolve on its own or you might need medication or other treatments.

If you have a chronic health condition such as arthritis, cancer, or chronic migraine, your doctor might prescribe medication, surgery, or other therapies to help treat it. Your healthcare professional might also recommend treatments to ease the pain itself. For example, they may recommend or prescribe:

- over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen;
- prescription anti-inflammatory drugs, such as corticosteroids or certain types of COX-2 inhibitors;
- opioid medications, which may be prescribed for acute pain following an injury or surgery;
- antidepressant or anti-seizure medications, which may be prescribed for some types of neuropathic pain or functional pain

syndromes;

- physical therapy, which may help relieve pain caused by injuries or certain health conditions, such as arthritis or multiple sclerosis
- occupational therapy, which may help you learn how to adapt your daily activities and environments to limit pain.

Your doctor may also recommend complementary therapies, such as:

- biofeedback, in which a therapist uses electronic devices to help you learn how to consciously control body functions, such as breathing;

- acupuncture or acupressure, in which a practitioner stimulates certain pressure points on your body to help relieve chronic pain;
- massage, in which a therapist rubs, kneads, or presses on muscles or other soft tissues to help ease tension and pain;
- meditation, in which you

focus your mind in ways intended to relieve stress and tension;

- Tai chi or yoga, which combines gentle movements and deep breathing to stretch and stimulate your muscles and ease tension;
- progressive muscle relaxation, in which you consciously tighten and then relax different muscle groups to promote natural relaxation;
- guided imagery, in which you visualize calming images.

Your doctor may also recommend lifestyle changes or home remedies to help manage pain. For example, they might encourage you to:

- apply a towel-wrapped cold pack or ice to reduce painful swelling and inflammation caused by injuries or chronic conditions such as arthritis;
- apply heating pads or take warm baths to ease muscle stiffness, soreness, or cramps;

- limit or avoid certain activities or triggers that make your pain worse;
- take steps to limit and ease stress;
- get regular gentle exercise;
- get enough sleep;
- lose weight.

For minor injuries that do not require medical attention, follow the general rule of RICE:

- Rest the injured area
- Ice the injured area, by applying a towel-wrapped cold pack or ice pack for 10 to 20 minutes at a time
- Compress the injured area, by wrapping it in an elastic bandage tightly enough to provide support, but not so tightly that it causes numbness
- Elevate the injured area above your heart

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis and other rheumatic diseases are common conditions that cause pain, swelling, and limited movement. They affect joints and

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Effective management of pain, arthritis and rheumatism

continued from page 13

connective tissues around the body. Millions of people around the world have some form of arthritis.

Arthritis means redness and swelling (inflammation) of a joint. A joint is where two or more bones meet. There are more than 100 different arthritis diseases. Rheumatic diseases include any condition that causes pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments, or bones. Arthritis is usually ongoing (chronic).

Arthritis and other rheumatic diseases are more common in women than men. They are also often linked with old age. But they affect people of all ages.

The two most common forms of arthritis are:

- **Osteoarthritis.** This is the most common type of arthritis. It is a chronic disease of the joints, especially the weight-bearing joints of the knee, hip, and spine. It destroys the coating on the ends of bones (cartilage) and narrows the joint space. It can also cause bone overgrowth, bone spurs, and reduced function. It occurs in most people as they age. It may also occur in young people because of an injury or overuse.

- **Rheumatoid arthritis.** This is an inflammatory disease of the joint linings. The inflammation may affect all of the joints. It can also affect organs such as the heart or lungs.



Other forms of arthritis or related disorders include:

- **Gout.** This condition causes uric acid crystals to build up in small joints, such as the big toe. It causes pain and inflammation.

- **Lupus.** This is a chronic autoimmune disorder. It causes periods of inflammation and damage in joints, tendons, and organs.

- **Scleroderma.** This autoimmune disease causes thickening and hardening of the skin and other connective tissue in the body.

- **Ankylosing spondylitis.** This disease causes the bones of the spine to grow together. It can also cause inflammation in other parts of the body. It can affect the shoulders, hips, ribs, and the small joints of the hands and feet.

- **Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) or juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA).** This

is a form of arthritis in children that causes inflammation and joint stiffness. Children often outgrow JRA. But it can affect bone development in a growing child.

What causes arthritis?

The cause depends on the type of arthritis. Osteoarthritis is caused by the wear and tear of the joint over time or because of overuse. Rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and scleroderma are caused by the body's immune system attacking the body's tissues. Gout is caused by the build-up of crystals in the joints. Some forms of arthritis can be linked to genes. People with the genetic marker HLA-B27 have a higher risk of ankylosing spondylitis. For some other forms of arthritis, the cause is not known.

Who is at risk for arthritis?

Some risk factors for arthritis

that cannot be avoided or changed include:

- **Age.** The older you are, the more likely you are to have arthritis.
- **Gender.** Women are more likely to have arthritis than men.
- **Heredity.** Some types of arthritis are linked to certain genes.

Risk factors that may be avoided or changed include:

- **Weight.** Being overweight or obese can damage your knee joints. This can make them more likely to develop osteoarthritis.
- **Injury.** A joint that has been damaged by an injury is more likely to develop arthritis at some point.
- **Infection.** Reactive arthritis can affect joints after an infection.
- **Your job.** Work that involves repeated bending or squatting can lead to knee arthritis.

Symptoms of arthritis

Each person's symptoms may vary. The most common symptoms include:

- Pain in one or more joints that doesn't go away, or comes back;
- Warmth and redness in one or more joints;
- Swelling in one or more joints;
- Stiffness in one or more joints;
- Trouble moving one or more joints in a normal way.

How is arthritis treated?

Treatment will depend on your symptoms, age, and general health. It will also depend on how what type of arthritis you have, and how severe the condition is. A treatment plan is tailored to each person with his or her health care provider.

There is no cure for arthritis. The

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Osteoarthritis of Superficial Joints

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*Abbreviated Prescribing Information

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

INDICATIONS

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

DOSAGE 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

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* Ref: Volini Gel prescribing information

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Ijeoma Uchegbu: Pharmaceutical nanoscientist reshaping drug delivery systems

By Ola Aboderin

History was made in late 2023, when Nigeria's Prof. Ijeoma Florence Uchegbu was elected 7th president of Wolfson College, one of the 31 colleges of the University of Cambridge. She is to succeed the current President, Professor Jane Clarke, from 1 October 2024. By that historic election, Uchegbu becomes the first black woman to hold the prestigious position, since the founding of the college in 1965.

Generally, considerations for election to such a significant post include outstanding academic achievements, strong leadership skills and extensive experience in higher education and research. In the case of Uchegbu, however, her emergence came not just because she met the above requirements but because she has distinguished herself as one of the shapers of the future of pharmaceutical science.

Indeed, within the past decade, the pharmaceutical world has witnessed a radical innovation that is redefining the process of drug development and reconfiguring the mechanisms of drug delivery. It is the application of nanotechnology to Pharmacy, otherwise known as pharmaceutical nanoscience. One of the luminaries driving this disruptive change is Prof. Uchegbu.

To understand the immensity of this ongoing scientific revolution, it is important to understand that while pharmaceutical science has triggered tremendous advances in drug development and delivery over the years, major limitations persist that warrant a paradigm shift. For instance, with the conventional drug delivery systems (oral tablets, capsules, injections, and topical preparations), there is the challenge of poor solubility and bioavailability, which often results in low efficacy, requiring higher doses of a drug or more frequent dosing.

Again, conventional drug delivery systems are often unable to target specific tissues or cells, which makes them affect healthy cells along with diseased cells, causing adverse effects and toxicity. Added to this are imitations with sustained drug release and stability issues.

A new dawn

Fortunately, however, these limitations are being rapidly dismantled by the birth of pharmaceutical nanoscience. This emerging field of medical science exploits the unique physicochemical properties of nanoparticles to ensure novel drug delivery systems that ensure better efficacy, safety, and patient compliance. In simple terms, pharmaceutical nanoscience harnesses the power of minuscule particles (often measuring mere nanometres) to carry therapeutic payloads to their intended destinations within the body, thus, ensuring unprecedented control over drug release, bioavailability, and pharmacokinetics.

These nanoparticulate drug delivery systems have increasingly proved invaluable in gene therapy, cancer therapy, AIDS therapy, and radiation. They are also being used to transport proteins, antibiotics, and vaccinations, as well as serve as vesicles to cross the blood-brain.

According to Uchegbu, "When the drug is encapsulated in nanoparticles, we can use

the particular features of the nanoparticles to control where the drugs go in the body. We can dose eye drops that stay in the eye tissues, deliver high quantities of drugs to the eye tissues and do not go to the blood, and we can dose drugs that go to the brain and do not predominantly accumulate in the blood and other organs. This means that we can reduce side effects and make the drugs more effective."

The game-changer

Professor Uchegbu is a professor of pharmaceutical nanoscience at University College London. With over 30 years' experience in the field of pharmaceutical research, she has worked extensively on developing nanotechnologies for efficient drug delivery, leading to her holding of several patents for drug delivery and biocompatible polymers. She specifically developed new types of polymers that self-assemble to form nanoscale structures, which can be used to deliver drugs to specific sites in the body.

Uchegbu has also made contributions to the field of pulmonary drug delivery. She has developed new techniques for creating inhalable drugs that can be used to treat respiratory diseases such as asthma and COPD. She has also contributed to the education of students in pharmaceutical nanoscience. In the process, she has developed educational resources (including globally acclaimed books) and programmes to train the next generation of nanomedicine researchers.

Uchegbu was the first to show that peptides could be delivered across the blood brain barrier to elicit a pharmacological response, when presented as peptide drug nanofibers and the first to demonstrate, through definitive pharmacology and pharmacokinetics evidence, peptide transport into the brain, using peptide nanoparticles delivered through the nose to brain route. These findings led her to develop the enkephalin pain medicine candidate (NES100), designed to address the opioid crisis.

In preclinical studies, NES100 showed no analgesic tolerance, reward seeking behaviour or potential to cause significant constipation. NES100 has been out licensed to Virpax Pharmaceuticals and is currently being developed by the US National Centre for Advancing Translational Studies. If successful, this will be the first neuropeptide medicine approval and it will have been made possible by the innovation originating from Uchegbu and her team.

Uchegbu is also a co-founder and chief scientific officer of Nanomerics, a pharmaceutical nanotechnology company specialising in drug delivery solutions for poorly water-soluble drugs, nucleic acids and peptides. The company is developing structures that can transport antibodies that can cross the blood-brain barrier. Nanomerics developed molecular envelope technology nanoparticles from amphiphilic polymers that self-assemble. The company licenced the medicine NM133 eyedrops to Lacta Pharmaceuticals, in California, in 2017. NM133 contains cyclosporine A and can be used to treat dry eye. She is equally a governor of the Wellcome, a large biomedical research charity.



Prof. Ijeoma Uchegbu

Uchegbu serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Controlled Release. She has served as the scientific secretary of the Controlled Release Society. She is editor-in-chief of Pharmaceutical Nanotechnology. She is on the healthcare strategy advisory team of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

Background and career path

Prof. Uchegbu was born in 1961, in Hackney, East London, where she lived and had her early education. In 1973, her Nigerian parents brought her back to live in Owerri, Imo State. She completed her secondary education at Owerri Girls Secondary School (1974-1976), before proceeding to the University of Benin, where she obtained her pharmacy degree, in 1981. Thereafter, she went to the University of Lagos for her master's degree, while being a member of staff.

Uchegbu returned to the UK in 1990 and enrolled for her PhD programme at the University of London in 1991, specialising in Medicines Development. After obtaining her PhD in 1994, she was appointed to a lectureship in drug delivery in 1997 at the University of Strathclyde. She became a senior lecturer in 2000 and a professor of drug delivery in 2002. Here she worked on polymer self-assembly, identifying materials that could form stable nanosystems. She demonstrated that polymer molecular weight could be used to control the size of vesicles. She then joined the School of Pharmacy,

University of London, as a professor of pharmaceutical nanoscience in 2006 before ultimately joining UCL in 2012.

She has risen through the ranks over the years, taking on diverse roles and responsibilities. These include being the school's pro-vice provost for Africa and the Middle East, as well as provost's envoy for race equality (2015-2021).

Awards and recognitions

In recognition of her massive contributions to scientific research, innovation, leadership and scholarship, Uchegbu has received other prestigious honours and recognitions. In 2007, she received the Women of Outstanding Achievement in Science Engineering and Technology award from the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. In 2012, she was named Pharmaceutical Scientist of the Year by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. In 2013, the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences inducted her as Eminent Fellow. That same year, she was inducted into the Controlled Release Society College of Fellows.

In 2016, Uchegbu received the Innovative Science Award from the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. A year later, her company, Nanomerics won first prize for its Molecular Envelope Technology at the Royal Society of Chemistry's Emerging Technologies Competition (Health category). In 2021, the distinguished professor was named Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

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Effective management of pain, arthritis and rheumatism

goal of treatment is often to limit pain and inflammation, and help ensure joint function. Treatment plans often use both short-term and long-term methods.

Short-term treatments include:

- **Medications.** Short-term relief for pain and inflammation may include pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications.

- **Heat and cold.** Pain may be eased by using moist heat (warm bath or shower) or dry heat (heating pad) on the joint. Pain and swelling may be eased with cold (ice pack wrapped in a towel) on the joint.

- **Joint immobilisation.** The use of a splint or brace can help a joint rest and protect it from further injury.

- **Massage.** The light massage of painful muscles may increase blood flow and bring warmth to the muscle.

- **Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS).** Pain may be reduced with the use of a TENS device. The device sends mild, electrical pulses to nerve endings in the painful area. This blocks pain signals to the brain and changes pain perception.

- **Acupuncture.** This is the use of thin needles that are inserted at specific points in the body. It may stimulate the release of natural, pain-relieving chemicals made by the nervous system. The procedure is done by a licenced health care provider.

Long-term treatments include:

- **Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs).** These prescription medications may slow down the disease and treat any immune system problems linked to the disease. Examples of these medications include methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine, sulfasalazine, and chlorambucil.

- **Corticosteroids.** Corticosteroids reduce inflammation and swelling. These medications, such as prednisone, can be taken orally or as an injection.

- **Hyaluronic acid therapy.** This is a joint fluid that appears to break down in people with osteoarthritis. It can be injected into a joint, such as the knee, to help relieve symptoms.

- **Surgery.** There are many types of surgery, depending on which joints are affected. Surgery options may include arthroscopy, fusion, or joint replacement. Full recovery after surgery takes up to six months. A rehabilitation programme after surgery is an important part of the treatment.

Living with arthritis

There is no cure for arthritis. But it is important to help keep joints working by reducing pain and inflammation. Work on a treatment plan with your healthcare provider that includes medicine and therapy. Work on lifestyle changes that can improve your quality of life. Lifestyle changes include:

- **Weight loss.** As noted earlier, extra weight puts more stress on weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees.

- **Exercise.** Some exercises may help reduce joint pain and stiffness. These include swimming, walking, low-impact aerobic exercise, and range-of-motion exercises. Stretching exercises may also help keep the joints flexible.

- **Activity and rest.** To reduce



stress on your joints, switch between activity and rest. This can help protect your joints and lessen your symptoms.

- Using assistive devices. Canes, crutches, and walkers can help keep stress off certain joints and improve balance.

- Using adaptive equipment. Reachers and grabbers let you extend your reach and reduce straining. Dressing aids help you get dressed more easily.

- Managing use of medicines. Long-term use of some anti-inflammatory medicines can lead to stomach bleeding. Work with your healthcare provider to create a plan to reduce this risk.

