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NNMDA to tackle medicines insecurity with technologically designed indigenous drugs

To combat the persistent inaccessibility and rising cost of essential medicines in Nigeria—which reports indicate have surged by over 50 per cent

By Temitope Obayendo
between 2020 and 2023—the Director General of the Nigerian Natural Medicine Development

Agency (NNMDA), Professor Martins Emeje, has unveiled the agency's strategic plans to leverage nanotechnology in *continued on page 8*



L-R: Pharm. Gafar Lanre Madehin, PSN national secretary; Prof Cyril Usifoh, immediate past president, PSN; Pharm. Theophilus Adimoha, head of regulatory, Shalina Healthcare; and Mr Chiuba Nwaosu, marketing manager Pharm OTC, Shalina Healthcare, during the official signing ceremony of the IBUCAP brand endorsement by the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria (PSN), held at the PSN 97th National Conference (2024), in Uyo.

Free radicals and antioxidants page 42

Shortage of skilled human capital threatens Nigeria's pharmaceutical growth – Daily-Need GMD page 28

Nneka Mobisson-Etuk: Iconic innovator transforming African healthcare page 17

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PHARM. MARYAM IMAM

Pharm. Maryam Imam is an eminent clinical pharmacist, researcher, and healthcare innovator, whose impactful contributions to pharmacy practice, public health, and clinical research continue to advance healthcare delivery. With over eight years of dynamic experience, she is a leading figure in addressing health disparities and fostering equitable access to quality care.

A proud alumna of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, where she earned her Bachelor of Pharmacy, and Bayero University, Kano, where she attained a master's degree in Health Economics, Imam's academic achievements reflect her untiring commitment to excellence. Currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the prestigious Medical College of Wisconsin, USA, her research focuses on the intersections of pharmacy, public health, and health economics. Her work seeks to tackle pressing global challenges, such as healthcare accessibility and equity, using innovative and data-driven approaches.

Imam's professional journey is as diverse as it is impressive. She has held pivotal roles, including clinical pharmacist, associate research assistant, and superintendent pharmacist. Her expertise extends to disease management programmes, medication adherence strategies, and community health outreach, demonstrating a deep-seated commitment to improving patient outcomes.

Her research portfolio is equally robust, centred on the generation of real-world evidence to inform chronic disease management and health policy decisions. Her areas of specialisation include health economics, pharmaco-economic evaluations, electronic health record (EHR) analysis, administrative claims data utilisation, and the delivery of patient-centred care.

A passionate advocate for capacity building and knowledge sharing, Imam is deeply involved in community outreach initiatives that promote health literacy and preventive care. She has earned an array of certifications in global health, leadership, and pharmaceutical supply chain management, further underscoring her multifaceted expertise.

Imam is an esteemed member of several professional organisations, including the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), the American Public Health Association (APHA), the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR/HEOR), and the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN). Her active engagement with these bodies reflects her commitment to advancing the pharmacy profession and addressing global health challenges.

As a leader at MJay Pharmaceutical Limited, Pharm. Maryam Imam leverages her skills to optimise pharmaceutical supply chains and address systemic healthcare inequities. Guided by her vision of improving health outcomes, she consistently strives to advance innovative and patient-focused solutions that resonate with her overarching goal of transforming lives through equitable healthcare delivery.



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Inspiration

“What you're supposed to do when you don't like a thing is change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it. Don't complain.” -**Maya Angelou**

“Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose.” -**G.K. Nielson**

“Success isn't always about greatness. It's about consistency. Consistent hard work leads to success. Greatness will come.” -**Dwayne Johnson**

“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit.” -**Conrad Hilton**

“The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” -**Thomas Edison**

“Persistence is the

twin sister of excellence. One is a matter of quality; the other, a matter of time.” -**Marabel Morgan**

“Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential.” -**Winston Churchill**

“Obstacles can't stop you. Problems can't stop you. Most of all, other people can't stop you. Only you can stop you.” -**Jeffrey Gitomer**

“Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later.” -**Og Mandino**

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” -**Arthur Ashe**

“There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits.” -**Michael Phelps**

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Celebrating 46 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2025)

With 2025 already begun, the state of Nigeria's health sector is under scrutiny, amid pressing questions about its readiness to confront emerging disease threats. The sobering reality of disease outbreaks in recent years, from the Ebola crisis of 2014 to the COVID-19 pandemic and recurring battles with endemic diseases like Lassa fever and cholera, has made it clear that health emergencies are not a matter of if, but when. With a population exceeding 200 million, the country's preparedness is not merely a priority—it is a necessity.

The statistics from the previous year paint a stark picture. Nearly 1,000 lives were lost to diseases such as Lassa fever, diphtheria, and meningitis, alongside emerging threats like the human metapneumovirus (HMPV) and the Marburg virus, which loom on the horizon. While institutions like the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) have shown promising leadership, their efforts will falter without systemic and strategic improvements. This is not the time for complacency; it is the time for decisive action.

In recent years, Nigeria has demonstrated flashes of potential in its response to health crises. The mobilisation during COVID-19, from the rollout of vaccines to the establishment of isolation centres, showed what could be

Bracing Nigeria's health sector for 2025

achieved with political will and coordinated effort. Agencies like the NCDC have bolstered disease surveillance, while the NIMR has reaffirmed its readiness to tackle emerging threats. Yet, these achievements are a fragile veneer over deeper structural challenges. Hospitals remain overcrowded and underfunded, rural areas are starved of basic healthcare, and the national health budget continues to fall woefully short of the 15 per cent Abuja Declaration target, hovering at just 5.46 per cent in 2024.

The cracks in the country's health system are compounded by a dire shortage of healthcare professionals. The "brain drain" of skilled workers emigrating for better opportunities leaves the country struggling to meet even the most basic medical needs, particularly in rural areas. This exodus, coupled with reliance on imported medical supplies, leaves the nation vulnerable and dependent. Issuing tax waivers on pharmaceutical imports, as the government did in 2024, is a short-term measure that does little to address the underlying issues.

To brace Nigeria's health

sector for the challenges of 2025 and beyond, bold and decisive steps must be taken. First, the government must prioritise investments in healthcare infrastructure. This involves not just refurbishing existing facilities but constructing new ones in underserved regions. These facilities must be equipped with modern technology and staffed with skilled personnel who are incentivised to remain in the country through competitive salaries, improved working conditions, and clear career development pathways.

Second, local manufacturing of medical supplies should be elevated to a matter of national urgency. The establishment of domestic production plants for vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and protective equipment would significantly reduce dependence on imports and enhance Nigeria's capacity to respond swiftly during outbreaks. This approach also aligns with broader economic objectives, creating jobs and stimulating local industries.

Third, the gaps in disease surveillance and response systems must be closed. Real-

time data collection and reporting systems should be expanded to cover the entire nation, ensuring that outbreaks are identified and addressed before they spiral out of control. Investments in digital health technologies can streamline contact tracing, testing, and logistics, enabling rapid deployment of resources where they are most needed.

Finally, the government must deepen partnerships with international organisations, private sector players, and non-governmental organisations to leverage expertise and funding. Collaborative efforts can bridge gaps in capacity and ensure that Nigeria's health system is not isolated but integrated into the global fight against infectious diseases.

The stakes could not be higher. A well-prepared health sector does more than save lives—it underpins economic stability, national security, and public trust. Nigerians deserve a system that safeguards their health and dignity, and 2025 offers an opportunity to take the decisive actions needed to make this vision a reality. The question is not whether the country can rise to the challenge—it is whether it will. Let this be the year that the nation chooses resilience, innovation, and progress in the face of adversity. The time to act is now.

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The PSN conference of elders

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

The last conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), held in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, from 4 to 9 November, 2024, will be remembered as the conference of elders of the Society. It was a conference that attracted the highest number of pharmacy elders in the history of the Society.

The conference defined and recognised pharmacy elders as pharmacists aged 80 years and above. Historically, the recognition of pharmacists aged 75 years and above started when Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai became president in 2015. To encourage these colleagues to attend our conferences, a special arrangement was made for their hotel accommodation. This incentive attracted only a few elders, and we never recorded more than six of them at any conference.

From last year, interest focused on pharmacists aged 80 and above.

In some areas of the country, the age of 80 is well respected and celebrated. In fact, there are special ceremonies to admit men and women into this prestigious age group in some communities. At this age, they are accorded certain rights and privileges.