Misconceptions about arthritis

There are many misconceptions about arthritis. The most common misconceptions about arthritis seem to persist. Patients need facts and valid information, not myths and misconceptions, so they can better manage their illness.

Misconception 1 – Arthritis is an old person's disease.

Fact: Anyone can have arthritis. The most common misconception about arthritis is that it is a disease only of old people. In actuality, arthritis can affect anyone at any age, not just the elderly, including children, young adults and middle-aged people.

Arthritis is not age or gender specific. There are over 100 different types of arthritis and related rheumatic conditions and some are more commonly found in particular groups. Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, and lupus are more commonly found in women than men. Gout and ankylosing spondylitis appear more often in men than women.

In terms of gender, psoriatic

arthritis affects men and women nearly equally. Older people are more inclined to have osteoarthritis, the degenerative form of arthritis.

Misconception 2 – Arthritis is induced by a cold, wet climate.

Fact: Climate itself is neither the cause nor the cure.

It has long been theorised that arthritis is caused by a cold, wet climate. Moving to a warm, dry climate has been regarded by some as the cure. Logically, one can infer that if a warm climate cured arthritis, no one in other warm regions would have arthritis. Bone rubbing on bone after cartilage has worn away causes pain in any climate. However, warmth can be soothing. People without arthritis often feel better in warm climates too. Warmth may relieve symptoms of arthritis, as does soaking in a hot tub or taking a hot shower.

Misconception 3 – Arthritis can be cured.

Fact: There has been no scientific evidence that a cure for arthritis exists.

The notion that arthritis can be cured is a fallacy. To date, there is no known cure for the disease. Much has been discovered, in terms of better treatment options and slowing down the disease progression, but nothing yet has been found to successfully halt the disease. Since there are so many different types of arthritis, the prognosis varies.

Since arthritis is a lifelong process, the importance of gaining knowledge and understanding of your own health condition cannot be overstated.

Misconception 4 – Arthritis is caused by a poor diet.

Fact: There is no scientific evidence that specific foods prevent or cause arthritis.



There has been an abundance of speculation about the importance of diet with regard to arthritis. It is certain that a nutritious, well-balanced diet and ideal weight maintenance improves overall health and wellness for everyone. There are a few examples where there is a definite diet connection, such as between high uric acid levels and gout.

There is no scientific evidence, though some specific foods prevent or cause arthritis. Good diet does not prevent arthritis. Unless a person is found to have a particular food allergy which causes their arthritis to flare, there is no proven direct link between a particular food source and arthritis.

Misconception 5 – Arthritis consists of only minor aches and pains

Fact: Arthritis consists of much more than just minor aches and pains.

It is another common misconception that arthritis exhibits only minor aches and pains. Television commercials, which claim that a couple of aspirin or another over-the-counter pain reliever takes away the minor aches and pains of arthritis, tend to mislead the public.

Such advertising, along with a lack of knowledge about the disease, expand some people's unawareness of the more complex forms of arthritis, which require more aggressive forms of treatment.

Misconception 6 – “You felt fine yesterday... why so tired today?”

Fact: There is variation in the duration and severity of the symptoms of arthritis.

Since arthritis is a disease characterised by periods of flares and remissions, it is often difficult for the family and friends of an arthritic person to comprehend why they feel so much better or so much worse on any particular day. The inconsistency of arthritis can even lead some people to believe the disease is “all in your head”.

Arthritis is characterised by a mix of good days and bad days. Some days, the joint pain and fatigue are exacerbated. A balance between rest and activity may be necessary to best manage living with arthritis.

Misconception 7 – “You have arthritis, you can't...”

Fact: There is much a person with arthritis CAN do.

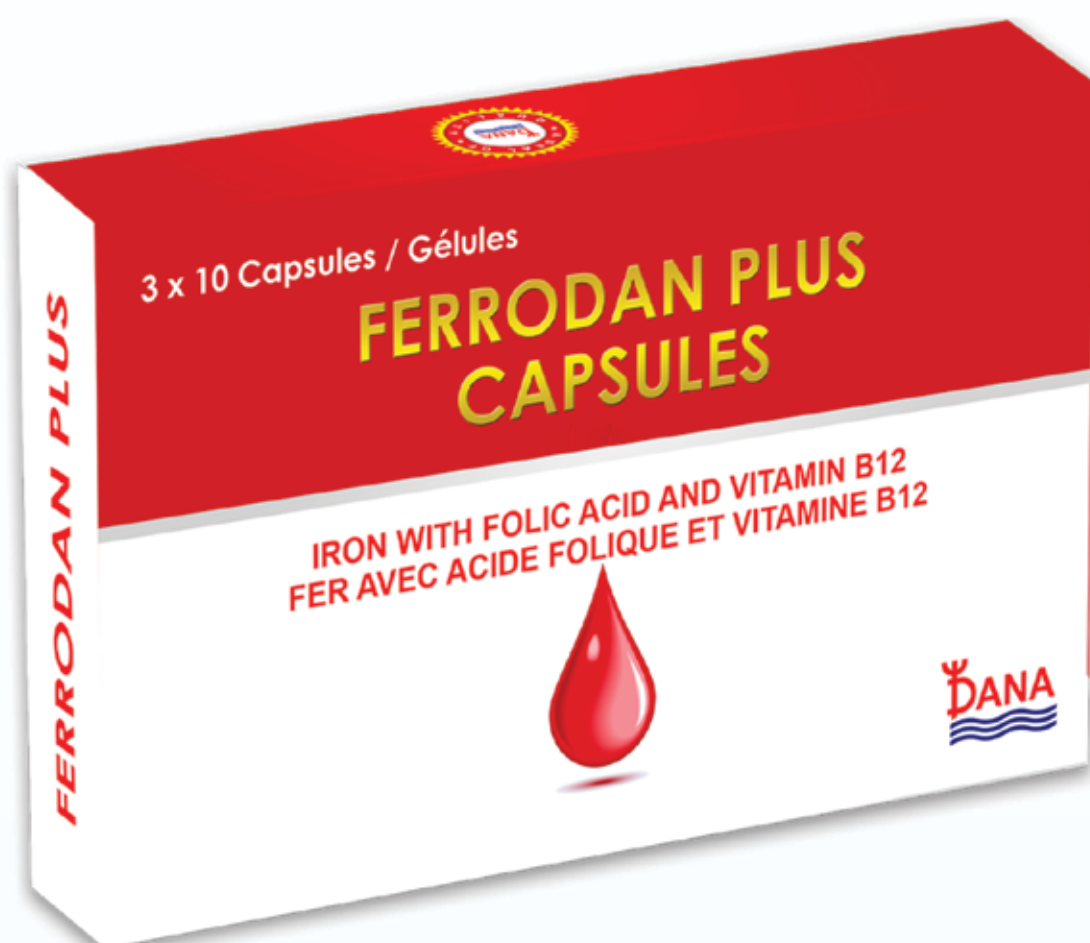
The limitations that arthritis imposes on an individual can cause people closest to them to become overprotective. Sometimes people do too much to try and help the person with arthritis. The disease does interfere with some physical ability, but certainly, the arthritic person should not be viewed as totally dependent and invalid.

A certain amount of help and dependence is likely to be required. It must be remembered though that it is best to maintain as much independence as possible for both physical and emotional reasons.

Report compiled by **Adebayo Oladejo** with additional from News Medical, Science Direct, Medical News, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Healthline, Medscape, **Pharmanews**, National Institute of Health, Wikipedia, Researchgate, National Library of Medicine, Vanguard, and the Guardian.

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Expert laments heart failure prevalence

- As Getz Pharma launches Vacutro

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

A Professor of Medicine at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, and Consultant Cardiologist at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Professor Amam Mbakwem, has decried the prevalence of heart failure across the globe, saying the rising cases of heart failure and cardiovascular-related diseases require special attention from concerned health professionals in Nigeria.

Mbakwem made the remarks at the recent launch of Vacutro, a brand of sacubitril/valsartan, by Getz Pharma in Lagos State.

Speaking on "Minimising the Risk of Hospitalisation & Cardiovascular Death in Heart Failure Patients", the professor of medicine noted that 64 million adults worldwide are living with heart failure and the number is expected to rise, due to increasing aging population, increasing prevalence of risk factors, as well as improved post-myocardial infarction (MI) survival.

According to Mbakwem, a person at age 40 has a one in five lifetime risk of developing heart failure, stating that more than one million hospitalisations due to heart failure are reported annually in Europe. She added that all patients with heart failure, regardless of their symptoms, have a poor prognosis.

She specifically stated that within three years, 34 per cent of New York Heart Association (NYHA) Classification I and II patients, and



L-R: Dr Ola Adewuya, consultant cardiologist, Rjolad Hospital; Prof. Amam C. Mbakwem, consultant cardiologist and head of unit, Cardio B, LUTH (keynote speaker); Dr Funsho Olorunto, general manager, Sales, Getz Pharma Nigeria; and Mr Syed Khairat, general manager, Marketing, Getz Pharma Nigeria, during the recent launch of Vacutro tablets, held at Bon Hotel, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.

42 per cent of NYHA classification III and IV patients die.

The consultant cardiologist further noted that, in developed

countries, heart failure is the primary cause of hospitalisation in patients aged above 65 years, adding that all patients with heart failure are

at increased risk of frequent, repeated hospitalisations.

She emphasised that the newly launched Vacutro is suitable and more effective to manage heart failure and achieve optimal treatment, noting that sacubitril/valsartan has proved significantly effective in reducing death from cardiovascular causes or first hospitalisation for heart failure.

Mbakwem stated that sacubitril/valsartan has a safety and tolerability profile comparable

to that of enalapril, stressing that sacubitril/valsartan has fewer adverse effects.

Gov. Makinde, others laud Vanguard Pharmacy's 11th branch unveiling

By Adebayo Oladejo

The Executive Governor of Oyo State, Engr Seyi Makinde; the National Chairman, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, as well as other eminent personalities, have extolled Vanguard Pharmacy Limited on the opening of a new branch in the densely-populated Akobo Community of Ibadan, Oyo State, saying the government and the populace are proud of the achievement.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, held recently along the popular Akobo road, Makinde, who was the special guest of honour, reiterated his administration's commitment to the delivery of quality healthcare and infrastructural development in the state, saying Vanguard Pharmacy has displayed a high level of professionalism so far and has endeared itself to the heart of people in the state.

The governor, who was represented by the Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Oyo State, Prof. Musibau Babatunde, noted that when he assumed office in 2019, his administration brought up the roadmap for accelerated development in Oyo State's development. This, he said, was hinged on the four major pillars of economic development, health, education, and security, adding that its economic expansion agenda paves way for Vanguard Pharmacy and others to operate smoothly.

In his speech, Pharm. Oladigbolu, commended the company's co-founding couple, Pharm. Taofik Odukoya and Mrs Kawthar Odukoya, who are also the CEO and executive director respectively, for continuing to advance the company's vision, adding that Vanguard Pharmacy has become a household name in the state and the country at large.

While describing the establishment of the new outlet as a strategic decision, Oladigbolu noted that any community that lacks the presence of a community pharmacist is being short-changed because the pharmacist is responsible not only for drug information but for the reduction of harm to the patient.



Pharm. Taofik Odukoya, founder and chief executive officer, Vanguard Pharmacy; Mrs Kawthar Odukoya, co-founder and executive director; Rtd Brig Gen Dada Adekola, chief consultant cardiologist and former CMD, 68 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital, Yaba; and Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN, at the opening of the 11th branch in Akobo, Ibadan, Oyo State.

In their speeches, the duo of Mrs Roseline Ajayi, south-west zonal director, NAFDAC, and Pharm. (Mrs) Adenike Ogunlola, south-west zonal director, PCN, commended the founders of Vanguard Pharmacy for being mindful of quality standard in setting up their structures, adding that the issue of drugs is a professional thing and should not be considered ordinary business.

According to Ajayi, who was represented by Pharm. Samuel Adeyemi, assistant director, south-west, NAFDAC, "As an agency, we associate with stakeholders who play the rule by the game because the fight against counterfeit drugs is collective. Safeguarding the health of the people is a collective effort too; so, we encourage Vanguard Pharmacy not to let down their guard and to continue to play the game by the rules."

In her goodwill message, the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University

of Ibadan, Prof. (Mrs) Titilayo Fakeye, urged pharmacy students to follow the good example of the Vanguard founders, adding that great things start small.

"The level of professionalism and mode of operation in all their branches amaze me and I make bold to say it's rare," she stressed.

Corroborating the university don, the duo of Pharm. (Alh) Lukman Akinwande, director of pharmaceutical services, Oyo State, and Rtd Brig Gen Dada Adekola, chief consultant cardiologist and former CMD, 68 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, lauded the co-founding couple for having foresight and being good role models to the younger ones.

In his speech earlier, Pharm. Odukoya described the opening of the eleventh branch as a new milestone in the 17-year journey of the enterprise to transform

healthcare in Nigeria, adding that the company had set ambitious goals for 2030, which are to become a national and West African retail brand, a top employer within the pharma industry, and to be consistently customer-centric.

According to him, "At Vanguard Pharmacy, we don't just provide medicines; we empower our customers. That's why we've integrated a pharmacy, veterinary, supermarket, and bakery under one roof, a testament to our core values of excellence, innovation, and a customer-centric approach. Alongside quality products, we focus on preventive care, helping our communities lead healthier lives."

While commending the Oyo State governor for his tireless work in building infrastructure and improving lives, Odukoya pleaded for swift completion of ongoing road projects to ease the flow of business.

He further sought the Federal Government's intervention in ensuring stable foreign exchange and curbing inflation, which he said are necessary to ensure that life-saving medications remain accessible to all Nigerians.

Also speaking, Mrs Odukoya expressed happiness over the success recorded so far by the company, adding that the mission is to create smart health benefits for people to succeed and thrive.

"With a foundation built on excellence, customer experience, innovation, simplicity, and sustainability, we remain steadfast in this pursuit", she stressed.

Other dignitaries at the event included His Royal Majesty, Oba Rufai Adeleke Odumesi, the Lemo of Ode Lemo, Ogun State; Olori (Alh.) Folasade Odumesi, wife of Kabiyesi; Alhaji Abiodun Odukoya; Prof. (Mrs) Amudalat Bolanle Olaniyan; Pharm. Colonel Victor Ajanaku (Rtd), chairman, PSN, Oyo State; Alhaja Fatimah Dele; Pharm. Duke Otite, former chairman, ACPN, Edo State; Pharm. (Chief) Hamidu Oluyedun, retired director, Pharmaceutical Services, Oyo State; among many others.

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1. J Clin Gynecol Obstet. 2015;4(2):217-225



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PCN inducts 85 ABU pharmacy graduates

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, recently graduated 85 new pharmacists, with Sekinat Yusuf emerging overall best graduating student.

The graduands were all inducted into the pharmacy profession by the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), at the 2021/2022 Oath-taking and Induction Ceremony, held on 6 February, 2024 within the campus premises.

Speaking shortly before he led the graduands on the oath-taking exercise, the Registrar, PCN, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, charged them to be ethical in all they would be doing, urging them to continuously work for the advancement of the healthcare sector.

In his remarks at the event, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Kabiru Bala, disclosed that ABU had been a beacon of knowledge, enlightenment, and progress since its establishment, adding that the institution had produced leaders, innovators, and change-makers who had made significant contributions to various fields.

He said the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, being an integral part of the university, had a responsibility of upholding the highest standards of excellence and ethics in the field of pharmacy.

Bala, who was represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ahmed Doko Ibrahim, stated that amidst a rapidly evolving world, the role of pharmacists had become increasingly crucial. He noted that the healthcare landscape was transforming, presenting various challenges and opportunities. He



A cross-section of the graduands.

therefore urged the graduands to play an active role, while proving to be true custodians of public health.

The VC said: "As you step into the professional realm, remember that you are not merely dispensers of medicines but custodians of public health. Your decisions and actions will impact lives, and I implore you to approach your responsibilities with the utmost integrity, compassion, and competence."

"I encourage you to embrace a lifelong commitment to learning.

The pharmaceutical field is dynamic, and staying abreast of advancements is essential. Be proactive in seeking new knowledge, engage in continuous professional development, and contribute to the advancement of your field."

Also speaking at the ceremony, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Prof. Aliyu Muhammad Musa, told the inductees that while they had learnt so much in the university, there was still so much more to be learnt. He therefore urged

them to always try to update their knowledge.

"I implore you to uphold the highest ethical standards in your practice. Be honest, hardworking, dedicated, and confident in your abilities. Show humility and respect towards your seniors, and always conduct yourselves with integrity and professionalism."

"I encourage you to be good ambassadors of this esteemed institution. Remember your *alma mata* and come to the aid and assistance of the faculty and the university whenever you can, as individuals or as a group," the dean said.

The high point of the event was the presentation

of various categories of awards of excellence to some of the graduands. The awards included the PCN Best Graduating Student/Overall Best Graduating Student award; the Marcus Niyi Oyeyipo Foundation (MNOF) cash award; and the Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP) award for the best graduating student in the Department of Pharmaceutics and Industrial Pharmacy.

DEANS' Corner DR SA'AD ABDULLAHI

Dr Sa'ad Toyin Abdullahi is the current acting dean, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Ilorin, Kwara State. He specialises in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry and currently has over 30 publications in reputable peer-reviewed local and international journals to his credit. His teaching and research interests predominantly focus on pharmaceutical analysis, clinical pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, pharmacogenetics and pharmacometrics.

Born on 30 July, 1976, Abdullahi hails from Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State. He had his elementary education at Aliyu Makama LGA Primary School, Barnawa, Kaduna, Kaduna State, from 1981 to 1986. He proceeded to Government Secondary School, Minna, Niger State, from 1986 to 1991.

He was admitted into Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, in 1994 and graduated with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree in 2001. Thereafter, he had his mandatory internship training with Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, at the Malumfashi Unit in Katsina State, between 2001 and 2002. He served as an NYSC pharmacist, at General Hospital, Geidam, Yobe State, between October 2002 and September 2003.

Abdullahi obtained his master's degree in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry, from Ahmadu Bello University, in 2010 and then proceeded to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria in 2013 for his PhD. He eventually bagged his PhD in November 2017.

The acting dean joined the University of Ilorin in July, 2012. Prior to then, he had worked as a locum pharmacist at Y-Fab Pharmacy, Kaduna, from 2003 to 2004; after which he joined Worldwide Commercial Ventures Limited (WWCVL), now known as Worldwide Healthcare, as pharmaceutical representative. He rose to the position of zonal manager before resigning to join University of Ilorin as Lecturer II in July, 2012. He was promoted to the rank of Reader in 2021.

Until he became the dean of the faculty, Abdullahi had held several administrative positions in the university. He was the acting head, Department of Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry, from 2017 to 2022. He was a two-term departmental examination officer, from 2012 to 2017, and 2020 to 2022. He has also served in several committees. He was a member of the university SERVICOM Committee, from 2016 to 2022; member, Campus Security Committee, from 2017

to 2022; member, Faculty Junior Staff Appointments & Promotions Committee, 2018 to date; member, Faculty Senior Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee, from 2022 to date. He has also been a member of the university Senate since 2017.

A professional to the core, Abdullahi is a member of the Nigeria Association of Pharmacists in Academia (NAPA), Unilorin Chapter. He was the secretary of the association, from 2017 to 2020. He also served as the chairman, from 2020 to 2022. He is a registered pharmacist with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), as well as member of the

Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN). He is also a member of the Statistics and Pharmacometrics Interest Group, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the PSN Kwara Education Committee (since 2020).

Abdullahi also served in various capacities as an Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ad hoc staff, in the 2019 and 2023 general elections. These include being the returning officer for the Ilorin East/Ilorin South Federal House of Representatives Constituency.

The acting dean has received many awards and grants, including



the Senate Research Grant and TETFund Institution Based Research Grant. He holds a certificate in Continuous Professional Development Course in Meta-Analysis from Karolinska Institutet, the Department of Medicine, Solna, Stockholm, Sweden (2016); as well as the John Maxwell Special Leadership Course certificate (2023).

Dr Abdullahi is happily married to Mrs Mulikat Abdullahi, a medical laboratory scientist, and the marriage is blessed with children.

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Wellness

with

Dr Patrick Ijewere

(Specialty: Internal Medicine, from John Hopkins University)
Tel: 0809 771 4455
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Sleep is a complex physiological process that is regulated globally, regionally, and locally by both cellular and molecular mechanisms. Sleep is extremely important for the individual's overall health, and it is just as important as eating, drinking and breathing.

When a person is awake for a long time, the system alerts the body about its need for sleep, and it helps the body get enough sleep during the night to regain its energy during the day.

Stages of sleep

An individual pass through two stages of sleep. Several things happen during every stage.

Stage 1: Deep sleep

During this stage, the body increases blood flow to the muscles, repairs muscles and tissues, stimulates growth and development, builds up energy for the next day, and secretes important hormones for the processes of growth and development.

Stage 2: Rapid eye movement sleep (REM sleep)

This stage is characterised by intense brain activity. It is when dreams

start, and the body is unable to move. Respiration and heart rates during REM sleep is typically higher and more variable.

The body needs to pass through both stages to get a healthy sleep. Those whose sleep is interrupted frequently may not get sufficient amounts of one of these stages of sleep.

Benefits of restorative sleep

The health benefits of sleep include:

1. **Longevity:** Adequate restorative sleep is associated with increased longevity, as sleeping helps to improve immune system, leading to overall life expectancy.

2. **Sharper decision-making skills:** Quality sleep is associated with improved decision-making abilities, improved concentration, clarity and judgment.

3. **Enhanced athletic performance:** Restorative sleep is essential for athletes and active individuals as it acts as a form of energy repletion and conversion in the body, which promotes physical recovery, muscle repair, and optimal performance.

4. **Reduced risk of chronic diseases:** Restorative sleep is linked to a lower risk of developing

chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes. Sleep helps with decrease in free radicals production and assists the body in increasing total glutathione level necessary for scavenging of free radicals.

5. **Optimised metabolic health:** Restorative sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining a healthy metabolism. It helps regulate appetite hormones, such as leptin and ghrelin, which influence hunger and satiety cues.

Health consequences of poor sleep

1. **Negative impact on physical health:** Lack of restorative sleep or poor sleep habits can lead to various physical health problems, including weight gain, metabolic disorders, increased inflammation, and decreased pain tolerance.

2. **Decreased libido and sexual dysfunction:** Poor sleep behaviour can negatively impact libido and sexual function in both men and women.

3. **Increased risk of chronic diseases:** Poor sleep behaviour is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic diseases, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension, which can decrease longevity of life.

4. **Compromised mental health:** In addition to mood disorders, poor sleep behaviour is linked to an increased risk of developing other mental health conditions, such as anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder,

and schizophrenia.

5. **Impaired eye function:** Adequate sleep promotes tear production crucial for lubrication and eye health. Therefore, insufficient sleep can lead to various eye issues, including dry eyes and vision problems, such as glaucoma.

6. **Reduced physical performance:** it causes impaired coordination, slower reaction times and decreased athletic performance.

Improving your sleep quality

Several tips for a better night's sleep include:

- Stick to a sleep schedule by waking up and going to bed at a specific time.
- Create a restful sleep environment that is quiet, dark and cool.
- Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoon and evening.
- Avoid eating heavy meals before sleeping.
- Do regular early morning exercises.
- Avoid going to bed when you are not sleepy.
- If you don't fall asleep within about 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and do a mild activity.
- Avoid napping after 3 pm.
- Avoid performing tasks and homework at the end of the day.
- Limit stimuli around bedtime (such as television, computer, and video games).
- Create to-do lists before going to sleep to minimise thinking about them while attempting to sleep.
- Engage in light and calm activities in the evening.

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Me Cure partners ACPN to launch Track and Trace solution for drug safety

By Adebayo Oladejo

Amid the growing menace of fake drugs circulation and treatment failures in the country, Me Cure Industries Plc has signed an agreement with the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) to introduce an innovative technology, called Track and Trace solution, to ensure product safety and elevate patient safety standards.

Speaking at a meeting, held at the ACPN National Secretariat, in Ikeja, Lagos, leader of the Me Cure team, Pharm. (Mrs) Iniobong Joseph, explained that the new technology is in response to the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry's dual imperative to balance the accessibility of medicines and the growing threat of fake and counterfeit drugs in the market.

She disclosed that the tool plays a pivotal role in preventing counterfeit drugs from infiltrating the healthcare supply chain, thereby preventing risks such as incorrect ingredients, improper dosages, and harmful substances that can have severe health consequences.

Joseph added that the initiative not only fortifies the pharmaceutical supply chain but also fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, including manufacturers, distributors, and regulatory bodies, through shared access to standardised, traceable data systems.

According to her, the solution is easy to use, as all that is required is just to scan the QR code on the pack of any Me Cure product and all the information needed will be sent immediately.

"It's an easy process for both the seller and even the end-user. The QR codes are already embedded in our



L-R: Pharm. Omokhafa Ashore, national secretary, ACPN; Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, national chairman, ACPN, and Pharm. (Mrs) Iniobong Joseph, product manager, Me Cure Industries Plc, at the press briefing.

cartons and product packs and they just need to download the QR code scanner," she said.

She further explained that the Track and Trace technology monitors and documents the entire journey of a pharmaceutical product, from manufacturing to the end-user, adding that the comprehensive transparency ensures that every stage of the drug's trajectory is traceable and verifiable. This, she said, makes Me Cure Track and Trace-enabled brands virtually impossible to counterfeit.

"Circulation of counterfeit drugs is a fatal and growing problem, especially in developing countries where supply chain security is limited. The Track and Trace solution offers consumers the ability to authenticate each product with just a click on any smartphone.

"We have come to partner with the ACPN so that we can encourage community pharmacists across the country to come on board and embrace this initiative, as we want every dose, every pill, and every medication to be trusted and we want

assurance of good health after the medications are taken.

"This is the standard in advanced countries and if it is replicated here, the better for our healthcare sector, as the healthy nation is wealthy.

In his remarks, the National Chairman, ACPN, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, said the association was delighted to partner with Me Cure towards ensuring that Nigeria is rid of unwholesome drugs, adding that the association would like to encourage other pharma companies in the country to, as a matter of urgency, make sure that they take part in the Track and Trace policy of the Federal Government.

Oladigbolu said, "As a responsible group of professionals and a responsible company, we have decided to partner together to rid our society of sub-standard and falsified medicines. To this end, we are using technology for track and trace and every community pharmacist in Nigeria is encouraged to adopt this technology that is being brought on board by Me Cure."

While speaking on the database launched by NAFDAC a few months ago to identify certified drugs, the ACPN boss noted that as medicines are manufactured and taken to warehouses in the country, NAFDAC should be informed.

According to him, "This goes down to the retailer, even to the point of the end-users. NAFDAC should be in the know, so that every product in Nigeria will have traceability attributes.

"If there is doubt about the credibility of medicines, the healthcare system is in trouble. This innovation will encourage people to trust Nigeria's healthcare system and this is the reason we are partnering with Me Cure, to encourage other pharma companies to come on board so that every tablet, every syrup, every injection, and every capsule that come from our pharma sector are products of trust."

WAPCP to induct first Francophone, Lusophone Fellows

As college president visits Pharmanews

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (WAPCP) will be inducting its first set of Francophone (French-speaking) and Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) Fellows into the college in April 2024.

President of the college, Alhaji Murtada Sesay, made this known when he paid a courtesy visit to Pharmanews Publisher, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, in Lagos, recently.

The induction, according to Sesay, will take place from 15 to 18 April, 2024, in Banjul, capital of The Gambia, adding that the college will also be inducting elected Fellows at the Banjul event.

The WAPCP president also disclosed during the visit that the college had concluded plans to lay the foundation of the building of its secretariat in Lagos. He added that this would be done by the end of March 2024, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Sesay, a Sierra Leonean, revealed that one of the things that had delayed the work in the past was getting government approval.

"We didn't want to skip any regulatory issue, but now, we have crossed the bridge. Everything is now in our hands", he said.

According to the Secretary General of the College, Prof. Ibrahim Oreagba, who was with



MD, Pharmanews Ltd, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi; President, WAPCP, Alhaji Murtada Sesay, and the Secretary General, WAPCP, Prof. Ibrahim Oreagba during the WAPCP president's visit to Pharmanews office recently.

the president on the visit, the blueprint and other pending requirements will be ready by the middle of March.

"So, by the end of March, 2024, we will be able to start the construction, starting with the foundation-laying", Oreagba said.

While speaking on other

activities of the college, Alhaji Sesay said, "Our focus is to have more Fellows that can serve their community better and we do this through specific faculties. We are making progress. We are making an effort to ensure that all the governments of member nations and the ministries of health recognise the fact that when you

are a Fellow of the college, you can deliver better and also ensure that you are better placed.

"The focus of the college is to improve delivery in our countries because there is a lot to be done. We want to be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence that promotes teaching, research and training in postgraduate pharmacy education for the development of pharmacy specialists to meet the challenges of healthcare.

Sir Atueyi, on his part, congratulated

Sesay for the efforts made to ensure that the laying of the foundation of the secretariat happens during his tenure, saying it is a remarkable achievement. He also said he was impressed by the way the executives of the college were running its affairs.

Celebrating 45 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2024)

Polio: History and important facts

By Patrick Iwelunmor

A highly contagious disease, especially among children, polio attacks the nervous system and can lead to spinal and respiratory paralysis, which can also result in death. The disease has prehistoric origins, with ancient Egyptian images showing children with withered limbs walking with sticks.

British doctor, Michael Underwood in 1789, did the first known clinical description of polio. Thereafter, German physician, Jakob Heine, formally recognised it as a condition in 1840.

Deadly outbreaks

With frequent epidemics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, polio became the most feared disease in the world. In 1916, a major outbreak in New York City claimed over 2000 lives. In 1952, the worst recorded outbreak in the US killed over 3000

people. For those who managed to survive the disease, they were faced with lifelong consequences, such as deformed limbs, for which they had to resort to leg braces, crutches and wheelchairs. Some also had to use breathing devices, such as the iron lung, an artificial respirator that was specifically invented for the treatment of polio patients.

Becoming a global menace by the mid-20th century, the poliovirus had paralysed or killed over half a million people every other year. The absence of a cure, coupled with rising epidemics, necessitated the urgent need for a vaccine. In 1949, the world recorded a breakthrough, when John Enders, Thomas Weller and Frederick Robbins successfully cultivated the poliovirus in human tissue at Boston Children's Hospital. Their ground-breaking work was recognised with the 1954 Nobel Prize.

First vaccine

US physician, Jonas Salk, created the successful vaccine in the 1950s and went on to test it on himself and members of his family in 1953. A year later, it was tested on 1.6 million children in Canada, Finland and the USA. With the announcement of the results on 12 April 1955, Salk's polio vaccine became licensed on the same day. By 1957, annual cases witnessed a decline from 58000 to 5600. As at 1961, only 161 cases remained.