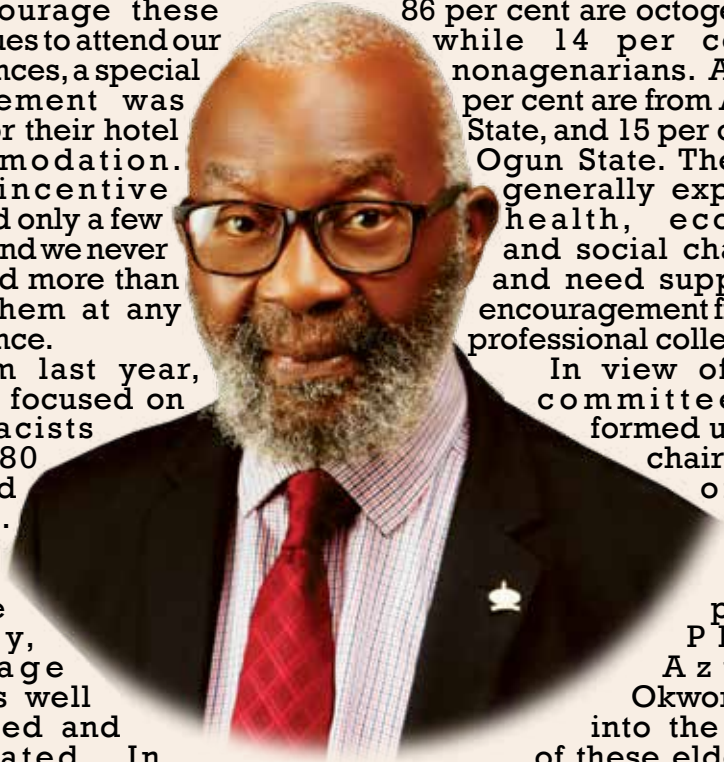
The Uyo conference defined a pharmacy elder as a pharmacist who becomes an elder only at the age of 80. In future, their rights and responsibilities will be stipulated. The conference was unique and memorable because it was attended by the oldest pharmacist in the country, and the first centenarian pharmacist in the history of the country, Pharm. Dick Obichere, from Abia State. Pharm. Onuigbo celebrated his 100th birthday on 31st December, 2024. With him were eleven other pharmacy elders, as follows: Pharm. Dick Nwoke, Pharm. Dr Benjamin Ekpo, Pharm. Ben Enemmo, Pharm. Ifeanyi Atueyi, Prof. Philip Olurinola, Pharm. Jacob Ogundare, Pharm. (Prof.) Oleka Udeala, Pharm. (Prof.) Bona Obiorah, Pharm. Deji Osinoiki, Pharm. Ugbaga Ugbaga, and Pharm. Claudius Aina.

The tenure of Prof. Cyril Usifoh will be remembered, among other achievements, for

the formation of the pharmacy elders' group. The next step will now be undertaken by the new president, Pharm. Ibrahim Tanko Ayuba, who has been known to have high regard for elders. His regime will determine the rights and privileges of the elders. It is expected that the next conference in Kano, Dabo '25, will attract even more pharmacy elders, depending on the encouragement from Pharm. Ibrahim Tanko Ayuba and his team.

Ongoing research shows that currently, we have about 120 pharmacy elders in Nigeria, with a few living abroad. About 86 per cent are octogenarians, while 14 per cent are nonagenarians. About 18 per cent are from Anambra State, and 15 per cent from Ogun State. The elders generally experience health, economic, and social challenges and need support and encouragement from their professional colleagues.

In view of this, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of past



president, Pharm. Azubike Okwor, to look into the welfare of these elders. This committee is expected to intensify its activities this year. Many elders suffer from loneliness, and even ordinary visits and phone calls mean a lot to them. They should not be neglected, abandoned, or forgotten after they have served the profession in particular and the country in general.

Pharmacy elders now have a WhatsApp group to promote communication among themselves, and through this means, they are kept up to date with news and issues of special interest to elders. Classmates, schoolmates, friends, and colleagues are now relating with one another through the WhatsApp platform. Classmates who never communicated with each other since they left their institutions are now phoning one another.

The presence of Pharm. Dick Onuigbo at the Uyo conference assured all colleagues that, by the grace of God and deliberate personal efforts, we can live a long and healthy life. In Psalm 91:16 NKJV, God said, "With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

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DISEASE OF THE MONTH 2025

MONTH	DISEASE
January	Pain/Rheumatism/Arthritis
February	Cancer
March	Skin Infections
April	Malaria
May	Asthma
June	Hypertension
July	Hepatitis
August	Heartburns and GERD
September	GIT Ulcer
October	Erectile Dysfunction/Infertility
November	Diabetes
December	HIV/AIDS & STDs

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The DAF model for success: Desire, Action, and Faith

“Desire dictates our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions.” – Elder Dallin

I wish you a Happy New Year and the very best in your family, career, and business. May 2025 be your best year yet. Amen.

I first introduced the Desire, Action and Faith (DAF) model in my book, *The 11 Irrefutable Principles of Success*, published ten years ago and revised in 2018. Readers have often described the book as an insightful read on success principles.

The DAF model outlines a clear path to follow when pursuing a goal. Whenever I launch a new idea, I apply the DAF model. It provides a structured approach to thinking and execution.

As we embark on a new year, it is crucial to be more intentional in our thoughts and actions. Let us delve into each component of the DAF acronym.

Desire

Desire is a strong feeling of wanting to achieve something or wishing for something to happen. It originates from within and drives the actions that follow. A strong desire to accomplish a goal often leads to its realisation.

The sequence of the DAF model is logical—every great achievement begins with desire. Dreams are born out of desire. When you cultivate a desire that brings value to you and society, you are motivated to take the necessary steps to bring that desire to fruition.

To nurture the right desires, you must monitor your thought process. The Bible says in Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” This is where desire begins. Ask yourself: What do you think about? How do you think? What thoughts dominate your mind? This is where right or wrong desires take root.

The Toyota advertising slogan captures this concept well: “Yo shinai, Yo kangai,” which translates to “Good Thinking, Good Product.” If you reshape your thoughts, you can change your outcomes. Every great desire starts with the way you think. As Brian

Tracy said, “Once you start thinking differently, you start acting differently.” I couldn’t agree more.

Action

The next step after desire is action. As William Shakespeare eloquently put it, “Action is eloquence.” Taking the right actions leads to the right results.

Actions breathe life into desires and dreams. No matter how great your desires or brilliant your ideas, if you fail to act, they will remain unrealised. Nobody celebrates intentions; people celebrate actions that yield results.

If you want to change your circumstances, take action. But not just any action—take strategic and purposeful action. As Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds.”

As we begin 2025, invest time in thinking critically so that your desires, decisions, and actions align with your goals.

Faith

The final step after taking action is faith. You must believe in your vision, mission, goals, objectives, and strategies. Faith is a cornerstone of the DAF model and a catalyst

for individual and organisational productivity.

This year, be intentional in your approach. Whether you are a salesperson, professional, or entrepreneur, adopt a strategic mindset in your work. While the economic outlook for 2025 may pose challenges, smart thinking and decisive actions will help you excel.

A vital component of faith in the DAF Model is belief in the God Factor. Yes, you must walk with God, the Creator of all things. While you plan and work, pray for divine guidance and support. We are not superheroes, so as we work, let us also pray. Faith involves believing in your ability to achieve results while trusting God to do the seemingly impossible. This is the path to true success.

As Martin Luther King Jr. wisely said: “Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase,

just take the first step.” This is the essence of walking with God.

Once again, Happy New Year, and may God bless you richly.

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LASTMA and cardiac arrest among Lagos motorists

can severely impact the cardiovascular system. These hormones increase heart rate, constrict blood vessels, and raise blood pressure, which over time can lead to heart disease and, in some cases, cardiac arrest.

Providing LASTMA officers with training in emotional intelligence and conflict resolution could help improve their interactions with the public. Officers should be taught how to de-escalate tense situations calmly and respectfully, preventing confrontations from escalating into health emergencies.

Road safety and stress management have become crucial concerns in Lagos, where traffic congestion is a daily struggle. Among the factors contributing to rising health issues for motorists, one overlooked cause is the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) role. Known for its role in maintaining order on Lagos roads, LASTMA officers often find themselves at the centre of disputes, leading to significant emotional and physical stress for drivers.

for motorists.

While traffic enforcement is essential, many believe that LASTMA's methods exacerbate the stress that motorists already face. Some drivers claim that LASTMA's tactics, such as stopping vehicles in heavy traffic, intimidating drivers, and imposing penalties without clear justification, elevate anxiety and blood pressure. This sustained stress can result in more severe health issues, including cardiovascular problems like cardiac arrest.

In Lagos, the consistent stress from traffic and interactions with LASTMA officers has created a dangerous situation. Stress from delays, fines, or scolding can lead to emotional outbursts, which may trigger heart attacks or even fatal cardiac events.

With over 23 million people, Lagos is one of Africa's largest cities. Its infrastructure, although improving, struggles to support the large number of vehicles on the roads. Traffic congestion, especially during rush hours, is a major stressor. Vehicles are often stuck in slow-moving traffic, and the constant honking, erratic driving, and impatience contribute to an environment of heightened tension.

In many cases, LASTMA officers respond aggressively to minor offenses or misunderstandings. A driver who unintentionally breaks a rule may face verbal abuse, humiliation, or even physical intimidation. These confrontations, especially when motorists are already anxious from traffic congestion, push the body into a heightened state of stress, triggering dangerous physiological reactions. For those with pre-existing heart conditions, the combination of emotional and physical stress can be fatal.

This stress has led to a rise in cardiac events among Lagos motorists. Several reports have highlighted incidents where drivers collapsed or suffered heart attacks while on the road, some of which were triggered by interactions with LASTMA officers. One tragic incident involved a Lagosian, Modibo Usman, who in July 2022, died from a cardiac arrest following a heated argument with LASTMA officers. Though the management of LASTMA at that time denied the report, many observers think that the agency is becoming more of a threat to the health of motorists than a solution. Motorists, already dealing with the pressures of city life, are especially vulnerable to the health risks caused by harsh treatment from law enforcement.