Salk recognised the importance of an equitable access to his inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and understood that elimination efforts would not achieve the desired goal, without universal low-cost or no-cost vaccination. Six pharmaceutical companies were licensed to produce IPV, and Salk did not profit from sharing the formulation or production processes. During an interview in 1955, when asked who owned the patent for IPV, he replied: "Well, the people, I would say. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?"



Oral vaccine

Microbiologist, Albert Sabin would later develop a second type of polio vaccine, the oral polio vaccine (OPV). Sabin's vaccine was live-attenuated (using the virus in weakened form) and could be given orally, as drops or on a sugar cube. Due to the wide usage of Salk's vaccine in the late 50s, the United States' interest in testing this new type of vaccine was low. Sabin also tested his experimental vaccine on himself and his family, though he had to embark on further fieldwork for larger-scale trials.

The oral vaccine, due to its ease of administration, became the best option for mass vaccination campaigns. While Hungary began to use it in December 1959,

Czechoslovakia started using it in early 1960 and became the first country in the world to eradicate the disease.

The OPV was administered in nationwide immunisation programmes in Cuba in 1962. It had an added benefit that paved the road to eradication. While IPV protected the vaccinated child, it did not stop the poliovirus from spreading between children. Alternatively, the OPV interrupted the chain of transmission, making it a powerful vaccine to stop polio outbreaks in their tracks.

Massive campaigns

In 1979, Rotary International began a campaign to immunise six million children in the Philippines. In 1988, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution to eradicate polio in order to achieve its permanent reduction to zero. That same year, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) was launched. The Assembly's work towards attaining that milestone was supported by the contributions of Rotary International which also wanted to ensure that the eradication of smallpox was sustained to ensure that no child was needlessly paralysed for life anymore.

Enormous donations by different countries were combined with international initiative and assistance, with WHO working to support the global collaboration. With WHO's backing, vaccine production was also expanded globally, with substantial capacity developed in countries, including India and Indonesia. In 1995, mass vaccination campaigns took place in China and India.

By 2003, polio remained endemic in only six countries – and by 2006, that number had dropped to four. The 21st century witnessed further improvements, with cases brought down by more than 99 per cent worldwide in less than two decades.



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PRODUCT OF POLAND

Celebrating 45 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2024)

The seeds of prosperity

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem

In the vast garden of life, the seeds of prosperity are sown within the fertile soil of the mind. As James Allen once remarked, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." This timeless wisdom forms the cornerstone of our journey as we embark on the exploration of true abundance, a journey that begins with the very thoughts that take root in the fertile grounds of our consciousness.

The garden within

Picture, if you will, the mind as a garden—a sanctuary where thoughts, beliefs, and aspirations are the seeds awaiting their moment to sprout. In this sacred space, the quality of our mental soil becomes paramount. Just as a well-tended garden yields an abundant harvest, a mind nurtured with positivity and optimism bears the fruits of prosperity.

Cultivating a positive mindset

The first step in our quest for prosperity is the deliberate cultivation of a positive mindset. Thoughts, like seeds, have the power to shape our reality. As we plant seeds of gratitude, resilience, and abundance, we set the stage for a flourishing inner landscape. Through introspection and mindful awareness, we discover the transformative potential that lies within the simple act of

The first step in our quest for prosperity is the deliberate cultivation of a positive mindset. Thoughts, like seeds, have the power to shape our reality. As we plant seeds of gratitude, resilience, and abundance, we set the stage for a flourishing inner landscape.

choosing our thoughts.

The power of intention

In the garden of prosperity, intention is the gardener's guiding hand. With clear and purposeful intentions, we sow the seeds of our desires, aligning our aspirations with the natural rhythms of growth. Just as a gardener tends to each plant with care, nurturing it from a tiny seed into a bountiful creation, so too must we tend to our intentions with unwavering focus and dedication.

Weeding out limiting beliefs

Yet, even the most vibrant gardens face the challenge of weeds that threaten to stifle growth. In the garden of the mind, these weeds take the form of limiting beliefs and self-doubt. To foster true prosperity, we must skillfully identify and uproot these impediments, allowing the seeds

of positivity and abundance to take root and flourish.

The harvest of thought

As we navigate the landscape of our thoughts, we become conscious architects of our destiny. Our mental harvest is a reflection of the seeds we choose to plant, nurture, and cultivate. In the chapters that follow, we will explore the various dimensions of prosperity, each intricately woven into the fabric of our consciousness.

As we embark on this journey of self-discovery, let us remember that the seeds we sow in the garden of our minds have the power to transform not only our inner world but also the reality we manifest in the external realms of our lives. Join me in this exploration of "The Prosperity Blueprint," where the seeds of prosperity sprout from the fertile ground of intentional thought, setting the stage for a life



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

abundantly lived.

Reflective Exercises

Mindful gardening: Take a few moments each day to reflect on your thoughts. What seeds are you planting in the garden of your mind? Identify one negative thought you can replace with a positive affirmation.

Intentional journaling:

Start a prosperity journal. Write down three positive intentions for the day and reflect on how they influence your overall mindset.

(Culled from Sesan Kareem's new book, "The Prosperity Blueprint")

AFFIRMATION: I think creatively, act fearlessly and accomplish masterfully. I am blessed and highly favored.

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



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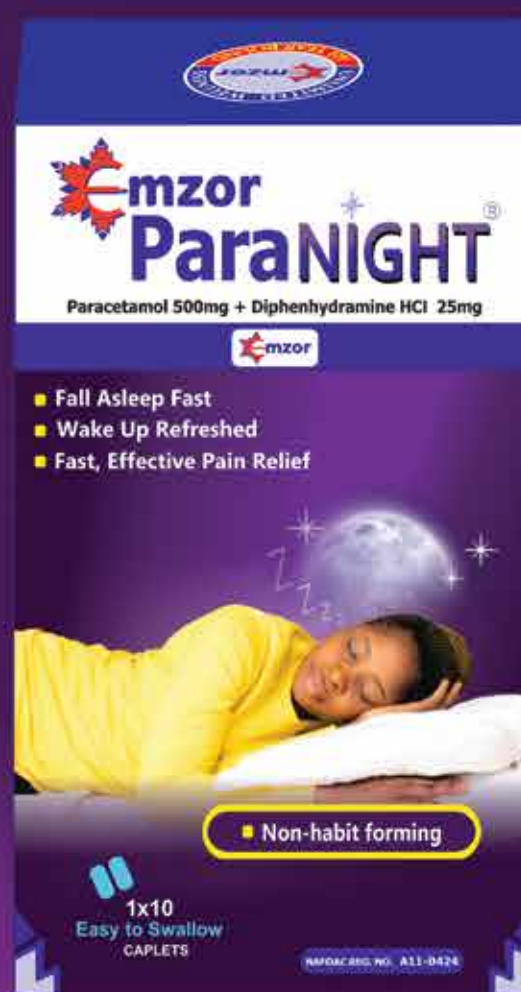


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Pharmacists seek FG support to navigate economic headwinds

- As NAIP holds 2024 Economic Outlook and CEOs Forum

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

As the Nigerian economy continues its turbulent turn, pharmacists in the country have called on the government to, as a matter of urgency, come to the aid of the pharmaceutical industry to enable the players weather the effects of the economic downturn rocking the industry.

The pharmacists made the call on 6 March, at the 2024 Economic Outlook and CEOs Forum, organised by the Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP), in Lagos.

According to the Chairman of the Programme Planning Committee (CPC) and Managing Director of May & Baker PLC, Pharm Patrick Ajah, the annual forum is held to enable stakeholders utilise strategies recommended by resource persons to improve the trajectory of their business for the rest of the year.

Also speaking at the event, themed “Navigating through the Strong Economic Headwinds in Nigeria”, NAIP Chairman, Pharm. Ken Onuegbu, stated that the worrisome economic situation of the country in the past few months had affected pharma business negatively in many ways.

He restated the association’s position that achieving medicine security is the best way to go for Nigeria, adding that this would require moving away from a consumption economy to a production economy, where more than 70 per cent of the drug need in the country is produced within the country. To achieve such a laudable goal, the Nigerian government must genuinely support the industry.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the occasion, Dr Joseph Ikemefuna Odumodu, stated that the pharmaceutical industry is underperforming and therefore needs the support and protection of the Federal Government.

Odumodu, who is a former MD/CEO of May & Baker Nigeria Plc and former director general of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), stated that the pharma industry is in crisis, noting that the situation the industry and the entire nation is now is unprecedented.

He averred that there is need for the political will to develop the pharmaceutical industry, adding that the government needs to support the industry not only in the area of regulation but also building of infrastructure and protection.

According to him, “There is a need for a new phase of regulation in the pharmaceutical industry. Our regulation must find a way to support the industry. The government must support the industry for it to overcome some of the challenges it is facing now.”

Odumodu further assured that if the government genuinely supports the industry, it will perform better, adding that if the industry is doing well, more foreign exchange will come into the country and it will ease the pressure on the naira. He emphasised that drug security is as important as food security.

The former SON DG also stated that there is need to put more effort in pharmaceutical raw material development, stressing however that such a move also needs the genuine support of the government, especially in developing human



NAIP Chairman, Pharm. Ken Onuegbu; CEO, Business School Netherlands, Prof. Lere Baale; Group CEO, Hazon Holdings and Founder, Eko Innovation Centre NG, Pharm Gbenga Afolabi; and PSN, President, Professor Cyril Usifoh, at the recent NAIP Economic Outlook and CEOs Forum.

capacity for the industry.

President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Professor Cyril Usifoh, remarked that the pharmaceutical industry is indispensable, saying if there is no right drug at the right place, at the right time, the country will collapse; hence there is need for government to optimally support the industry to be able to navigate the headwinds besetting it.

The PSN president also charged stakeholders in the industry to harness the economic headwinds in the country to their favour.

“I want the industry to do one thing. Let us control these headwinds to our favour. The best time to grow the industry is now,” Usifoh said, even as he charged stakeholders to always strive to be in the boardroom where decisions and policies are made.

A former President of PSN, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, also described the current economic headwinds in the industry as unfortunate. He called on the government to show keen interest in the wellbeing and health of the citizens by genuinely supporting the pharmaceutical industry.

Yakasai commended stakeholders in the industry for their effort and quest to seek solutions and coping strategies, rather than complaining. He urged players in the industry to consider merger where necessary, saying merger is not weakness but strategic.

The Chief Executive Officer, Business School Netherlands, Prof. Lere Baale noted that though there are challenges presently bedeviling the industry, there are opportunities in the challenges, stressing that only those who look out for such opportunities will be able to move forward.

He pointed out that every operator in the pharma industry must look out for strategies to cope which may include innovation and collaboration. He however called on the government to genuinely support the industry, noting that the effort of the players in the industry without government support will not take the industry to

where it ought to be.

The Chairman, Lagos PSN, Pharm Babayemi Oyekunle, in his remarks, decried the current economic situation in the country, calling the government to support the pharmaceutical industry. He pointed out that Nigerians are currently complaining of the high cost of drugs and one of the ways to ameliorate such is by reducing the cost of drug registration. He therefore urged the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to look into the cost of registering drugs and bring it down.

The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, JNC International Limited, Pharm. Clare Omatseye, who was the rapporteur and coordinating analyst of the panel session at the forum, noted that the current economic challenges in Nigeria can either be seen as headwinds or tailwinds, depending on the way the CEOs in the pharmaceutical industry see it.

While stating the need for the government to support the industry, Omatseye stated that the COVID-19 experience had shown how important drug security is. She added that, while the government’s effort toward attracting foreign direct investment is good, domestic investment is very critical. She therefore urged the government to support the pharma industry, saying now is the time to encourage local investment and local drug manufacturing.

Omatseye urged the government to provide incentives to unlock the potentials of the local pharmaceutical sector, stating that the government needs to grant the industry access to finance at a single digit interest rate. She added that there is urgent need for the government to prioritise patronage for made-in-Nigeria medicine and only think of foreign drugs when the local ones are not available.

In her remarks during the panel session, the Senior Director,

Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited, Pharm. Amaka Onyemelukwe, noted that there are huge potentials for local companies, stressing that the pharma industry is an essential sector that deserves huge protection from the government. She however charged the local pharma companies to concentrate on optimisation, noting that data optimisation and outsourcing will enhance efficiency.

Also speaking during the panel session, the CEO, XLR8, Pharm. Calixthus Okoruwa urged the Nigerian government to put the right policies in place that will favour and positively turn around the pharmaceutical industry.

He said, “Through policy, the pharmaceutical industry can experience a positive turnaround. If there is no favourable policy, more pharma companies will close down. So, the government needs to rise up now and do the needful.”

He however urged stakeholders in the industry to guide the government by providing the needed ideas and data that will help the government to make favourable policies, noting that all stakeholders in the industry need to collaborate.

Another member of the panel, who is the Technical Director, Swiss Pharm Nigeria, Pharm. Yetunde O. Adigun stated the need for the government to support the industry and encourage local investment. According to her, while foreign companies are closing down and relocating, because most of them are mere portfolio companies without serious investment, the local companies with heavy investment will stay.

She added that the local pharma companies have what it takes to fill the vacuum created by the exited foreign companies, though it may be tough. She therefore urged the government to support the industry to enhance the survival of local pharma companies. She also urged the local pharma companies to improve and also invest in technology transfer as well as internal data.

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Addressing impacts of socio-economic burden on widows' health

By Temitope Obayendo

They look more often than not distressed, dejected and despairing, as their fate hangs in the balance, while the society excludes or secludes them from joyful moments in life, due to the loss of a spouse. This portrays the experience of many widows in developing countries.

Widowhood in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa is associated with psychosocial trauma, stigmatisation and poverty, with the accompanying inequitable access to healthcare. The overwhelming shock brought about by the sudden demise of a life-partner notwithstanding, many African cultural beliefs still subject widows to harmful traditional rites, which reduce their dignity and violate their rights, thereby impacting their health adversely.

The International Women Society, in 2019, estimated the number of widows in Nigeria living in "abject poverty" at 15 million, among the world's 258 million widows. This number should have significantly increased four years after.

Hence, as the global community celebrates the International Women's Day (IWD) 2024, an annual event commemorated on 8 March, it is pertinent to rally support for the unheard voices in our communities, who go through life without hope in sight, especially with the harsh global economic realities.

This correspondent's one-on-one chat with some of these underprivileged women gives credence to the theme of this year's global advocacy, which is "Invest in women and inspire inclusion", as they expressed their unbearable economic burden of raising children alone, with its attendant impacts on their well-being.

Donald's uncontrollable tears, five years on

"I usually try to hold the tears back most times when I'm overwhelmed, but it will eventually flow, as no help is near," Mrs Angela Donald lamented. "The more I try to forget about the whole thing, the harder it becomes for me as it's impossible for me to handle the situation alone, though I know God has always been with me."

Donald, a 56-year-old widow, who sells food by the roadside in Lagos, narrated how she and her four children have been deserted by her late husband's relatives, since he passed on. As if that was not enough, she said the little cash gift received during the wake of her late husband was also stolen by one of his relatives, leaving her and the children to resort to begging to raise transport fare to their village for the funeral.

"My husband died on 19 September, 2019. Since then, none of his relatives has responded to me, and immediately after the burial, everybody left."

"The same relatives stole the



Mrs Esther Olowo

money, about N250,000, that kind-hearted friends and families gave us at his wake service, while we had to borrow money from people to travel to the village at that time and for the burial. It wasn't easy but God was on our side," she explained.

Donald's challenge is compounded by the financial pressure of training two of her daughters in higher institutions. She also lamented the frequent malaria episodes she and her children experience due to the issues associated with their poor environment.

"I have two daughters in higher institution, whose school fees I try to pay by all means. Aside from that, we frequently fall sick of malaria due to the filthy area we live. This is in addition to body pains because of daily stress, without access to healthcare, as I cannot afford hospital bills."

"I really want the government to assist me – firstly, by providing a better shelter for me and my children, because we live in a swampy area in Mende, Maryland. Whenever it rains, our hearts are always in our hands. Again, I'm appealing for sponsorship for my daughters' education, and funding to expand my business. I will be very happy if my family could be assisted to ease our financial burden and improve our health," she appealed.

Olowo's loss of business capital

The case of Mrs Esther Olowo, a 58-year-old widow, who resides in the Ikorodu axis of Lagos State is very similar to that of Donald. She explained how it has been difficult to fill the vacuum the death of her husband created.

Widowhood in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa is associated with psychosocial trauma, stigmatisation and poverty, with the accompanying inequitable access to healthcare. The overwhelming shock brought about by the sudden demise of a life-partner notwithstanding, many African cultural beliefs still subject widows to harmful traditional rites, which reduce their dignity and violate their rights, thereby impacting their health adversely.



Mrs Angela Donald

Olowo, an enterprising woman, who dealt on wholesales of frozen foods and foodstuff before the demise of her husband, said she lost all her business capital to the illness that eventually claimed the life of her spouse. Since then, "I have not recovered from the emotional and financial loss," she stated.

According to her, "Five years after his passing, the gap still exists, in terms of emotional and psychological trauma, as well as business funding. I just depend on God for divine health because I can't afford any healthcare plan with my four children. We also rely on herbs around us and visit chemists if the need arises."

"The most painful part of it is that he told me he acquired a landed property at the Ajah area of Lagos State, but he couldn't show me the place before his demise."

"Since then, I have been the only one responsible for the upkeep of the children, and my business has nosedived without the capital to boost it. That is why I have resorted to this petty trading for survival."

Olowo beseeches government and well-meaning Nigerians to come to her aid.

"If the government can assist me with funding to boost my business, I would appreciate it. The regular traumatic feeling of his death amidst my needs will no longer arise."

Ilesanmi's ordeals

For Mrs Deborah Ilesanmi, life has been extremely difficult since she lost her husband seven years ago.



Mrs Deborah Ilesanmi

"I have been going through incredible stress since his passing in 2018, but God has been helping me and the four children He blessed me with."

Like her counterparts, the 49-year-old widow disclosed her inability to access healthcare due to financial constraints, despite existing health condition she is living with.

While she admitted receiving some support from her church and the mistress she works with, in addition to the token she generates from her petty trading, she pleaded for the restoration of her own business, in order to be able to cater for the needs of her children.

"It will be well-appreciated if the government or other organisations can assist me financially to set up my business so I can cater more for my family," she appealed.

Government's role in empowerment and inclusion of widows

Explaining government's role in alleviating the poverty of widows and improving their healthcare access, the Special Adviser to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Health, Mrs Kemi Ogunyemi, said the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation has various programmes throughout the year for widows, from skills acquisition to financial empowerment.

Ogunyemi, who spoke in an interview with our correspondent, added that all citizens of the state are encouraged to purchase the Ilera-Eko health insurance.

"We encourage all citizens to purchase Ilera-Eko, health insurance. However, in the next couple of months, Mr Governor is going to be giving out free Ilera-Eko to 1000 vulnerable Lagos residents, per local government, who are registered with LASRRA, for one year. This initiative includes widows."

"Also, in a few weeks, each primary health district will embark on free medical care/drugs bi-monthly for two months. This medical outreach will see 24,000 residents gain free access to healthcare," she asserted.

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Investing in public labs, adoption of PPP, will boost Nigeria's drug development system – Aloba

Dr Olu Aloba is a registered pharmacist and consulting pharmaceutical scientist, with decades of experience as a drug developer and, more recently, as a consultant on drug and biologics development strategies. He bagged his pharmacy degree from the University of Benin (UNIBEN), followed by master's and PhD degrees in Pharmaceutical Science from St. John's University, in New York. He is a subject matter expert in drug product development, with special expertise in the application of quality-by-design (QbD) to formulation and process development, analytical development, and development strategy.

In this special edition of Diaspora with **Temitope Obayendo**, Aloba, who resides in Morrisville, North Carolina, United States, reveals the requirements for transforming Nigeria's drug development system, urging the Federal Government to deliberately invest in public-funded laboratories, while leveraging the potentials of cooperation with stakeholders through public-private partnerships (PPP). He also discloses key elements needed in standardising drug quality design and upscaling regulations of medicines towards surmounting the challenge of fake drugs circulation in the country. Excerpts:



Dr Olu Aloba

What stimulated your interest in drug design and development?

I have always been interested in mechanisms of action. In pharmacy school, my more memorable courses, such as pharmacology and organic chemistry, involved mechanisms. To this day, I am passionate about understanding mechanisms. In my consultant role, I'm tasked with and I enjoy communicating the mechanistic bases of the advice I provide, whether they are scientific, regulatory or strategic.

More often than not, most clinical trials of the medicines used in Africa are not done in Africa. With different climate and body chemistry, the implications of this situation are enormous. For example, adverse effects specific to Africans due to our genetics and environment may not be known until after the drugs have been in widespread use, increasing patients' risk.

Conversely, drugs that may be more effective in Africans than in other study populations may not be developed because their benefits are obscured.

The good news is that clinical researchers are becoming more aware of pharmacogenetics and incorporating their understanding into clinical study designs. But there is a long way to go.

Is it mandatory for all drugs to go through the design and development process or it is only made for specific medicines?

I wouldn't say mandatory. However, I consider the design and development process a best practice, as compared to other ways of bringing new drugs

out. These include wild claims of benefit based on unsupported oral history, or charismatic advertising of "cure-alls" by profiteers.

There was a controversial report recently that alleged that 50 per cent of paracetamol tablets in Nigeria were substandard, which NAFDAC refuted. Assuming it was true, what is the place of drug design and development in this scenario?

One fundamental aspect of drug development is development of reliable analytical methods for testing a drug's critical quality attributes. Once the attributes are defined and the test methods to assess them are available, it is possible to quickly verify a drug's authenticity in terms of its identity, purity, potency and quality.

With increase in the circulation of fake and substandard medicines in Nigeria, how can drug design and development help to checkmate these activities?

Several ways. For example, drugs should be designed to have unique visual identifiers that are difficult to replicate (such as combinations of a tablet's shape, colour, size and markings); a publicly accessible database of such identifiers makes it easy to check a drug for authenticity.

Also, as I previously mentioned, reliable analytical methods ensure quick verification of the attributes of a drug. Some of these methods can be designed to be portable, so they can be used outside a laboratory – for example,

in a marketplace during an inspection. These are just a couple of examples.

Still on tackling the menace of counterfeit medicines in Nigeria and West Africa as a region. What are the new technologies you would advise regulatory agencies to leverage for effective regulation?

I would advise that regulators adopt the latest serialisation and traceability technologies, especially those that can be deployed using portable equipment, such as mobile phones. Technologies that rely on artificial intelligence also take away some of the subjective elements of quality control and add an extra layer of security. Just as important as technology is cooperation among different regulatory agencies within our country and our region.

Can you share with us the visible signs that a drug is lacking in quality and design?

In drug development, we often say "the label is the product". So, the most obvious sign of a poor quality drug is the appearance, quality and accuracy of a label. Now, "label" includes what is called the "trade dress" and encompasses electronic identifiers (such as bar codes) and visual aspects of the drug, such as a tablet imprint.

As a pharmaceutical regulator abroad, do you think Nigeria can overcome the menace of open drug markets? If yes, how?

First, I am not a regulator, although I constantly interface with regulators in my consulting work. My answer to the question about open drug markets is yes, they can be overcome.

However, instead of viewing them as a "menace", we should look at what needs the markets are meeting and how we can legitimately fill that need. But I'm confident that things can be remedied.

What is your counsel to the minister of health relating to drug quality design and development in Nigeria?

First, it's humbling for me to counsel the Honourable Minister. That said, I think one step is boosting investment in public-funded laboratories under NAFDAC control. Also, facilitating cooperation with stakeholders through public-private partnerships (PPP) will enhance our ability to gather data on and control the quality of our marketed medicines. There is a saying by management consultant, Peter Drucker, that "you can't manage what you don't measure".

I would advise that regulators adopt the latest serialisation and traceability technologies, especially those that can be deployed using portable equipment, such as mobile phones. Technologies that rely on artificial intelligence also take away some of the subjective elements of quality control and add an extra layer of security. Just as important as technology is cooperation among different regulatory agencies within our country and our region.



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....Championing Healthy Living

Shuttling between campuses, major challenge at NDU – President, PANS

In this exclusive interview with **Adebayo Oladejo**, President of the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria Students (PANS), Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State, Happiness Ogweh, bares his mind on the challenges associated with studying in a multi-campus higher institution. The 14th PANS-NDU president and Delta state born scholar also speaks on his foray into Pharmacy and PANS politics, as well as his achievements and challenges in office. Excerpts:

What does leadership mean to you?

I strongly believe in the tenets and principles guiding leadership through the mechanism of mediation, replication and multiplication. This has worked extremely well for me over the past years; it has made me to gain much recognition within and outside the faculty.

With leadership experience, I am highly motivated to contribute with my interpersonal, investigative problem-solving, organisational, and teamwork skills, as well as being open to learning new skills.

I have maintained a first class CGPA, and showing excellent abilities across the board. I have a few awards of outstanding leadership and academic excellence. I am an awardee of the Federal Government Scholarship Board.

In a nutshell, I believe that leadership is about being adaptable, flexible, trustworthy, reliable, and willing to learn. I am willing to connect and pitch ideas

with like-minded minds.

Many students studying Pharmacy actually chose Medicine as their first choice. Are you one of them?

I am not one of them. I opted for Pharmacy, and I figured that it was the best for me at the age of 12, after attending my elder brother's induction ceremony as a pharmacist.

I feel many students chose Medicine because the awareness of the beauty of Pharmacy wasn't there at the early stage of our educational history. This is the more reason we need to do a lot of pharmacy profession awareness campaigns across the country, focusing on the younger ones.

Also, I think the percentage is gradually reducing, and more students are beginning to opt for Pharmacy now.

Why did you join politics in school?

We have very few or no pharmacist in the political space, so it's very difficult to initiate and

implement certain favourable policies for the massive growth of the pharmacy profession.

I have better plans and vision for the pharmacy profession in Nigeria, especially in the regulatory and administrative facets. At the state level, we have constantly been engaging

the Bayelsa State Government regarding the growth of the pharmacy profession.

It is wise we start engaging more future pharmacists in the political space if we want a rapid advancement in the pharma

continued on page 44



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Beta-Lactamase Stability	Unaffected by Beta-Lactamases	Unaffected by Beta-Lactamases

Reference:
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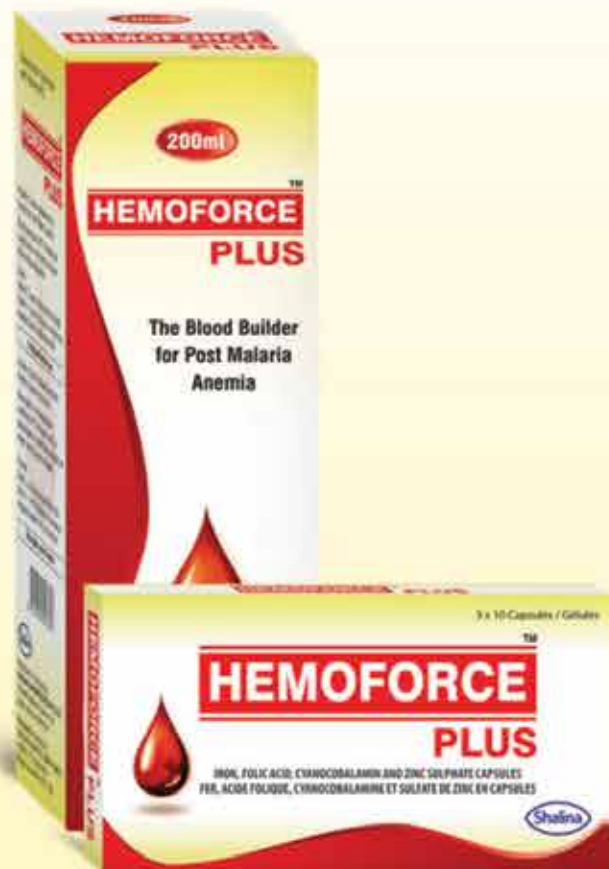
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Shuttling between campuses, major challenge at NDU – President, PANS

continued from page 40
industry.

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

First and foremost, you need God. Leadership took a big part of me, I must sincerely confess. However, it has shaped me to the point where I am confident that with my political advocacy and involvement in politics after school. We can make a change in the pharmacy profession.

Well, as a young chap, who wanted to come out with good grades, I focused more on garnering knowledge and values in my early years of pharmacy school, before delving into politics in my penultimate year.

So I would say that, because my foundation was very strong, I didn't need to struggle too much in my academics, and I already know what works for me to get my distinctions. I also have a group of friends that have been a major motivation for me in pharmacy school.

Time management is also a key factor, coupled with setting your priorities right. Know yourself, and work at your own pace. My dean, lecturers and the entire staff of the faculty have been a major support to my academic journey as well.

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

For the first time in five years, we are currently running a proper PANS government in NDU - the executive council, as well as the legislative arm, with the establishment of a good number of standing and ad-hoc committees. So we run an all-inclusive government.

I have been able to revive PANS in NDU after it was banned for five years, and I have been able to lay a concrete foundation, a blueprint. There was a huge gap between PANS-NDU and affiliate professional bodies and the major pharmacy stakeholder in the state, but we have been able to establish a solid relationship, by closing that gap. We paid courtesy visits, for the first time in five years, to all the relevant offices in the state.

We successfully organised a befitting orientation programme for our 100 Level students, the first time in five years. I am currently running a project, Mortar and Pestle, in front of our faculty. We initiated the renovation of our toilet facilities, and we bought some reservoirs for seamless use. We bought podiums in some of the classrooms, and I opened an official bank account for the association. Pharmacy is the only faculty in NDU that has been able to achieve that.

We have aroused and spurred the interest of pharmacy students to engage in politics. PANS-NDU produced a PRO at the university

SUG, and we are currently reviewing our PANS-NDU Constitution, which will be a major achievement for my government. Also, we won a business pitch award at the Faculty of Nursing Sciences.

However, talking about our challenges, we have plenty of ideas but lack financial buoyancy. Funding is a major factor to achieve certain desires. Foundation is a very hard thing to lay. I suffered in laying the foundation, but the next set of leaders will enjoy what we have done.

Are there peculiar challenges associated with studying Pharmacy at NDU?

The transportation system is a major issue we are faced with in the Faculty of Pharmacy, NDU.

Shuttling between two campuses is no joke at all. We need more full-time staff in the faculty, as well as a permanent, all-inclusive faculty, with all classes and laboratories situated in one place.

Moreover, we need to redesign the academic calendar to enable us to go for our Industrial Training for, at least, three months. Irregular power supply, due to hikes in prices of fuel, coupled with network issues, have been a challenge for our researchers and students at the new campus site.

Many schools of pharmacy in the country are upgrading to PharmD. How would you react to this development?