LASTMA officers are responsible for regulating traffic, ensuring compliance with traffic laws, and issuing fines for violations. However, their aggressive approach, marked by harsh treatment, often compounds the stress already present for drivers. A seemingly minor traffic violation can quickly escalate into a confrontation between drivers and LASTMA officers, increasing stress

The connection between stress and heart health is well-documented. When the body experiences stress, it releases hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, preparing the body for a "fight or flight" response. While this can be beneficial in dangerous situations, chronic exposure to stress

Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach. Firstly, LASTMA must adopt more considerate enforcement methods. Traffic laws are necessary to maintain order, but enforcement should aim to minimize stress for motorists.

Moreover, it is essential to educate motorists on managing stress while driving. Encouraging relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or mindfulness can help drivers stay calm during traffic congestion or stressful encounters with law enforcement. The government should also invest in improving road infrastructure to make Lagos roads more navigable, thus reducing time spent in traffic. Shorter travel times would directly decrease the stress that contributes to cardiac events.

Additionally, public health organizations should raise awareness about the link between road stress and heart health. By promoting self-care, regular health check-ups, and stress management, individuals can better protect their heart health in the face of daily stresses.

While LASTMA's role in regulating traffic on Lagos roads is vital, it is important to acknowledge the unintended consequences of their enforcement tactics. The combination of stress from Lagos' traffic gridlock and harsh treatment from LASTMA officers has become a serious health risk, contributing to an alarming rise in cardiac events. To prevent further tragedies, a shift towards more empathetic and balanced enforcement is necessary.

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Choosing window coverings for health and comfort

By Gloria Obikili

Back in the day, my elder brother was very allergic to dust. The slightest speck in the air would trigger a sneezing marathon that seemed never-ending. Looking back, I realise our thick, dusty curtains could have contributed to his condition. Those curtains were heavy and difficult to wash; so we only cleaned them about thrice a year—usually during the dry season when they could dry quickly.

It wasn't until much later that I realised how much those neglected curtains might have worsened his allergies. It makes me wonder now: could choosing better window coverings have eased his struggles?

Window coverings are not just decorative; they play a major role in promoting hygiene, infection control, and overall indoor comfort. Whether in a hospital, where patient recovery is paramount, or at home, where the atmosphere should be a haven of relaxation, selecting the right window coverings is essential.

Why window coverings matter

Window coverings like curtains and blinds are much more than design elements. They impact indoor air quality, light control, privacy, energy efficiency, and even mental health. For example, natural light has been shown to improve mood, enhance productivity, regulate sleep patterns, and reduce symptoms of depression. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, exposure to natural light boosts serotonin production, which is critical for emotional well-being.

The material and structure of window coverings also play a crucial role. Poorly chosen or maintained coverings can harbour dust, allergens, and even harmful pathogens, leading to respiratory issues, allergies, and in healthcare settings, hospital-acquired infections (HAIs).

Health implications of window coverings

1. Impact on hygiene and infection control

In hospitals, window coverings must be easy to clean and resistant to microbial growth. A study published in the *Journal of Infection Control* revealed that 90 per cent of hospital curtains tested positive for pathogens like *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Clostridium difficile* within just two weeks of use. This alarming statistic highlights the importance of switching to alternatives like blinds with smooth, non-porous surfaces.

Blinds, especially those treated with antimicrobial agents, can significantly reduce the spread of infections. A 2021 study in the *Journal of Hospital Infection* reported that antimicrobial blinds decreased bacterial growth by 60 per cent, improving overall hygiene.

2. Allergens and respiratory health

Thick curtains often trap dust, pollen, and other allergens, posing significant challenges for individuals with asthma or allergies. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, unwashed curtains are responsible for over 65 per cent of allergen exposure, especially affecting vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.

Blinds, particularly roller or vertical styles, are easier to clean and trap fewer allergens, making them a healthier option for homes and healthcare settings alike.

Practical recommendations

For Hospitals and clinics

Choose antimicrobial blinds: Blinds with antimicrobial coatings reduce the spread of infections and

are easier to maintain.

Automate for hygiene: Automated blinds minimise physical contact, reducing contamination risks.

Regular maintenance: Establish a routine cleaning schedule to ensure hygiene and reduce pathogen build-up.

For homes

Opt for lightweight curtains: In bedrooms and living areas, lightweight, machine-washable curtains are practical and stylish.

Use dust-resistant blinds: Roller or vertical blinds are ideal for areas prone to dust accumulation, such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Vacuum and wash regularly: Consistent cleaning prevents the build-up of dust and allergens.

Material matters

The choice of material is critical when selecting window coverings. Synthetic materials like vinyl and polyester can emit harmful volatile

organic compounds (VOCs) such as formaldehyde, which may affect indoor air quality. Instead, opt for natural materials like cotton, linen, bamboo, or hemp, which are eco-friendly, low in toxins, and more breathable.

Aesthetic and functional balance

While functionality is paramount, aesthetics should not be overlooked. Natural light enhances the beauty of a space while improving mental health. Sheer curtains or blinds with adjustable slats allow for optimal light control, creating an inviting atmosphere.

In hospitals, choosing coverings that blend functionality with a calming design can promote patient relaxation and aid recovery. At home, well-selected coverings contribute to a serene and stylish environment.

Conclusion

The choice of window coverings is more than a design decision—it is a health decision. Whether in hospitals



or homes, selecting antimicrobial, allergen-resistant, and easy-to-clean options can dramatically improve hygiene, indoor air quality, and overall well-being. By considering material, functionality, and maintenance, we can create healthier, more comfortable spaces for everyone.

Don't let your window coverings become a hidden health hazard. Choose wisely, clean regularly, and let in the light.



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NNMDA to tackle medicines insecurity with technologically designed indigenous drugs

continued from front page



**Professor Martins Emeje
NNMDA DG**

developing and standardising traditional medicines. This innovation aims to make these medicines comparable to conventional drugs, ultimately improving accessibility and affordability for most Nigerians.

Speaking at the agency's 2024 End-of-Year Media Parley, Prof. Emeje emphasised that standardising traditional medicines will help break barriers to healthcare access. He noted that by applying advanced technology to indigenous medicine production, the agency is positioning Nigeria towards medicine security and independence.

Addressing criticism from some medical practitioners regarding the lack of standardised dosages in traditional medicine, the NNMDA DG dismissed these concerns as deliberately misleading. He argued that any healthcare professional holding such views is unwilling to embrace the scientific study of natural medicine, which is as legitimate as any other academic discipline. He encouraged sceptics to engage with the NNMDA, which recently gained accreditation for training and certifying traditional medicine practitioners in Nigeria.

Highlighting the urgency of achieving medicine security, Emeje declared, "Nigeria is under siege, and the only path to freedom is through securing our medicine supply. We are fully committed to this mission by standardizing traditional medicines with nanotechnology." He revealed that the agency is actively forming partnerships with international organisations and professionals to accelerate this process.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises the role of traditional medicine in Africa and advocates for its integration into national healthcare systems. A study published in *Science Direct* also confirmed that many people in developing countries rely on traditional medicine due to its affordability, accessibility, and cultural relevance. This trend is even gaining acceptance in some developed nations.

Emeje expressed his unwavering commitment to elevating the standard of natural medicines in Nigeria, describing them as vital for the entire population. Despite opposition to the use of indigenous medicines, he vowed to ensure their widespread availability for

all Nigerians.

"Any country that depends entirely on imports is vulnerable," he stressed. "No matter how educated or wealthy you are, you are still a slave if your basic needs, like medicine, come from outside. The absence of medicine security means that if any entity decides to harm Nigeria, they could easily do so by disguising biological weapons as drugs."

Emeje revealed that the NNMDA had received approval from the Minister of Health and the President through the proposed 2025 budget. Once the National Assembly finalises the budget, the agency will secure funding to advance its nanomedicine development initiatives.

"In 2025, we will strengthen our research and development models, which are uniquely designed for Nigeria. We plan to establish a biological plant and a pharmaceutical-grade excipient plant right here at Kofu

Abayomi," he disclosed.

Countering the belief that traditional medicine lacks proper dosage, the NNMDA chief criticised certain medical professionals for their unwillingness to learn about natural medicine.

"I question whether these critics are genuinely ignorant or deliberately mischievous. If it's genuine ignorance, it's forgivable. But deliberate sabotage is unacceptable. Anyone intentionally working against the progress of this country is as harmful as any extremist. You may not carry weapons, but your mindset can be just as destructive.

"Some of us are blinded by pride, thinking that someone speaking Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, or Igala can't teach us anything because of our academic degrees. Education isn't about degrees—it's about knowledge. What you don't know, you must learn," he asserted.

PCNNews

PCN scales ISO 9001:2015 recertification audit

By Ifeoluwa D. Afolayan

The Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) has successfully completed its ISO 9001:2015 recertification audit, conducted from 9 to 10 December 2024 at the PCN Head Office in Abuja. This recertification follows the initial certification attained in January 2022, which is valid for three years.

The audit, carried out by an independent certification body, aimed to confirm compliance and continued alignment of PCN's Quality Management System (QMS) and practices with the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

The recertification process involved a comprehensive review of PCN's QMS, with a focus on regulatory compliance, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement. The external audit team conducted in-depth interviews with PCN staff, examined documentation, and evaluated the effectiveness of organisational processes.