Well, I must applaud the PCN for ensuring that we transition and upgrade to the PharmD

programme in Nigeria, because that's actually what is being awarded in other developed countries. So it's impressive that the profession is growing, and we have moved away from the lick, stick and pour, to become more clinically-oriented professionals.

However, there should be room for massive, flexible conversion programmes for those interested. I believe it will contribute significantly to the healthcare sector, specifically the clinical pharmacists.

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

The zenith - massive growth and advancement, to the point where the state government will be very much interested in investing more in our graduates.



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The ugly side of watching football

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



Football is incontrovertibly the number one sport with the highest number of fans globally. It is not only considered the most popular sport all over the world, but also one of the top three highest paying sports across the globe.

Additionally, studies have established that watching football has many health benefits. For instance, human biology and psychology researchers from the University of Leeds, in their 2019 study, found that watching football increases heart rate, otherwise known as “positive stress”. They described it as a cardiovascular workout akin to a 90-minute brisk walk.

Other studies, as well as many medical experts, have also said watching sports, especially football, gives viewers a significant mental workout, and helps to keep one’s brain healthy and sharp. Joseph Connolly, a popular American writer, added that watching football matches is one of the key things that can help viewer to build self-confidence, stressing that watching the round leather game will make the viewer get smarter. No wonder the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) estimates that football has about 3.5 billion followers across the globe!

The flip side

While there are many health benefits derived from watching live football matches, doing so is not without its ugly side. Studies and medical experts have established that there are many negative health effects that people are disposed to while watching live football.

For instance, in a study published in August 2022, Juan Enrique Puche, a doctor of medicine and biology at the University Foundation San Pablo, Madrid, Spain, said sporting events, such as football matches, can cause viewers to experience

cardiovascular issues that may cause damage to the heart muscle.

Also, while trying to comprehensively shed light on whether viewing football games is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, a group of Chinese researchers, in 2019, found that viewing football matches was associated with a higher risk of fatal overall cardiovascular disease. They however noted that victory of the viewer’s team could have a lower risk of fatal cardiovascular disease.

Similarly, in 2020, researchers at the University of Oxford said football fans are putting themselves at risk of a heart attack due to the intense levels of physical stress caused by watching their team. The study, conducted by seven researchers from the university, verified a scientific link between fans’ intense group bonding with their team and levels of cortisol (stress hormone) while they watched football.

Titled “Devoted fans release more cortisol when watching live soccer matches,” and published in the journal, *Stress and Health*, the study collected the saliva of 40 football fans before, during, and after three World Cup matches, including Brazil’s historic semi-final loss (1–7) to Germany. The research found that levels of the hormone cortisol shot up during the games.

“Cortisol rocketed during live games for the fans who were highly fused to the team,” said the lead researcher at the Centre for the Study of Social Cohesion, University of Oxford, Dr Martha

Newson.

“It was particularly high during games where their team lost. Interestingly, there were no differences in cortisol concentrations between men and women. Despite preconceptions that men tend to be more bonded to their football teams, women were in fact found to be slightly more bonded to their national team than the men”, Newson said.

Practical proofs

The validity of such studies as above was proven during the 2023 African Cup of Nations, held in Cote d’Ivoire, from 13 January to 11 February, 2024. For instance, no fewer than five Nigerians were confirmed dead at different locations, after watching the semi-final match between the Super Eagles of Nigeria and the Bafana Bafana of South Africa.

A former member of the House of Representatives, who represented the Ika Federal Constituency of Delta State, Dr Cairo Ojougboh, died while watching the match. Ojougboh reportedly died shortly after a penalty kick was awarded against Nigeria. He was said to have shouted and slumped due to a massive heart attack when South Africa scored.

Also, a member of the National Youth Service Corps, serving in Adamawa State, reportedly died during the penalty shootouts of the same match. The NYSC Coordinator in Adamawa State, Jingi Dennis, said the corps member was confirmed dead at the General Hospital in Numan. Similarly, the Deputy Bursar of Kwara State University, Malete, Alhaji Ayuba Abdullahi, also died while watching the match.

Following the tragic incidents, the Super Eagles teams sympathized with the families of the deceased through a post on their official X handle on 9 February. The post read: “During the course of our semi-final match, we tragically lost a few supporters. In a cruel twist of fate, their fervent passion for the beautiful game unwittingly led them to their final moments.

“As the Nigeria vs South Africa match unfolded, they were lost in the thrill of the game, unaware of the looming danger. May their souls find eternal peace. They will forever be remembered for their love for football and the togetherness it brings. Rest in peace.”

Further findings

In 2021, five researchers in

Zagreb, Croatia, carried out a study on the incidence of cardiovascular events when watching intense football matches. The study was titled, “Incidence of cardiovascular events when watching intense football matches - sex differences”.

Among other things, the study aimed to determine whether there was an increase in the number of emergency admissions for cardiovascular disease in the emergency room and clinic for cardiovascular diseases of the Sestre Milosrdnice University Hospital Centre, during and after the matches that the Croatian national team played in the FIFA World Cup 2018.

The hospital’s database was examined for the dates when Croatia played its matches, plus two more days after each match. An unexposed period that included the same dates in 2017 and 2019 was formed. It was found that watching Croatian national team’s matches and cheering represented an additional risk for a cardiovascular disease incident, especially in women.

The researchers also found that arrhythmias (a problem with the rate or rhythm of your heartbeat) and angina pectoris (result of myocardial ischemia caused by an imbalance between myocardial blood supply and oxygen demand) were the cardiovascular diseases that occurred more frequently in the exposed period.

A similar study was carried out in 2013 to evaluate the acute effects of environmental stress induced by the World Cup on increased incidence of cardiovascular diseases in Brazil. The study took place from May to August, in 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010, to examine four consecutive Brazil World Cup matches. It was found that the incidence of myocardial infarction increased during the period of the tournaments.

Experts’ views

While reacting to the deaths of Nigerians during the Nations Cup, a Professor of Medicine and Consultant Cardiologist at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin, Kwara State, Philip Kolo, told *The Punch* that watching live matches is very dangerous for those who have heart disease. On his part, a former Chairman of the Association of Private Medical Practitioners of Nigeria, Dr Tunji Akintade, said one of the reasons for sudden deaths during matches is excitement.

With the hazards attached to watching football matches, irrespective of the health benefits of watching the round leather games, it is important for viewers to be conscious of their health status before settling down to watch a football match. The Oxford study recommended that football viewers can use humour and hugging as coping mechanisms.

To Prof. Kolo, however, “The ideal thing is that, if you are interested in sports, especially when your favourite team is playing, it is better to watch the recorded match, instead of watching the live match.”

With the hazards attached to watching football matches, irrespective of the health benefits of watching the round leather games, it is important for viewers to be conscious of their health status before settling down to watch a football match. The Oxford study recommended that football viewers can use humour and hugging as coping mechanisms.

Communication and interpersonal skills for pharmaceutical sales leaders

Nigeria's economy experiences fluctuations due to factors like oil prices, political instability, currency devaluation and foreign exchange crisis. As a sales leader, you must adapt swiftly to changing market conditions and tailor your communication accordingly. Understand the economic context in which you operate, and adjust your strategies to align with the prevailing conditions. The following are the major elements of the current situation:

- **Intermittent regulatory changes.** Frequent policy shifts impact pharmaceutical sales practices. Stay informed about regulatory updates to ensure compliance and adjust your communication strategies accordingly. For example, if there are changes in prescription guidelines or marketing regulations, proactively educate your team and clients to avoid any compliance pitfalls.
- **Intense competition.** Rivalry among pharmaceutical companies is fierce. To stand out, your people skills—especially communication—are your competitive edge. Differentiate your brand by building strong relationships with healthcare providers and demonstrating genuine care for patients. Remember, in a crowded market, trust and credibility matter.
- **The need for adaptable communication.** Effective communication is your compass in this dynamic environment. It bridges gaps, fosters trust, and ensures alignment with organisational goals.

Key aspects of communication skills

Communication and interpersonal skills are the abilities to interact effectively with others through verbal and non-verbal means. They are vital for personal and professional success, as they help to build trust, solve problems, collaborate, and adapt to different situations. Communication and interpersonal skills include listening, speaking, writing, empathy, and teamwork.

Strategies for effective communication

- Tailor your message. Adapt your communication style to each audience. Whether you're speaking to a rookie, or an experienced star rep, customise your message.
- Storytelling. Stories evoke emotions and make information memorable. Share success stories—how you or your other reps or reps from other companies were able to succeed and/or

Communication and interpersonal skills are the abilities to interact effectively with others through verbal and non-verbal means. They are vital for personal and professional success, as they help to build trust, solve problems, collaborate, and adapt to different situations.

overcome obstacles recently or in the past.

iii. Feedback loop. Encourage open dialogue. Seek feedback from your team members, key customers, HCPs, etc. Understand their concerns, preferences, and suggestions. Act on constructive feedback to enhance your approach. Their insights can inform adjustments to your communication strategies.

iv. Active listening. Active listening allows you to truly understand your team and customer needs. When meeting with your team, customers or healthcare providers, focus on what they say. Avoid interrupting; instead, ask clarifying questions to delve deeper. For instance, if a physician expresses concerns about adverse effects, actively listen and address those specific worries.

v. Techniques for active listening, which include paraphrasing - repeating what you've heard in your own words—show that you're engaged with them, and reflecting on their emotions and concerns. Active listening builds trust and strengthens relationships.

vi. Empathy. Put yourself in their shoes. Understand the challenges healthcare providers face—their workload, patient demands, and regulatory pressures. Empathy enhances relationships and fosters goodwill. When a nurse expresses burnout due to long shifts, empathize with their fatigue and discuss ways to alleviate stress.

B. Building rapport and trust. Rapport and trust are essential elements of successful pharmaceutical selling and leading. Rapport is the ability to connect with others and create a positive impression. Trust is the confidence that others have in your integrity, competence, and reliability. Building rapport and trust with your clients, prospects, and colleagues can help you achieve your sales goals and enhance your reputation. To build rapport and trust, you need to demonstrate the following behaviors consistently:

- Authenticity. Be genuine and honest. If there are limitations or side effects associated with your OTC medicine, communicate them transparently. Don't exaggerate or make false claims. Show that you care about your clients' needs and interests. Authenticity resonates with clients and builds credibility.

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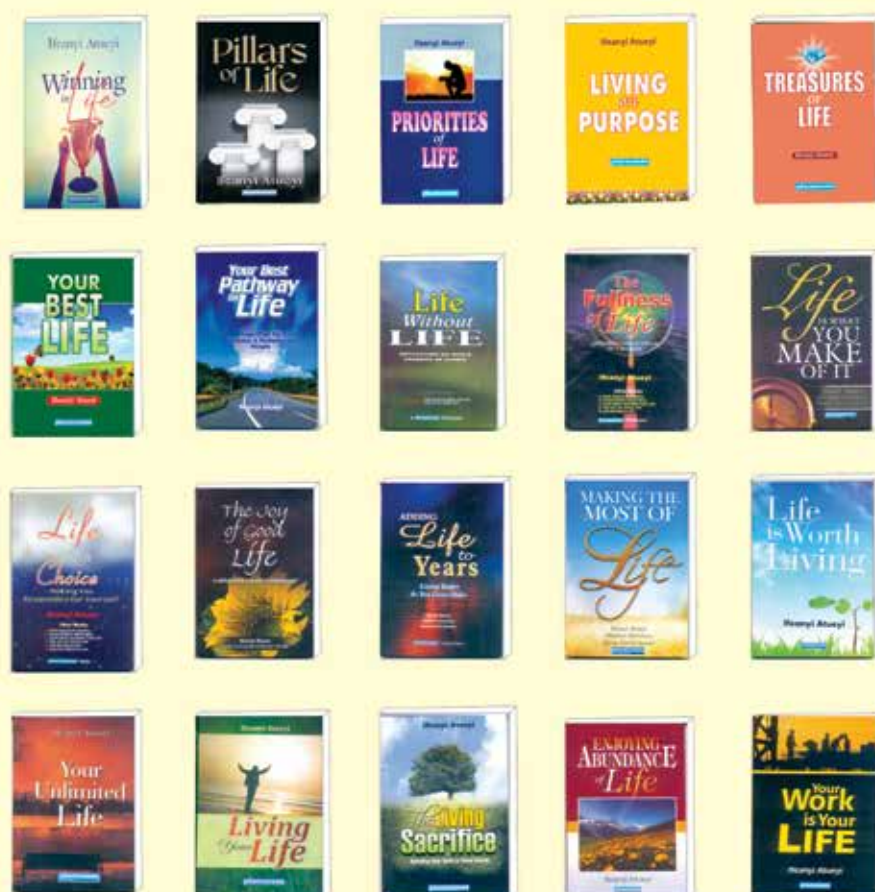
environment. You may encounter disagreements, objections, or complaints from your clients, prospects, or colleagues. How you handle these situations can affect your rapport and trust. To resolve conflicts effectively, you need to:

i. Acknowledge Conflicts. Don't ignore or avoid conflicts. Address them promptly and respectfully. Listen to both sides and try to understand their perspectives and concerns. Acknowledge their feelings and emotions and show empathy.

ii. Win-win solutions. Strive for resolutions that benefit all parties involved. Don't try to impose your views or force your solutions. Collaborate and negotiate with your counterparts and seek common ground. A win-win approach strengthens your relationships and builds mutual trust.

In the dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of pharmaceutical sales in Nigeria, possessing exceptional people skills is not just a desirable trait—it's an absolute necessity. As sales leaders and managers, your ability to communicate effectively, build relationships, and navigate challenges directly impacts your team's success.

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Shalina canvasses vocal health awareness for Nigerians

As UNIUYO graduate, others win Shaltoux Lozenges contest

By Adebayo Oladejo

Leading pharmaceutical company and maker of Shaltoux Lozenges, Shalina Healthcare Nigeria Limited, has stressed the need for industry stakeholders to push for more awareness on vocal health. The company further pledged to continue playing its part in this regard through its online digital contest, tagged "Shaltoux's My Voice, My Identity" (MVMI).

Speaking at the prize presentation programme for the winners of the recent edition of the contest, held at Shalina's corporate head office, the Deputy General Manager, Shalina Healthcare West Africa, Mr Sandeep Sahu, noted that the voice is every human's unique identity and should be well taken care of, adding that Shalina is already in the forefront of the awareness campaign.

Sahu, who noted that the voice is an incredible instrument that allows people to express themselves, communicate, and connect with others, added that, just like any other part of the body, the vocal system requires proper care and attention to maintain its health and functionality.

The deputy general manager revealed that the company will take its commitment further by joining the rest of the world in celebrating World Voice Day 2024 in a big way, adding that the contest was for music enthusiasts to showcase their unique voices and win prizes for creating a freestyle 30 to 60-second-video with Shaltoux Lozenges.

While remarking that the company is proud of the lozenges and proud to connect the product with its consumers in a very creative way, he noted that it was one of the company's



L-R: Mrs Opeyemi Abisola Akinyele, head, Pharma Business, Shalina Healthcare Nigeria; Zadok Aghalengbe, Shaltoux brand ambassador; Israel Ejike Uroko, 1ST prize winner; Mr Sandeep Sahu, head, Brand Marketing, Shalina Healthcare Nigeria; and Pelumi Oyebanji, Shaltoux Brand Manager, at the presentation of prizes to the winners in the 2024 Shaltoux digital contest, My Voice My Identity, MVMI Season 2.

ways of giving back to society.

Also speaking, the Chief Commercial Officer, Shalina Healthcare West Africa, Mr Arun Raj, said the show of interest by Nigerian youths who participated in the contest was huge, saying the contest had brought out hidden talents in many Nigerian youths, while also giving them financial reward for the past three years.

While assuring that Shalina will continue to provide the enabling platform for the youths to express

their creativity, he added that when they "blow" (become rich and famous), they will reflect and remember Shaltoux's My Voice, My Identity as well as Shalina that had given them the platform.

Speaking on the motive behind the online vocal challenge, the Shaltoux brand manager, Pelumi Oyebanji, said the "My Voice My Identity" (MVMI, Season 2), is an online contest for the budding youths in the country, adding that the entries were so massive that, at some point, she could not cope with the sorting.

presented with a cheque of 300,000 naira.

In his reaction, the grand prize winner, who is a 28-year-old Estate Management fresh graduate from the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, noted that the feat was a dream come true for him, adding that he felt privileged to have won the competition out of the different talents that participated. He added that he had participated in the last two editions without winning anything.

Speaking before the presentation of the prizes, Shaltoux's Brand Ambassador, Zadok Aghalengbe, a Nigerian entertainer, music producer, songwriter, and the 1st runner-up in the Nigerian Idol season 7, commended Shalina for the opportunity given to the youths to showcase their talents through the challenge.

The winners were, Israel Ejike Uroko, a participant with the entry name, @ejiyk, from Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, who emerged as the 1st prize winner and was presented with a cheque of 1.2 million naira; Lawrence Kurah, with the entry name, @dir_ten, who emerged as the 2nd prize winner, and was presented with a cheque of 600,000 naira; and @dcapable_twins, the twin sisters from Rivers State, who came third and were

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Events in Pictures



President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Prof. Cyril Usifoh, having a handshake with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, during the PSN delegation's visit to Abuja, recently.



L-R: Pharm. Emeka Ndinech; MD/CEO Merith Healthcare Ltd, Dr Lolu Ojo; PSN President, Pof. Cyril Usifoh; Pharm Osaretin Ijiyeola and NAIP Chairman, Pharm. Ken Onuegbu at the 2024 NAIP Economic Outlook and CEOs Forum in Lagos recently.



R-L : Mrs O. Williams, Ceo Microsoft; Mr Akinwumi Ambode, former governor, Lagos State; Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun, founder, AAF ; Pharm. J. Agbaje; Hon. A. Adeogun, and Pastor Tolu Odukoya, at The Akinjide Adeosun Foundation's 2024 Leadership Colloquium & Award-Chapter 8, held In Lagos, recently.



L-R: Pharm. Babayemi Oyekunle, chairman, Lagos State PSN; Pharm. (Mrs) Margaret Adedapo, member, Summit Committee; and Dr Olusegun Igboye, permanent secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, at the 3-Day Summit of Heads of Pharmacy Units in the Lagos State Public Service, held at Orchid Hotels, Lekki, recently.

Coming Events

36th Annual Scientific Conference of WAPCP

Date: 15th – 18th April

Venue: Sir Dawda Jawara International Conference Centre
Banjul, The Gambia

Phone: 08027280584

2nd International Scientific Conference of CPAN

Date: 23rd -27th April

Venue: Lagos

Phone: 08033367881

16th Biennial National Conference of ALPs

Date: 14th - 18th May

Venue: Uyi Grand Event Centre, Benin City, Edo State

Phone 08033083042

82nd FIP World Congress

Date: 1st- 4th September

Venue: Cape Town, South Africa

2024 NAPPSA Annual Scientific Conference & Exposition

Date: 28th -29th September

Venue: Marriott San Antonio Airport Hotel, San Antonio, Texas

PSN National Conference

Date: 21st - 24th November

Venue: Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.



Immediate past PSN National Secretary, Pharm. Gbenga Falabi; a forum participant; former president of PSN, Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai; MD, Nigerian Army Drug Manufacturing Company (NADMACO) Ltd, Col (Pharm.) Stella Nkiru Ibeh, and MD, Miraflash Nigeria Ltd, Pharm. Moses Oluwalade at the 2024 NAIP Economic Outlook and CEOs Forum in Lagos recently.



L-R: PSN President, Prof. Cyril Usifoh; Senior Director, Public Affairs, Communication and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Nig. Ltd., Pharm. Amaka Onyemelukwe and MD, Alpha Pharmacy & Stores Ltd., Pharm Ikechukwu Onyechi at the 2024 NAIP Economic outlook and CEOs Forum in lagos recently.

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Authentic transformational leaders (2)

By Prof. 'Lere Baale, *FPSN, FPCPharm, FNAPharm, FNIM*
(Business School Netherlands)

(Continued from last edition)

5. Positive energy

Authentic transformational leaders radiate positive energy and enthusiasm, igniting team motivation and commitment. Their optimism and resilience in facing challenges encourage others to persevere and innovate. These leaders empower their followers to overcome obstacles and confidently embrace change by fostering a culture of hope and possibility.

Positive energy is an integral and influential characteristic of authentic transformational leadership. Leaders who radiate positive energy can inspire, motivate, and uplift their team members, creating an environment where individuals are energised and enthusiastic about their work and the organisation's shared vision.

Leaders who exude positive energy create an atmosphere of optimism and resilience, which can significantly impact the morale and productivity of their teams. Maintaining an optimistic outlook and a can-do attitude instils confidence and a sense of purpose in their team members, especially during challenging times.

Moreover, leaders who embody positive energy can influence the organisation's overall culture, fostering a spirit of collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Their enthusiasm and passion for their work can be contagious, encouraging others to approach their tasks similarly.

In the context of transformational leadership, positive energy catalyses change and growth. Leaders who maintain a positive and encouraging demeanour can help their team members navigate through transitions, overcome obstacles, and embrace new opportunities with resilience and determination.

Positive energy is a crucial characteristic of authentic transformational leadership, as it elevates the team's spirit and empowers individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to the organisation's collective success.

6. Vision

Vision is a critical and fundamental characteristic of authentic transformational leadership. Leaders with a compelling and forward-thinking vision can inspire and mobilise their teams toward meaningful change and growth.

A clear and articulate vision serves as a guiding force, aligning the team's efforts toward a common goal and providing a sense of purpose and direction. Transformational leaders can communicate their vision effectively, painting a powerful and inspiring picture of the future they envision for the organisation.

Visionary leaders also demonstrate a capacity for strategic thinking and long-term

Authentic transformational leadership embodies self-awareness, empathy, integrity, effective communication, positive energy, vision, and adept relationship management. By incorporating these qualities, leaders inspire their teams to reach new heights of performance, foster a culture of trust and collaboration, and drive meaningful, sustainable change within their organisations.

planning. They can anticipate opportunities and challenges and inspire others to embrace innovation and change to realise the shared vision.

Moreover, a strong vision empowers leaders to foster a culture of creativity, resilience, and continuous improvement within their teams. By presenting a compelling vision for the future, transformational leaders stimulate motivation, engagement, and a shared commitment to achieving the organisation's goals.

In transformational leadership, a well-defined vision provides the framework for driving positive change, empowering leaders to motivate their teams and guiding them through the challenges and opportunities associated with transformation.

Vision is an integral characteristic of authentic transformational leadership, as it catalyses change, inspiring individuals to collaborate, innovate, and strive for excellence in pursuit of a shared and compelling future.

7. Relationship management

Successful leaders in this model excel in building and nurturing relationships. They create an environment where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered. Through mentorship, coaching, and a genuine interest in the well-being of others, they cultivate strong, interconnected teams that are united in their pursuit of collective goals.

Relationship management is a crucial aspect of authentic transformational leadership. Leaders who excel in this area prioritise the development of solid and meaningful connections with their team members, colleagues, and stakeholders.

Effective relationship management involves building trust, demonstrating empathy, and fostering open and honest communication. Leaders who invest in cultivating positive and supportive relationships create a sense of belonging and loyalty within their teams, which can significantly impact motivation, collaboration, and overall performance.

Transformational leaders understand the importance of each individual within the organisation and seek to create an inclusive and supportive

environment where everyone feels valued and respected. By building solid relationships, leaders can better understand the needs and aspirations of their team members, which in turn allows them to provide support, guidance, and opportunities for growth.

Furthermore, leaders who prioritise relationship management are better equipped to navigate through periods of change and transformation. By maintaining solid and transparent connections with their teams, leaders can effectively communicate the rationale behind organisational changes, address concerns, and inspire a shared commitment to the transformational journey.

In conclusion, relationship management is an integral characteristic of authentic transformational leadership, as it fosters a sense of community, trust, and collaboration within the organisation, thereby supporting the successful implementation of change and growth initiatives.

Authentic transformational leadership embodies self-awareness, empathy, integrity, effective communication, positive energy, vision, and adept relationship management. By incorporating these qualities, leaders inspire their teams to reach new heights of performance, foster a culture of trust and collaboration, and drive meaningful, sustainable change within their organisations.



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How Nigerian healthcare system can be improved – Convener, West Africa Healthcare Expo

Mr Sonnie Braih is a licenced attorney, in the United States. His passion for affordable and accessible healthcare for Nigerians birthed the forthcoming West Africa Healthcare Expo, through which he intends to bring together both local and foreign medicine manufacturers to cross-fertilise ideas on how to improve the Nigerian healthcare delivery system. In this exclusive interview with **PATRICK IWELUNMOR**, he shares his thoughts about the healthcare situation in Nigeria and how it can be improved. Excerpts:

Let us know about you and your professional background.

Thank you for this rare opportunity to be interviewed by your renowned publication, **Pharmanews**. My name is Sonnie Braih. I am a Nigerian by birth but today a Nigerian-American licenced attorney, residing in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I got my Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1986, from North Dakota State University, in Fargo, North Dakota. Thereafter, I worked as a resident supervisor with the Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, Fargo and then moved to Dallas, Texas, to further my education in the Fall or late 1986.

I started my three-year law programme at Hamline University School of Law, from 1995 to 1998. I also did my postgraduate degree in Public Administration at Hamline University Graduate School, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. I have worked as a civil rights officer, an administrator and a division chief of the External Civil Rights at the Nevada Department of Transportation.

What inspired your passion for healthcare, especially as it concerns Nigeria?

This is a very good question. I was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and spent the early part of my life in Nigeria, until 1981 when I travelled abroad in pursuit of university education. Before leaving Nigeria, hardly could a month go by without my getting down with malaria. The doctors would always prescribe Nivaquine, Camoquine, Chloroquine, quinine, and other similar medications ending with "quine".

Unfortunately, I was always having allergic "body itching" reactions to these medications. The saving grace for me in those days was Fansidar (sulfadoxine + pyrimethamine). I didn't have any itchy reaction to Fansidar. Because my grandma always used washed dongoyaro concoction, which is equally bitter to treat my malaria, I became curious about ingredients used in the medication formula.

Due to the frequency of my bout with malaria, I thought it would be great to find a permanent cure and if only I could lead the charge to find the cure for malaria. Unfortunately, during my high school years, Chemistry and Physics were not offered until my fourth year, when my school was approved to have a science laboratory.

Because of this singular shortcoming, my set in high school were only able to take Biology as the only science subject in the West African School Certificate ordinary level examination. If I was privileged to take Chemistry and Physics as part of the science courses required, who knows, I probably could have been a medical doctor today. Be that as it

may, I am still grateful to God that I am a lawyer with keen interest in the healthcare sector.

I draw my passion and inspiration for the delivery of good healthcare to the people from the fact that we in our country have taken the necessity of being healthy. Good healthcare is *sine qua non* to growing a healthy nation.

In 2007, during one of my many trips to Nigeria, I was opportune to visit a sick friend who was in the hospital, actually a private clinic at Ikeja. What I observed was nothing to write home about. Noticing that most of the hospitals that I had been to in Nigeria were nothing compared to what obtains in the United States, I felt it was imperative to not only point out the deficiencies, but to contribute in my own little ways to address some of the shortcomings.

As someone who has been in the USA for decades, what do you think the country is doing better in terms of healthcare, compared to Nigeria?

It is always a tough act to juxtapose or state categorically what country A is doing compared to what Nigeria is doing or not doing. However, for the purpose of this interview, I will state here without fear of equivocation that Nigeria has all the regulatory protocols in place. I have been privileged to review documents from the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, the Radiographers Board, the Optometry Board, the Rehabilitation Board and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDCP) which is like the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC). Actually, the NCDCP was the brainchild of a US-based Nigerian Diasporan.

Theoretically, Nigeria can stand side by side America or other advanced countries in Europe and Asia. But the reality is, everything most likely ends in theory. For instance, can we say with any degree of certainty that our healthcare providers or institutions are operating in compliance with the extant laws, as spelt out in the regulations that are written to regulate them?

Everything is relative. The US is perhaps amongst the top 10 in the provision of healthcare to her citizens. The quality of care is far better than what obtains in Nigeria. I may not be too far from being correct to say that Nigeria ranks in the bottom 10 in the provision of basic healthcare to her citizens.

Again, it is an open secret that the healthcare delivery system over the course of the last three decades has experienced a progressive deterioration, compared to other countries similarly situated. It will be patently unfair to compare Nigeria to the United States of America.



Mr Sonnie Braih

We can talk about the National Health Insurance Scheme and the management of this very noble vision. Can we compare this to Obamacare in the US? Absolutely not. I can go on and on but let me save this for another time.

Can you shed some light on your forthcoming West Africa Healthcare Expo? What really do you intend to achieve with it?

In one word, "exposure". I think it is about time we put our house in order. We have very well trained and highly competent healthcare professionals working in all facets of the healthcare sector. I believe that we cannot only focus on our national malaise when it comes to healthcare. Let us take two sectors as our reference points.

In the pharmaceutical sector, Nigerian-trained pharmacists can compete with or even outperform pharmacists from anywhere on planet earth. Even in the United States and Canada, our pharmacists are making waves. But for the challenges and failure of leadership or lack of political will from the powers that be, even Nigerians that have ventured into manufacturing drugs, such as Emzor, Fidson and Unique, should be commended.

The West Africa Healthcare Expo was designed to bring together in one space all the key stakeholders in the healthcare sphere. It is targeted at doctors, pharmacists, nurses, therapists, dentists and the like. It will provide a very unique platform for the participants and the visitors or consumers to interact or mingle freely in a non-healthcare setting.

We intend to educate, enlighten and empower everybody that shows up that we need to take our personal health seriously. It is also to call attention to the neglected tropical diseases that are ravaging the tropical countries.

What efforts are you making to win the support of stakeholders in the Nigerian health sector like the Nigerian Medical Association and the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria?

I have been very privileged over the years to have been able to identify with experienced healthcare

practitioners and specifically those in the pharmaceutical and medical professions. These people are very dedicated and passionate to their professions and always willing to discuss the state of the healthcare business in the country. So much so that they identified the challenges and proffer the solutions from their own point of views.

One of the solutions or ideas mentioned is an expo or exhibition where all the major stakeholders are invited to share their views on the problems confronting the industry. I have also had fruitful discussions with eminent subject matter experts in academia - some professors and lecturers within the healthcare discipline - all of whom agreed that we need to empower Nigerians to take charge of their health issues.

Also, the need to address the menace of fake medications is a matter of utmost importance that has garnered the support of not only the stakeholders, but everybody that cares.

How do you think government at the federal, state and local levels can leverage your project to make healthcare accessible and affordable to all Nigerians?

Collaboration through team efforts is key to make this expo a success. The TEAM concept envisages a situation where everyone or party participating at every level is a winner. TEAM stands for "Together Everyone Achieves More". So, the concept of TEAM is key.