The audit concluded with a productive closing meeting on 10 December 2024, during which key findings were discussed. The external auditors commended PCN's leadership for the commitment and progress achieved since the initial certification and subsequent surveillance audits.

PCN Registrar, Pharm. Ibrahim Babashehu Ahmed, FPSN, highlighted the importance of the audit in his remarks at the closing meeting. He stated: "This recertification demonstrates our commitment to maintaining ISO standards and improving our processes. The significant improvements observed reflect the dedication and hard work of our entire team."

The registrar also expressed gratitude to the certification body's team for their objective and thorough approach while PCN awaits the final audit outcome in January 2025.

In her closing remarks, the PCN Quality Manager, Dr Amina S. Omar, thanked the registrar for his guidance and consistent support of the quality team. She assured stakeholders that the QMS team would intensify their efforts to sustain and enhance the QMS at PCN.

The successful completion of the audit reaffirms PCN's adherence to its quality policy, ensuring effective pharmaceutical regulatory service delivery across Nigeria. PCN remains steadfast in its commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction.

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Celebrating 46 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2025)

continued on page 16

Start the year with the right access: SOS call for healthcare

By Pharm. (Dr) Onyinye Bridget Chiekwe, PharmD, MScPH, ABMP
pharmbree25@gmail.com

Dear reader, Happy New Year!

I am taking a break from my exposition on social marketing to focus on something crucial and undeniably close to my heart: Access to quality healthcare.

I will start with a story.

In the last quarter of 2024, a friend (we can call her Veronica) shared a somewhat harrowing experience she encountered with our healthcare system in Nigeria.

Veronica is a non-healthcare practitioner.

Veronica had taken a relative to the hospital following a medical emergency, hoping to get medical attention. Since she was familiar with the "sub-optimal state of the health system" (her words), she did not expect to receive urgent attention even though she perceived it as an emergency.

So she rushed into the hospital with her near-unconscious relative, prepared to wait for two hours or more, only to be told that the doctors in that hospital were on strike; so she needed to take her relative elsewhere.

"Onyinye, I felt like dropping to the floor in tears", she expressed

as she narrated her ordeal. She had not expected that level of disappointment.

Something broke in my heart, and I could not help thinking: *This is wrong.*

I did not know that the worst was to come.

She went on to narrate her trip to another hospital where they managed to access a physician but was told that the specialist for that condition was only present two days a week, but that day was not one of those days.

She was told to come on the said day and ensure to be at the hospital as early as 6 a.m.

Why so early? The simple reason is the queue. There is always an incredibly long line of patients to see the specialist to the point that, sometimes, not every patient gets attended to.

To cut the sad story short, they did as advised and finally got a prescription.

That was when she came to me. Interestingly, the entire conversation and her narration started with this message from her: *Bridget, please tell me you can get this medicine for me because I am about to lose it!*

Veronica was lucky; I located the medicines, and she received

them within 24 hours. She later told me that she was in disbelief at the speed and ease of medicine access because she had prepared her mind that finding the drugs would be another mad hunt.

I was glad to have been a source of respite to her after her earlier experience. However, I was not pleased because, in my opinion, access to quality healthcare should not be this difficult. As healthcare providers, we cannot be okay with this.

One of the biggest challenges of public health, especially in the sub-Saharan, is access to quality healthcare for everyone and overcoming health inequities.

Let us picture this: We are in the 21st century; Lagos is often described as the commercial capital of Nigeria (based on who you ask, also the economic hub of West Africa); Nigeria ranks in the top 5 African countries by GDP. Therefore, if an urban centre like Lagos still struggles with healthcare access challenges, I shudder to think about what happens in remote and rural communities.

I once hosted a webinar on universal health coverage (UHC) and the role of pharmacists in achieving UHC goals. One



thing that stood out for me, and which I was impressed with throughout the discussion, was how the conversation naturally centred on ensuring coverage in underserved (rural) regions.

However, one key takeaway from Veronica's experience is this: The so-called urban centres that we think are adequately served are struggling tremendously! We should not limit our understanding of being underserved to only remote and rural areas because even urban centres are seriously underserved if the topic is healthcare access.

As healthcare providers, we are obligated to do right for our patients; so let us keep doing our best to speak up and act wherever and whenever.

Thank you for coming to my TedTalk. Once again, Happy New Year.

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Effective management of pain, rheumatism, and arthritis



Pain, rheumatism, and arthritis are common conditions affecting millions of individuals worldwide. These ailments often overlap in symptoms and impact, particularly in their effects on the musculoskeletal system. This report explores the intricacies of these conditions, their causes, symptoms, treatment options, and preventive measures.

PAIN

Pain is a universal experience that serves as the body's warning system, signaling potential harm or underlying health issues. It is both a physical sensation and an emotional experience, shaped by biological, psychological, and social factors. Understanding pain, its types, and mechanisms is vital for effective management and treatment.

Definition of pain

The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage."

Pain can occur in response to:

Noxious stimuli: Physical harm or injury.

Pathological processes: Diseases like arthritis or cancer.

Psychological conditions: Stress or depression.

Types of pain

Acute pain: Short-lived, typically lasting less than three months.

Acts as a protective mechanism, alerting the body to injury or illness.

Common examples: Post-surgical pain, burns, or fractures.

Chronic pain: Persists beyond normal healing time, often longer than six months.

May occur without a clear cause. Associated with conditions like fibromyalgia, arthritis, and neuropathy.

Nociceptive pain: Caused by damage to tissues.

Subtypes:
Somatic pain: Felt in skin, muscles, or bones (e.g., a broken bone).

Visceral pain: Originates in internal organs (e.g., appendicitis).

Neuropathic pain: Resulting from damage to nerves or the nervous system.

Common in conditions like diabetes, shingles, or spinal cord injuries.

Psychogenic pain: Linked to psychological factors such as anxiety or depression.

Mechanism of Pain
Pain perception involves a complex process:

Transduction: Painful stimuli activate nociceptors (pain receptors).

Transmission: Electrical signals travel through peripheral nerves to the spinal cord and brain.

Perception: The brain interprets these signals as pain.

Modulation: The nervous system dampens or amplifies the pain response.

Common causes of pain

Injuries: Sprains, cuts, burns, or fractures.

Medical conditions: Arthritis, migraines, or cancer.

Post-surgical pain.

Neurological Disorders: Peripheral neuropathy or multiple sclerosis.

Infections: Dental abscesses or herpes zoster (shingles).

Diagnosis of pain

Accurate diagnosis involves:

Clinical history: Onset, location, duration, and intensity of pain.

Associated symptoms like swelling or numbness.

Pain assessment scales: Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), Visual Analogue Scale (VAS).

Imaging studies: X-rays, MRIs, or CT scans to detect structural issues.

Laboratory tests: Blood tests to identify infections or inflammatory markers.

Pharmacological interventions:

Non-opioid analgesics: Paracetamol and NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen) for mild to moderate pain.

Opioids: Morphine or oxycodone for severe pain, under strict supervision.

Adjuvant medications: Antidepressants and anticonvulsants for neuropathic pain.

Non-pharmacological approaches:

Physical therapy: Strengthens muscles and improves mobility.

Psychological interventions: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to manage chronic pain.

Complementary therapies: Acupuncture, yoga, and mindfulness.

Invasive procedures: **Nerve blocks:** To interrupt pain signals.

Spinal cord stimulation: For refractory pain conditions.

Impact of pain on quality of life

Pain significantly affects daily activities, emotional well-being, and social interactions. Chronic pain, in particular, may lead to:

Fatigue and sleep disturbances.

Anxiety and depression.

Reduced productivity and economic burden.

Preventing pain

While some pain is unavoidable, certain measures can help prevent or minimise its occurrence:

Exercise regularly to maintain physical fitness and prevent injuries.

Adopt ergonomic practices at work to avoid repetitive strain injuries.

Seek early medical attention for persistent or worsening pain.

Conclusion

Pain is a multifaceted condition requiring an integrative approach for effective management. By addressing the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of pain, healthcare providers can improve patient outcomes and enhance overall quality of life. A greater emphasis on education and early intervention can help mitigate the widespread impact of pain in society.

RHEUMATISM

Rheumatism is a broad term historically used to describe a variety of conditions that cause pain, stiffness, and inflammation in the joints, muscles, and connective tissues. While not a precise medical diagnosis, the term often refers to rheumatic diseases, which include

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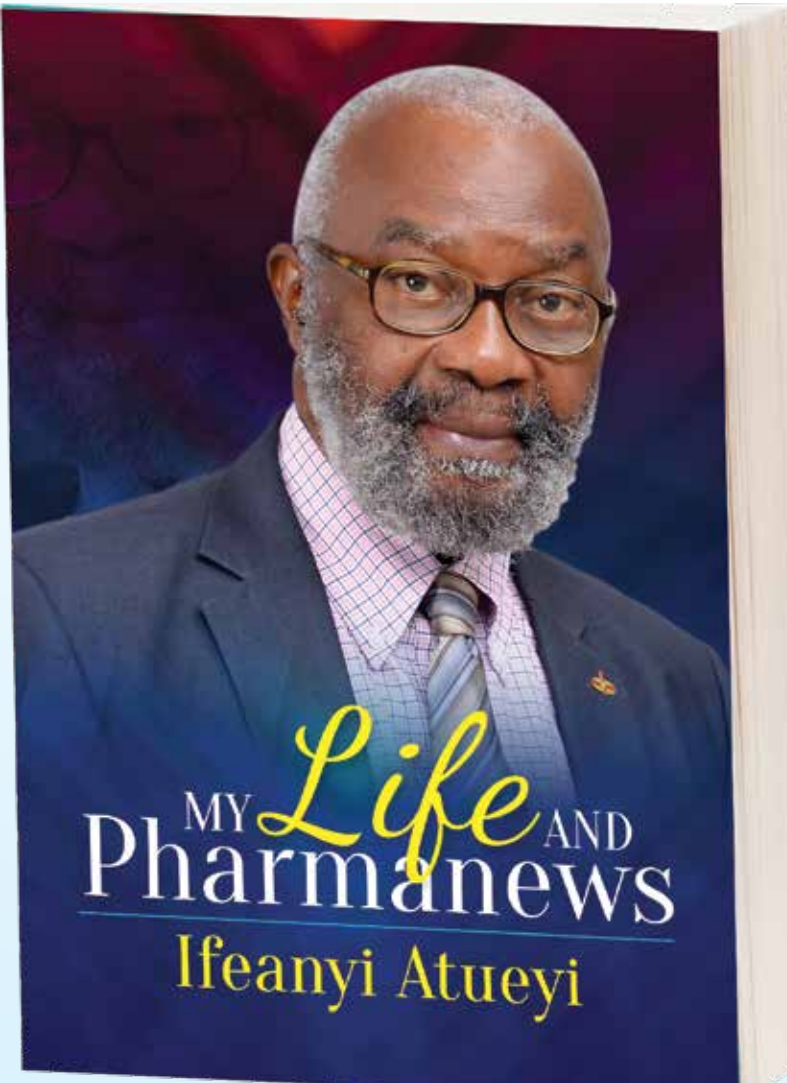
(Excerpts from **MY LIFE AND PHARMANEWS** by Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi)

Those who know me now and the way I could leave the office to attend religious programmes would not know that, at one time, I considered Sunday morning the best time for me to work. This is because my wife and the children would have gone to church, leaving me alone to concentrate on **Pharmanews**. Of course, as at then, I was so consumed with **Pharmanews** that I could no longer remember my mother's "man in the moon" story about working on Sundays.

Moreover, since I wasn't having any meaningful relationship with God, my thinking then was that the success of **Pharmanews** solely depended on how much time I spent working on it. So, I practically worked on it round the clock. Even when I was not seen to be writing or editing physically, my mental faculty was absorbed in projecting

the publication.

This fanatical commitment to my work (which I now understand to be actually idolisation) was not only noticed



by my wife and children but also outsiders. I recall that, at one time, during the interview of some young graduates who came to seek employment in

serious with his school work and eager to work closely with me.

Well, the truth is that even though my way of working might have left a positive

Pharmanews, I asked my usual question, "Why do you want to work in this company?" And the answer I got from one of the applicants was totally unexpected. According to the young man, whose parents lived near my office, he had often watched the way I worked and observed that the light in my office was always on at night. He said he had imagined me working alone after office hours and thought I was a teacher preparing lesson notes. He added that the devotion he saw in me made him to be

impression on the mind of the young man, I was to later realise that my life was out of balance as at then. But aside from idolisation of work and desire for alcoholic drinks, which had not totally left me despite the unpalatable experience I had in my university days, I had another vice which some people might not have known. I enjoyed watching pornographic films. In fact, from 1977 when I started attending FIP and other overseas conferences, I made it a habit to visit red light districts. I discovered that all the big cities had such spots - Hamburg, Milan, London, Boston, Paris and so on. I did not know that I was doing something immoral.

The Change

My life might have continued as described above, were it not for an invitation I received in 1989 from my friend, Mike Okeke, who worked then at International Paints West Africa Plc., Ikeja, to a breakfast meeting of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI). Even though I was not the religious type, I accepted the invitation - a decision, which, in hindsight, I am sure could only have been inspired by the Spirit of God.

Continues next edition



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Effective management of pain, rheumatism, and arthritis

continued from page 11

conditions like rheumatoid arthritis (RA), fibromyalgia, and lupus. These disorders can lead to significant disability if left untreated, making early detection and management crucial.

What is rheumatism?

Rheumatism encompasses inflammatory and autoimmune conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues. It is characterised by:

Pain and tenderness in joints and muscles.

Stiffness, especially in the morning or after periods of inactivity.

Swelling and inflammation in affected areas.

Common types of rheumatic conditions

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA):

An autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the synovial lining of joints, leading to chronic inflammation.

Common symptoms: Morning stiffness, swollen joints, fatigue, and systemic complications.

Fibromyalgia:

A condition characterised by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and cognitive difficulties.

Triggered by stress, infections, or trauma in some cases.

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE):

An autoimmune disease affecting multiple organs, including joints, skin, kidneys, and the heart.

Symptoms include joint pain, rashes, and organ dysfunction.

Ankylosing Spondylitis:

A type of arthritis primarily affecting the spine, causing pain and stiffness.

Over time, it can lead to spinal fusion.

Gout:

A metabolic disorder resulting from uric acid crystal deposition in joints, often causing acute pain and swelling.

Causes and risk factors

The exact cause of rheumatism depends on the specific condition, but common contributing factors include:

Autoimmune Response: The immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues.

Genetic predisposition: Family history of rheumatic diseases increases risk.

Infections: Certain bacterial or viral infections may trigger autoimmune reactions.

Lifestyle factors: Sedentary habits, obesity, and smoking may exacerbate symptoms.

Age and gender: Many rheumatic conditions are more prevalent in older adults and women.

Symptoms of rheumatism
Persistent joint pain, swelling, and stiffness.

Fatigue and malaise.

Reduced range of motion.

Systemic signs, such as fever, rashes, or organ involvement in autoimmune types.

Diagnosis

Diagnosing rheumatic conditions requires a comprehensive approach, including:

Clinical evaluation:

Medical history and physical examination focusing on joint tenderness, swelling, and range of motion.

Laboratory tests:

Rheumatoid Factor (RF) and Anti-Cyclic Citrullinated Peptide (Anti-CCP) for RA.

Antinuclear Antibody (ANA) test for lupus.

Uric acid levels for gout.

Imaging studies:

X-rays, ultrasounds, and MRI to assess joint and tissue damage.

Synovial fluid analysis:

Used to detect infection, crystals, or inflammation in affected joints.

Management of rheumatism

Medications:

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs): To reduce pain and inflammation.

Disease-Modifying Antirheumatic Drugs (DMARDs): Methotrexate or sulfasalazine to slow disease progression in RA.

Biologic Agents: Target specific immune pathways, such as TNF inhibitors for RA and ankylosing spondylitis.

Corticosteroids: For severe inflammation, used short-term to avoid side effects.

Lifestyle modifications:

Regular exercise to improve joint flexibility and muscle strength.

Healthy diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods like fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Weight management to reduce strain on joints.

Physical and occupational therapy:

Tailored exercises to maintain mobility and functionality.

Assistive devices, such as braces or splints, to support affected joints.

Alternative therapies:

Acupuncture, massage, and yoga for symptom relief.

Surgical options:

Joint replacement or repair in advanced cases of damage.

Complications

If untreated, rheumatic conditions can lead to:

Joint deformities and loss of mobility.

Systemic complications like cardiovascular disease, kidney dysfunction, or lung involvement.

Emotional and psychological challenges, including depression and anxiety.

Prevention

While not all rheumatic conditions are preventable, the following measures can reduce risk:

Avoid smoking and maintain a healthy weight.

Stay physically active to strengthen joints and muscles.

Manage infections promptly to prevent autoimmune triggers.

Regular check-ups for early

detection and management of symptoms.

Conclusion

Rheumatism encompasses a wide range of conditions that can significantly impact quality of life if not properly managed. Advances in medical research have improved diagnosis and treatment, enabling patients to lead productive lives. Education and awareness about rheumatism are essential to encourage early intervention and minimise the burden of these chronic conditions.

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a common condition characterised by inflammation and stiffness in one or more joints. It affects millions of people worldwide, often leading to chronic pain, reduced mobility, and diminished quality of life. With over 100 types of arthritis, the most prevalent forms include osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), and gout. Understanding its causes, symptoms, and management options is critical

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Effective management of pain, rheumatism, and arthritis

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for effective treatment.

What is arthritis?

Arthritis is not a single disease but a group of conditions that affect the joints and surrounding tissues. It typically manifests as:

- Joint pain
- Swelling and tenderness
- Reduced range of motion
- Arthritis can be degenerative, autoimmune, or metabolic in nature.

Types of arthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA):

The most common form, caused by the wear and tear of cartilage that cushions joints.

Risk factors: Ageing, obesity, joint injuries, and repetitive stress.

Symptoms: Pain worsens with activity, joint stiffness, and bony growths (osteophytes).

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA):

An autoimmune disorder where the immune system attacks joint linings, causing inflammation and joint damage.

Risk factors: Genetics, smoking, and environmental triggers.

Symptoms: Symmetrical joint pain, morning stiffness, fatigue, and systemic inflammation.

Gout:

Caused by uric acid crystal deposits in joints, leading to sudden and severe pain episodes.