Accessibility and Affordability are two buzzwords that are key to Nigeria dealing with healthcare challenges. "Accessible" suggests that most, if not all, our healthcare needs can easily be taken care of in Nigeria. All Nigerians should have equal access to good and qualitative healthcare services. It will save the country foreign exchange and address a critical component of our people going for treatment abroad.

With the value of the Naira and good medical infrastructure in place, we can very well reverse medical tourism because it will be far reasonably affordable to come to Nigeria for medical treatment. Our pharmaceutical companies can also step in to be a net exporter of drugs, just like India is doing to the world.

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Beetroot, the blood turnip

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



Beta vulgaris

Beet (*Beta vulgaris*) is a root vegetable plant, which belongs to the Amaranthaceae family. Beetroot is the taproot portion of a beet plant. Though not an indigenous plant, the plant is commonly grown in Jos, Northern Nigeria. Common names for the beet include: beetroot, chard, European sugar beet, red garden beet, Harvard beet, blood turnip, table beet, garden beet, red beet, dinner beet, golden beet, maangelwurzel, mangel and spinach beet. Beet is called *gwoza* in Hausa, *biiti* in Igbo, and *oyin* in Yoruba.

Constituents

Beetroot contains protein, fat, carbohydrate and fibre. Other nutrients in beetroot are iron, sodium,

folate, vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, copper, manganese, phosphorus, anthocyanins such as betacyanin, ferric acid, rutin, kaempferol and glutamine.

Preparations

Beetroot may be eaten raw, boiled, roasted or infused. It may be blended and taken as smoothie or juice. It is sometimes used as a component of salad and some fruit drinks.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses:

Beetroot is rich in protective antioxidants. It may have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, blood pressure lowering and weight fighting properties. It may improve exercise performance and digestive health, support energy levels, brain health

and reaction time. It may protect the gut and relieve symptoms of Raynaud's phenomenon.

Betacyanin, the powerful plant pigment that gives beetroot its rich colour, is also thought to help suppress the development of some types of cancer, including bladder cancer.

Some research suggest that betalains, the family of natural colour pigments that betacyanin belongs to, may help reduce the symptoms and markers of inflammation, thus potentially relieving discomfort of inflamed joints, such as knees.

Beetroot contains nitrates which help to improve blood flow by relaxing the blood vessels, which potentially lowers blood pressure. Studies suggest that nitrate-rich foods, like beetroot, may also help in heart attack survival.

Studies suggest that when athletes add beetroot juice to their regime, it may support exercise endurance and improve performance. When muscles are in a resting state after exercise, the nitrates in beetroot help to bring more oxygen to the muscle cells promoting an efficient recovery.

Beetroots are rich in fibre, which support bowel function, helps promote a healthy environment in the gut, and contain betawins which help increase the production of short chain fatty acids by the beneficial bacteria that reside in the gut. These SCFAs are linked with a number of positive effects on health.

Glutamine, a nutrient in beetroot, is an amino acid essential to the maintenance of our gut lining; glutamine may play a role in protecting the gut lining from injury and stress.

A study examining the effects

of beetroot juice demonstrated improvements in blood flow to the thumb and forearm as well as a reduction in blood pressure and inflammation. These actions are useful in relieving the symptoms of Raynaud's phenomenon which include pain, numbness and pins and needles.

Adverse effects

Eating beetroot may induce beeturia, a red or pink colour in the urine or stool. This condition is harmless, though. Beetroot also contains high levels of oxalate, which is implicated in the formation of nephroliths (kidney stones). So it is considered to be a health concern in patients predisposed to kidney dysfunction.

Economic uses and potentials

Beet costs about ₦300 per bulb, ₦1,700.00 per kg, 750/500g. Nitrate-rich beetroot supplements, prepared through methods such as freeze-drying to prolong shelf life and maintain biological activity, have recently entered the market. Among them, pseudoplastic beetroot gels and beetroot chips are the most recently formulated functional forms of beetroot supplements. Beetroot has great opportunities in agriculture, pharmaceutical, food and beverage industries, through cultivation, transportation, processing and sales.

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Atueyi honours Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year, Ebong

continued from back page

Ebong for the first time in person, adding that despite all efforts to discourage him from coming over from Akwa-Ibom State, due to economic and security considerations, he insisted on coming physically.

The Pharmanews boss also explained that the objective of the award is to discover innovation and service delivery among young pharmacists in Nigeria, as well as to encourage them to expand their reach towards improving healthcare provision in the country.

He added that Ebong was highly qualified to win the award, having satisfactorily met the stipulated criteria, especially commitment to public health advocacy.

According to Atueyi, "Whoever that will be qualified for this category of award must have demonstrated innovation in healthcare delivery and must have been engaged in health research and development, especially towards combating infectious diseases. So we are interested in young pharmacists who are extending their interest beyond just Pharmacy, but general healthcare."

He continued: "Prospective winners must have the ambition to make a difference in their calling. They must not be described as 'ordinary pharmacists'; rather, they must have demonstrated special interests in other areas of healthcare."

"As a pharmacist, I am not an ordinary pharmacist. So our winners should not also not ordinary pharmacists but must have added something to their basic training."

Speaking further, the octogenarian publisher noted that, in line with the vision of catching them young, Pharmanews established a long-term relationship with young pharmacists, which has been sustained over the years. He disclosed that, presently, the journal reaches 27 pharmacy schools across the country, noting that the ultimate goal is that anyone who studies Pharmacy in Nigeria must become acquainted with **Pharmanews**, even after graduation.

He also charged Ebong, as the latest ambassador of **Pharmanews**, to be more committed to the cause of Pharmacy, while flying the flag of **Pharmanews**.

"Our winners must have the ambition to make a difference in their callings, touch lives, and as Pharmanews ambassador, they must project the image of Pharmanews at all times," he stated

Speaking after receiving the award plaque, book gift and a cheque of N150,000, an elated Ebong, who is currently the coordinator of the south-south zone of the Young Pharmacists Group of the PSN (YPG-PSN), pledged not to rest on his oars or let Pharmanews down.

The Uyo, Akwa-Ibom-based community pharmacist and



Pharmanews Publisher, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, presenting an award plaque and book to Pharm. Uwem O. Ebong



Some of Pharmanews staff in a photograph with the award winner and his colleagues during the award presentation.

public health advocate revealed that he was overwhelmed with joy that the honour of emerging the Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year was going to Akwa-Ibom State for the first time through him. He added that the award was not just a win for him alone, but victory for young pharmacists across the country.

"This award reminds me of the responsibility that comes with it, which means I will have to continue striving for excellence, be a positive influence on society, be a good ambassador for **Pharmanews**, and do my best to assist in public health coverage," he said.

Ebong also commended his co-contenders at the poll for being exceptional in contributing to Pharmacy and healthcare in general, and for being worthy contenders, adding that the victory was for all of them.

Recall that at the end of the poll last year, Ebong had 1102 votes to beat the first runner-up, Pharm. Shadrach Nzomisaki, who had 970 votes. Pharm. Goodness Nmesoma Ohakwe had 445 votes; Pharm. Tekena George, 251 votes; while Pharm. Peter Fiyebo Ebiwei had 116 votes.

Speaking at the ceremony, the duo of Mr Patrick Iwelunmor, editor, **Pharmanews**; and Mrs

Temitope Obayendo, the online editor, congratulated Ebong and urged him not to relent in rendering service to humanity, adding that as an ambassador of Pharmanews, he is meant to be in touch with the organisation and fly its flag higher for the next one year and beyond.

On the entourage of the award winner for the were Pharm. Ebong were Pharm. Oluwabukunmi Ajibade, former national deputy coordinator, YPG-PSN; Augustine Chidera Ugwu, general secretary, YPG-PSN, Nasarawa State; and Pharm. Nmesoma Goodness Ohakwe, coordinator, PSN-YPG, Lagos, and a co-contestant for the award.

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Stakeholders seek local solutions, stricter regulations to tackle pharma challenges

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could be derived through new trends in Pharmacy.

Ogunyemi noted that such innovations as digital health technologies and e-pharmacy solutions can boost healthcare access, particularly in remote areas. She stressed the importance of pharmacists in providing essential medicines and services, regardless of individuals' social or economic status.

Speaking on the theme, "Achieving universal health coverage through new trends in Pharmacy", Ogunyemi reiterated the critical role of Pharmacy in healthcare delivery and its evolution in the pursuit of universal health coverage. She underscored the need for collaboration, innovation, and excellence in pharmaceutical practice to attain this goal.

The special adviser further urged pharmacists to embrace the relevant pharma technologies as they are critical in the promotion of preventive and holistic healthcare approaches, adding that collaboration with other healthcare providers and community engagement have the potentials to empower individuals and communities.

Ogunyemi concluded by emphasising the commitment of the Lagos State Government to achieving universal health coverage through its THEMES Plus agenda, which focuses on health and the environment.

On his part, the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr Olusegun Ogboye, called for stricter regulations in the pharmacy sector to address the challenges of proliferation of fake drugs and unlicensed pharmacies, while highlighting the place of native solutions in advancing healthcare in the country.

Ogboye, who identified the importance of the State Drug Revolving Fund (SDRF) and the need for its survival, noted the



Seated L-R: Mrs Betty Allen Albert, representing the permanent secretary, Health District IV, Dr Abimbola Bowale; Pharm. (Mrs) Oyebisi Omolambe, DPS, Lagos State Ministry of Health; Dr Olusegun Igboye, permanent secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health; Dr Kemi Ogunyemi, SA to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on health; Pharm. Segun Onakoya, DPS, Lagos State Health Service Commission; and Pharm. (Mrs) Shakirat Adeosun, DPS, Lagos State Primary Healthcare Board, flanked by some participants at the summit.

simplicity of the system, which, he said, aimed at leveraging economies of scale to keep prices low.

The permanent secretary particularly mentioned the existing challenge in medicines supply, which, according to him, has dovetailed into a situation where majority of stock in hospitals are being sourced independently, leading to concerns about authenticity and undermining the system's integrity.

He harped on the importance of adherence to the essential drug list, while discouraging the arbitrary prescription of medications not stocked by hospitals. He also called for hospitals to become "one-stop" outlets, to eliminate the need for patients to seek medications elsewhere.

On the lingering issue of consultant pharmacists in Lagos State, Ogboye expressed hope of

a resolution through continued engagement between leadership and stakeholders.

In his goodwill message, the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Primary Health Care Board, Dr Ibrahim Mustafa, who was represented by the Director of Pharmaceutical Services at the board, Pharm. Shakirat Adeosun, underscored the pivotal role of pharmaceutical services in primary healthcare delivery.

Celebrating the achievements of the board, particularly in implementing the SDRF across numerous primary healthcare centres (PHCs) in Lagos State, he restated the commitment of the board to equitable healthcare access and quality medicine provision for all residents.

Earlier, Director of Pharmaceutical Services at the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Pharm. Oyebisi Omolambe,

highlighted the importance of the summit as a platform for meaningful engagement, idea exchange, and networking. She emphasized the significance of collaboration, learning, and growth in addressing pressing issues and seizing new opportunities in the pharmacy profession.

According to her, "It is hoped that the summit will culminate in a shared commitment among stakeholders to leverage collective expertise and insights to drive transformative advancements in Pharmacy and healthcare delivery in Lagos State."

"As discussions continue beyond the summit, the collaborative efforts and innovative solutions forged during this gathering are poised to make a lasting impact on healthcare access and quality for all residents of Lagos State".

PharmaServ unveils all-inclusive medical detailing software, Copilot

Pharmaserv, a leading provider of innovative technological solutions for pharmaceutical, medical and allied businesses, has launched a medical detailing software, called Copilot.

According to a press release, recently made available to **Pharmanews** by Pharmaserv, Copilot was designed to address the specific needs of medical representatives and managers. This it does by ensuring uniformity and consistency in information sharing between both teams, while enhancing efficiency in the promotion of their products to healthcare professionals and institutions.

Building on the success of its flagship product, Field Service Software (FSS), Pharmaserv said Copilot represents a significant leap forward in enhancing operational efficiency and marketing drive in a competitive economy.

According to the statement, "Pharmaserv Copilot is a cloud-based software that provides a comprehensive solution for organising, executing, documenting, and evaluating field operations.

"Copilot is specifically crafted to



Emeka Anyaorah, CEO, Pharmaserv unveiling Copilot, a medical detailing software.

empower medical representatives and sales teams within the life science industry to serve as an invaluable tool for presenting and promoting products to healthcare

professionals (HCPs) across various health facilities".

Among other features and benefits, the software is said to have offline capabilities and is reputed to

be useful in advanced GPS tracking and management of medical reps through geo-fencing technology.

The statement added that, aside from its capacity for enhanced medical detailing with a feedback loop, Copilot will be useful in bulk upload of media files, such as product presentation and infographs, while also proving to be effective in KPI planning and monitoring for sales and marketing purposes.

The statement emphasised that, with Copilot, PharmaServ has created a solution to the absence of standardised reporting systems, which poses a significant hurdle, as diverse reporting styles contribute to a lack of uniformity and hinder the effective measurement of medical reps activities.

It added that Copilot is a platform that automates the planning and call reporting processes, which helps teams strategise towards improving their visibility among healthcare professionals and track their goals.

The tech company expressed its willingness to partner with pharmaceutical companies and healthcare businesses in providing effective digital solutions to their marketing needs, with a view to enhancing productivity and visibility within the healthcare space.

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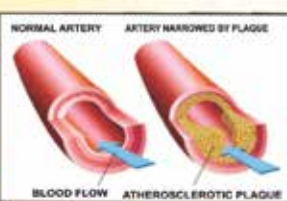


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Stakeholders seek local solutions, stricter regulations to tackle pharma challenges

By Temitope Obayendo

The plethora of issues begging for solutions in the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector may soon become history, as leaders and stakeholders in healthcare have recently converged to chart the way forward for the sector.

The stakeholders, who included policy makers, regulators, pharmacists, captains of pharmaceutical companies and healthcare professionals, assembled at a three-day summit of the Heads of Pharmacy Units in the Lagos State Public Service, held at Orchid Hotels, Lekki, recently. Their goal was to address bottlenecks around the actualisation of universal health coverage (UHC) in the state and the country at large.

The Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Health, Dr (Mrs) Kemi Ogunyemi, who was the keynote speaker at the conference, emphasised the transformative potentials of local solutions that



R-L: Pharm. Moses Awolola, summit chairman; Pharm. Segun Onakoya, DPS, Lagos State Health Service Commission; Dr Kemi Ogunyemi, special adviser to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on health; Pharm. (Mrs) Oyeibisi Omolambe, DPS, Lagos State Ministry of Health; and Pharm. (Mrs) Shakirat Adeosun, DPS, Lagos State Primary Healthcare Board, at the 3-Day Summit of Heads of Pharmacy Units in the Lagos State Public Service, held at Orchid Hotels, Lekki, recently.

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Atueyi honours Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year, Ebong

By Adebayo Oladejo

The Managing Director of Pharmanews Limited, Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, recently hosted winner of the 2023 Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year Award, Pharm. Uwem O. Ebong, seizing the occasion to congratulate and commend him for his tenacity of purpose, dedication, and determination in pursuit of his goals.

The Pharmanews Young Pharmacist of the Year online

contest was established in 2018, with Pharm. Isah Muhammad emerging winner of the maiden edition. Pharm. Frank Eze, won the 2019 contest; Pharm. Daniel Eze won in 2020; while Pharm. Ozioma Ezeofor clinched the 2022 prize.

Speaking at the award presentation ceremony, held at the corporate head office of Pharmanews in Lagos, Atueyi expressed delight in meeting

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