Risk factors: High-purine diets, alcohol consumption, and kidney dysfunction.

Symptoms: Redness, swelling, and intense pain, often in the big toe.

Psoriatic arthritis:

Associated with psoriasis, characterized by joint inflammation and skin lesions.

Symptoms: Joint pain, swelling,



and pitted nails.

Juvenile arthritis (JA):

Affects children under 16, causing persistent joint inflammation.

Symptoms: Swelling, stiffness, fever, and rash.

Causes of arthritis

The causes vary depending on the type but include:

Degenerative causes:

Cartilage breakdown in osteoarthritis.

Autoimmune reactions:

Inflammatory responses in rheumatoid and psoriatic arthritis.

Metabolic factors:

Excessive uric acid leading to gout.

Infections:

Septic arthritis caused by bacterial or viral invasion of joints.

Symptoms of Arthritis

Persistent joint pain and stiffness. Swelling and redness around affected joints.

Limited range of motion.

Deformities in advanced cases (e.g., knobby fingers in OA).

Diagnosis

Diagnosing arthritis involves:

Medical history and physical exam: Assessing joint pain, swelling,

and stiffness.

Imaging studies:

X-rays for cartilage loss and bone damage.

MRI for detailed views of soft tissues.

Laboratory tests:

Blood tests for inflammation markers (e.g., CRP, ESR).

Rheumatoid factor (RF) and anti-CCP for RA.

Uric acid levels for gout.

Joint aspiration:

Analysing synovial fluid for crystals or infection.

Management and treatment

Medications:

Pain relievers: Acetaminophen and NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen) for pain and inflammation.

Corticosteroids: Prednisone for severe inflammation.

DMARDs: Methotrexate for RA to slow disease progression.

Biologic agents: TNF inhibitors for autoimmune arthritis.

Non-pharmacological approaches:

Physical therapy: Exercises to maintain joint flexibility and strength.

Assistive devices: Braces, splints, or canes to support mobility.

Lifestyle modifications:

Maintain a healthy weight to reduce joint stress.

Engage in low-impact activities like swimming or cycling.

Adopt an anti-inflammatory diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Surgical Options:

Joint replacement: For advanced osteoarthritis.

Arthroscopy: To repair damaged joints.

Alternative therapies:

Acupuncture, massage, and mindfulness practices for symptom relief.

Complications

If left untreated, arthritis can lead to:

Permanent joint damage and deformities.

Reduced mobility and disability.

Systemic complications like cardiovascular diseases in RA.

Prevention

While some types of arthritis are unavoidable, these steps can help:

Maintain a healthy weight:

Reduce joint stress and inflammation.

Stay active: Regular exercise

strengthens muscles around joints.

Avoid joint injuries: Use proper

techniques during physical activities.

Manage chronic conditions:

Control diabetes or high blood pressure to prevent complications.

Conclusion

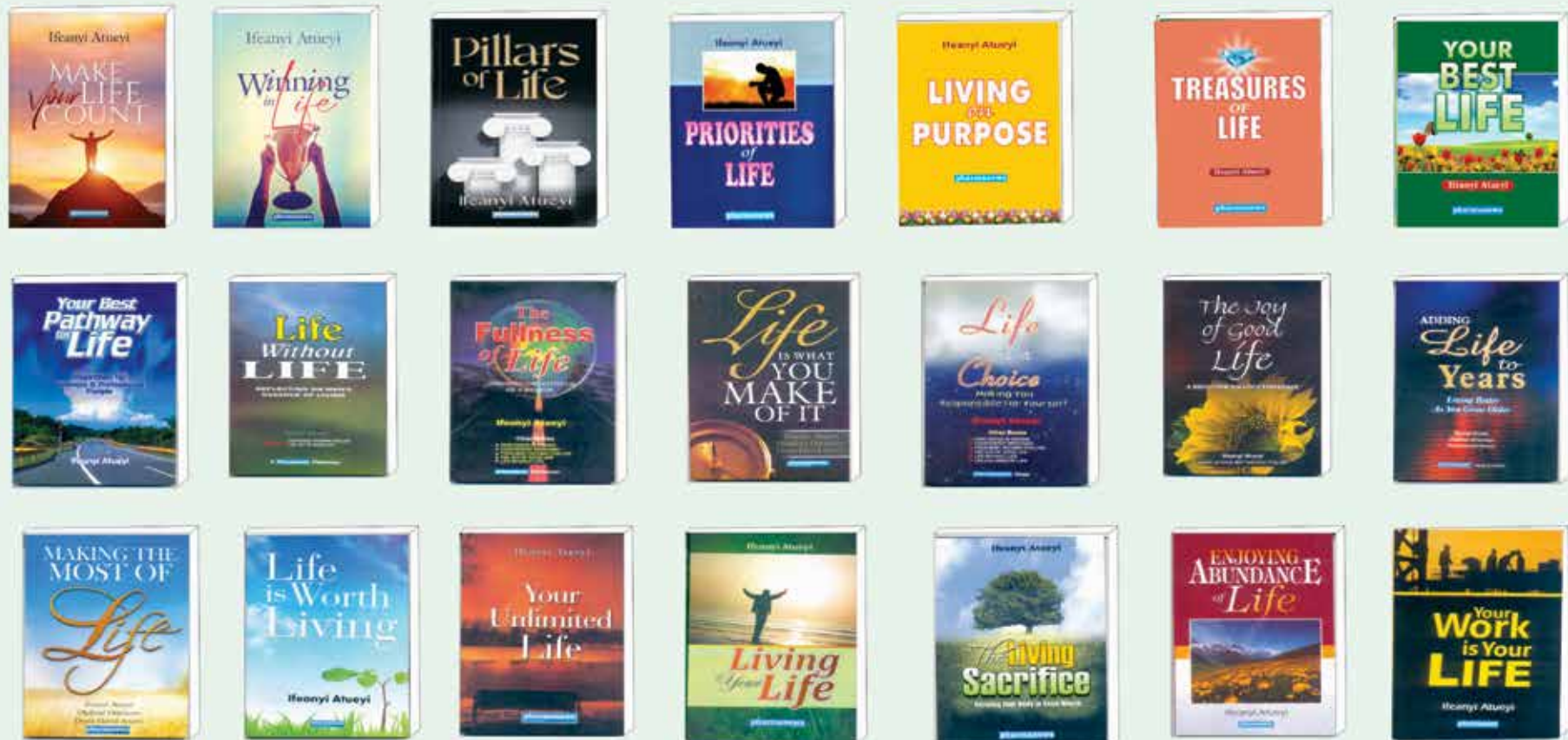
Pain, rheumatism, and arthritis are interrelated conditions that significantly impact quality of life.

While they cannot always be cured, advances in medical science, lifestyle modifications, and early interventions have made it possible to manage symptoms effectively and improve patients' overall well-being.

Public awareness and proactive health measures are essential in reducing the prevalence and burden of these conditions.

Report compiled by Adebayo Oladejo with additional information from The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), News Medical, Science Direct, Medical News, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Healthline, Medscape, National Institute of Health, Wikipedia, National Library of Medicine.

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

Nneka Mobisson-Etuk: Iconic innovator transforming African healthcare

By Ola Aboderin

In the vast landscape of healthcare innovation in Africa, very few individuals have made such significant impact as Dr Nneka Mobisson-Etuk. As the CEO of mDoc, a digital health company that she co-founded in Lagos, Mobisson-Etuk and her team of professionals leverage technology to improve care for individuals living with chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.

A beacon of hope for millions, Mobisson-Etuk has dedicated her life to addressing the systemic gaps in healthcare delivery, particularly for underserved populations in Africa. Her journey, deeply intertwined with personal loss, passion for equity, and a relentless drive to make healthcare accessible, tells a story of uncommon resilience and purpose.

Born in March 1975, Mobisson-Etuk is an indigene of Awo Idemmili in Imo State. While she grew up in an intellectually stimulating environment in the United States, her path to becoming a healthcare revolutionary was particularly shaped by the life and passing of her father, Professor Oliver Mobisson. A brilliant mind in his own right, Prof. Mobisson was a celebrated technologist, educator, and innovator who believed in the transformative power of technology for Africa. His contributions to Nigeria's technological landscape were massive.

As a pioneer of digital education in the country, Prof. Mobisson developed cutting-edge programmes at the then Anambra State University of Technology (ASUTECH) and led efforts to produce Africa's first commercialised personal computer system. Sadly, however, his relentless work schedule and ethic came at a personal cost. He suffered a massive stroke due to hypertension, leaving him paralysed and battling post-stroke complications. His death in 2010 was a profound loss for his daughter, but it also ignited her resolve to address the systemic healthcare failures that contributed to his untimely demise.

A vision born of grief

The World Health Organisation estimates that by 2030, chronic diseases will be the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, surpassing the toll of communicable diseases. For Mobisson-Etuk, her father's preventable death was emblematic of the growing healthcare crisis on the continent. She resolved to bridge the gap between healthcare providers and patients, particularly for those managing chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.



Dr Nneka Mobisson-Etuk

In September 2016, alongside her husband, Imo Etuk, Mobisson-Etuk co-founded mDoc to improve the health outcomes of people living with chronic diseases across Africa. The venture is built on the principle of integrating technology, data, and human-centered care to bridge the gaps in traditional healthcare systems.

mDoc's services range from virtual consultations to in-person home visits and tele-education classes. Patients can access health coaching, blood sugar testing, and tailored action plans to manage their conditions effectively. The platform also includes NaviHealth, a free directory of healthcare services across multiple African countries.

Recognising the challenges of digital literacy, mDoc has established community education hubs and deployed ambassadors to engage individuals in markets, hospitals, churches, and mosques. By building digital and health literacy, mDoc empowers individuals to take control of their health, unlocking broader economic potential in the process.

mDoc also focuses on training healthcare professionals. In collaboration with the University of New Mexico, the organisation has trained over 7,000 healthcare providers across 25 African countries through tele-education programmes. These efforts have resulted in significant knowledge gains, fostering trust between providers and patients while improving overall healthcare delivery.

Under Mobisson-Etuk's astute leadership as CEO, mDoc has touched the lives of over one million people living with chronic diseases and continues to expand its reach across the continent. The organisation's innovative approach has earned it recognition as Africa's first "SuperHub," a status that underscores its pivotal role in transforming healthcare on the continent.

Journey to innovation

Mobisson-Etuk holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (1992-1996), a Master's in Public Health from Emory University (1996-1998), and dual MD/MBA degrees from Yale University (2002-2004, 1999-2005). She also completed her paediatrics residency at the prestigious Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (2004-2007).

Her journey to mDoc was marked by a series of high-profile roles that honed her expertise and expanded her vision. In addition to her educational qualifications, she completed her pediatrics residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where her clinical training deepened her understanding of the complexities of healthcare delivery.

She has held influential positions at organisations such as McKinsey & Company, the World Bank, and Merck & Co., where she focused on strategy development, private healthcare investment, and public health initiatives. As

the Executive Director for Africa at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), she led efforts to build sustainable healthcare systems in countries like Ghana, Malawi, and Ethiopia. Her work with IHI, aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality and improving HIV care, laid the groundwork for her transition to digital health entrepreneurship.

Champion of health equity

Dr Mobisson-Etuk is distinguished by her holistic approach to healthcare. She understands that equitable health outcomes require addressing not just medical needs but also the social determinants of health. From advocating for policy reforms to building partnerships with governments and international organizations, she has consistently pushed for systemic change.

Beyond her professional achievements, Mobisson-Etuk is a role model for women and young leaders in Africa. Together with her husband, she has built not just a company but a movement—one that champions the idea that every person, regardless of their circumstances, deserves access to quality healthcare.

However, Mobisson-Etuk's vision for mDoc extends beyond healthcare delivery. She envisions a continent where improved health literacy unlocks economic potential and drives sustainable development. By equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge to manage their health, mDoc contributes to a healthier, more productive workforce—a critical factor for Africa's growth.

Mobisson-Etuk's work has earned her numerous accolades, including recognition as a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader and a Cartier Awards Finalist. Yet, she remains grounded in her mission, driven by the memory of her father and the millions of others who face preventable health challenges daily.

Her husband and co-founder, Imo Etuk, shares this commitment. A trained electrical engineer with an MBA from New York University, Imo brought his technical expertise to mDoc, helping design the platform that now serves as a model for digital health innovation in Africa.

For Nneka Mobisson-Etuk, mDoc is more than a company—it is a demonstration of the power of innovation, empathy, and determination. It embodies her belief that every person, regardless of their circumstances, deserves access to quality healthcare.

"My dad fundamentally believed that technology was the only way we could unlock the potential of Nigeria," she says. With mDoc, she is proving that his vision was not only possible but highly impactful.

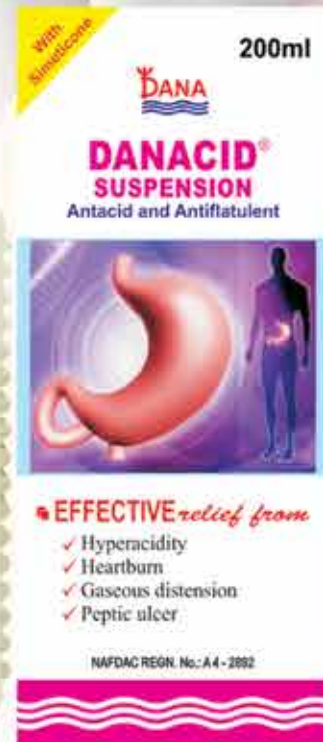
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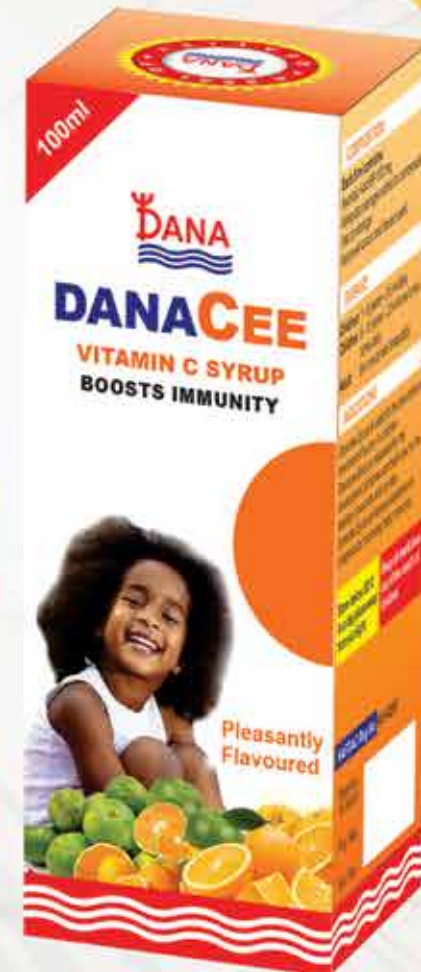
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Celebrating 46 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2025)

Schistosomiasis: History, prevention, and treatment

By Patrick Iwelunmor

Schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease caused by infection with *Schistosoma* worms found in freshwater environments, primarily in tropical and subtropical regions. It remains one of the most significant neglected tropical diseases, affecting millions worldwide.

History

Schistosomiasis has a long history dating back to ancient civilisations. Evidence of the disease has been found in ancient Egyptian mummies, where the parasites' eggs were discovered in their tissues. The disease was later documented in Europe, Asia, and Africa, where it became a significant health concern due to its prevalence in many regions with poor sanitation.

The earliest scientific recognition of schistosomiasis occurred in the late 19th century. In 1851, Theodor Bilharz, a German physician, identified the *Schistosoma* species in the veins of an Egyptian patient, and thus the disease was originally called "Bilharziasis." However, it was not until the 20th century that the connection between the *Schistosoma* parasite and human disease was fully understood. By this time, schistosomiasis was widespread in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia and South America, where people came into contact with contaminated water sources.

The spread of the disease intensified due to population growth, urbanisation, and poor public health infrastructure, which made it difficult to control. Despite significant advances in understanding its transmission, schistosomiasis remains a public health challenge, especially in rural areas where sanitation and access to clean water remain limited.

Transmission and lifecycle

Schistosomiasis is caused by several species of *Schistosoma* worms, with *Schistosoma mansoni*, *Schistosoma haematobium*, and *Schistosoma japonicum* being the most common human pathogens. The life cycle of the parasite is complex, involving both human and snail hosts.

Humans typically become infected when they come into contact with water contaminated with the larvae (cercariae) of *Schistosoma*. These larvae are released by freshwater snails that serve as the intermediate host. Once in contact with human skin, the cercariae penetrate and enter the bloodstream, eventually migrating to the liver, where they mature into adult worms. The adult worms then move to different parts of the body, often residing in the blood vessels around the intestines or bladder.

In these sites, the worms lay eggs that can either pass out of the body through urine or faeces, or become trapped in tissues, causing inflammation, scarring, and damage to organs. The eggs that exit the body return to the water, where they hatch into larvae that infect snails, continuing the life cycle.

Prevention of Schistosomiasis

Preventing schistosomiasis largely depends on avoiding contact with contaminated water sources, particularly in regions where the disease is endemic. Several strategies have been proposed to reduce the transmission and impact of schistosomiasis:

Improved sanitation and clean water supply:

One of the most effective ways to prevent the disease is by ensuring access



to safe, clean water and better sanitation systems. When people are less likely to come into contact with contaminated water, the risk of infection is significantly reduced.

Snail control:

Since snails are the intermediate host for the parasite, controlling their populations can reduce the incidence of the disease. This can be done through environmental management, such as eliminating standing water where snails breed, or through chemical treatments to kill the snails in infested water bodies.

Health education:

Informing populations about the risks of schistosomiasis and encouraging the use of safe water practices, such as avoiding swimming in contaminated water, is crucial

in endemic areas. In some places, local initiatives also promote the use of safe toilets and proper disposal of human waste.

Mass Drug Administration (MDA):

In areas where schistosomiasis is widespread, health authorities often employ mass drug administration programmes, where entire populations at risk are given treatments to reduce the number of infections. These programmes are particularly beneficial in reducing the prevalence of the disease in areas with limited healthcare infrastructure.

Treatment

Schistosomiasis can be treated effectively with the use of antiparasitic medications, particularly praziquantel, which is the most widely used drug for the disease. Praziquantel works by disrupting the worm's ability to regulate its environment, leading to paralysis and death of the parasite. The drug is generally safe and effective, especially when administered early in the course of the disease.

In addition to praziquantel, treatment may also include supportive care to manage complications arising from chronic infections, such as liver damage or bladder cancer. In some cases, surgery may be required to repair or remove severely damaged tissue.

Challenges in eradication

While the treatment of schistosomiasis is relatively straightforward, eradicating the disease remains a significant challenge due to the complexities of transmission and the lack of infrastructure in many endemic regions. The global burden of schistosomiasis, with millions of people infected and countless others at risk, calls for a multifaceted approach combining treatment, prevention, and education.

Ongoing research aims to develop new vaccines, better diagnostic tools, and alternative treatments to address the growing challenges of drug resistance and the environmental changes that affect snail populations.

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Sound leaders can't emerge from sick process – DG, PLPI

Dr Nathan Obasi is the director-general of the Professional Leadership Practitioners Institute (PLPI), an internationally acclaimed leadership think-tank working to reshape the mindset of Nigerians and position them for excellence in leadership through value-driven and problem-solving endeavours. In this exclusive interview with Patrick Iwelunmor, Obasi reflects on Nigeria's leadership challenges and offers insights on how these issues can be addressed.



Dr Nathan Obasi

How did you come up with the idea for the Professional Leadership Practitioners Institute?

I have participated in numerous leadership training sessions, held leadership positions, and observed a gap between what is taught and what is practised—not even the trainers themselves consistently applied their teachings. Comparing theoretical knowledge with on-ground realities, I identified a clear need to align theory with practice. This gap inspired the creation of an institute designed to address and close these shortcomings. That was how the Professional Leadership Practitioners Institute came into being.

What are your motivations, and what problems do you hope to solve through the Institute?

Our motivation stems from the enthusiasm of individuals and groups we have engaged with. Their positive feedback about the Institute's work reassures us of the importance of our mission.

The Institute seeks to address leadership challenges and their development by involving everyone. Leadership must be democratised. Our focus is on improving how leadership evolves and is practised. We aim to build a pipeline of leaders with a global outlook and a strong sense of community—leaders who guide with both their hearts and minds. Ultimately, our goal is to nurture innovative leaders capable of solving the world's most pressing problems.

With the leadership crisis in Nigeria reaching embarrassing levels, do you believe your Institute is making an impact?

Yes, we are making an impact, though we recognise there is still much to do.

We have members in the National Assembly demonstrating leadership

in various capacities. In universities and other higher institutions, our members serve as vice-chancellors, senior professors, and other academic and administrative personnel. Similarly, in the business and industrial sectors, we engage with various groups to promote better leadership practices. Many of our members hold leadership roles in professional bodies, associations, and organisations, exemplifying effective leadership.

Don't you think it is important to make your presence more prominent at national and international levels to attract the attention required for growth and expansion?

Absolutely, and the Institute is already making strides in that direction. At the national level, we are firmly established. Internationally, we are collaborating with institutions in the UK, USA, and Canada to set up an academy offering globally recognised leadership certifications.

However, while growth and expansion are vital, grounding our existing membership in the spirit, soul, and body of leadership remains our priority. We want leaders who will embody and propagate the Institute's leadership principles, ensuring sustainable impact rather than a fleeting presence.

What are your plans for Nigeria, particularly at the electoral level, where unelected leaders often emerge due to malpractice?

Leadership is a spiritual endeavour, rooted in self-image and moral values. When asked who they want for president, people usually say a leader, not a politician. Those who cheat their way into power are not leaders; they are transgressors.

True leadership is value-driven. A leader cannot emerge from a flawed or corrupt process. Leaders born of electoral fraud may wield

coercive power but lack the authority to inspire commitment, leading to dysfunctional governance.

The Institute is working to develop the organisational and cultural capacity to address electoral challenges in line with national values and aspirations. While the task is challenging, it is achievable.

We are leveraging Internet and ICT-based leadership knowledge to strengthen the electoral process and enhance credibility. By synchronising electoral infrastructure, we aim to achieve more transparent and acceptable elections.

Have you considered collaborating with other organisations to advocate for free and fair elections, given the critical role they play in leadership selection?

Yes, we are already collaborating with various organisations.

Our focus is primarily on shifting mindsets. We believe no programme, however well-intentioned, can succeed if the planners and executors are not aligned with its purpose. As mentioned earlier, we are introducing superior, credible knowledge into the system to achieve better outcomes.

Many argue that Nigeria is doomed to fail due to leadership failures. What is your view on this?

You've probably heard the saying, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." If Nigeria collectively decides to reject the electoral malpractices we currently endure, such negative predictions will not come to pass.

However, a people ultimately get the leadership they tolerate. Leadership has value, but it also comes at a cost. The Institute is working tirelessly to educate Nigerians about the value of true leadership, making such arguments about failure irrelevant.

As a leadership practitioner, what steps can Nigeria take to overcome its leadership challenges?

We must redefine leadership as the act of mobilising people to tackle tough problems. Leadership must be non-coercive and value-driven.

Our values as a nation must change. Leadership is not determined by ethnicity or background but by merit and the capacity to serve the greater good. The old system, where individuals are chosen based on their roots rather than their abilities, must end.

It is ironic that Nigerians can contest and win high political offices in advanced countries but face barriers to doing so in their own country due to tribalism. Such practices hinder our progress. Leadership must prioritise the collective good over parochial interests.

To address our challenges, we need to deconstruct and reconstruct our understanding of leadership, prioritising competence and integrity above all else.

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PCN inducts 112 UNILAG pharmacy graduands

- As faculty holds 10th alumni lecture

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



L-R: PCN Lagos Zonal Officer, Dr Taiwo Filusi; Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, UNILAG, Professor Gloria Ayoola; Overall Best Graduating Student, Wuraola Comfort Olayiwola; mother of the BGS, Mrs Olayiwola; former President of the PSN, Pharm. Olumide Akintayo; Guest Speaker, Pharm. Olanrewaju Awolokun; US based lecturer, Prof. Adebayo Adejare; and Secretary, WAPCP, Nigeria chapter, Dr Ukamaka Okafor at the induction/oath-taking ceremony.

The Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) on 3 December 2024 inducted 112 pharmacy graduands of the University of Lagos (UNILAG) after they successfully completed their programme at the institution.

The inductees, who graduated during the 2023/2024 academic session, included Wuraola Comfort Olayiwola, who emerged as the Overall Best Graduating Student with an impressive Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 4.91. Among the 112 graduates, 38 earned distinctions.

The PCN Registrar, Pharm. Babashehu Ahmed, was represented at the event by the PCN Lagos Zonal Officer, Dr Taiwo Filusi, who led the graduands in the oath-taking ceremony.

In his address before administering the oath, the registrar emphasised that the oath-taking and induction ceremony is a mandatory requirement under the PCN Act before graduates can be officially registered as pharmacists. He urged the inductees to uphold the ethical standards of the pharmacy profession and to take their compulsory one-year internship programme seriously. He highlighted that the internship must be undertaken at a PCN-accredited centre and described it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gain valuable knowledge.

The registrar further warned the graduands against professional misconduct, stressing that the PCN does not tolerate unethical behaviour. He encouraged them to avoid dishonesty and to actively engage in research within the pharmacy profession. He reminded them of the importance of integrity, stating that they must familiarise themselves with the profession's code of ethics. He assured them that after registration, they would have the opportunity to compete in the industry and that the sky would be their stepping stone. He encouraged them to take leadership

roles in the health sector and to avoid abandoning professional projects.

In her remarks, the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Professor Gloria Ayoola, commended the graduands for their resilience, dedication, sacrifice, and commitment, which culminated in their academic success. She urged them to pursue continuous learning and to embody the virtues, values, and ethics of the pharmacy profession.

Professor Ayoola highlighted that the induction and oath-taking ceremony marked the culmination of years of hard work, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to achieving pharmaceutical excellence. She stressed the need for graduates to keep learning, noting that the digital age is rapidly evolving. Staying informed about technological advancements, she said, would ensure they remain effective and relevant in their professional practice.

She acknowledged the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in the healthcare sector but cautioned that technology should enhance, not replace, the human touch. According to her, patients value pharmacists not only for their knowledge but also for the compassion and reassurance they provide. Ayoola also called on philanthropic individuals and corporate organisations to invest in the Faculty of Pharmacy to enable the institution to continue producing future-ready, top-tier pharmacists.

In his address, the event's chairman and former President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. Olumide Akintayo, stated that the graduands were joining the pharmacy profession at a challenging time, particularly given the significant issues facing Nigeria's healthcare sector.

He expressed concern over the severe shortage of pharmacists in Nigeria, revealing that the current pharmacist-to-patient ratio is

approximately 1:16,000, compared to the recommended 1:2,000. Despite this challenge, he viewed the situation as an opportunity to strengthen Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry and healthcare sector, particularly through the integration of artificial intelligence.

Pharm. Akintayo emphasised that integrating AI into pharmaceutical practice could transform healthcare in Nigeria. He envisioned a future where no child would die from malaria or diarrhoea due to a lack of medication, maternal mortality would be reduced, and no elderly person would suffer neglect due to limited access to pharmacists. He reminded the graduands that pharmacy in the digital age is no longer a distant dream but a present reality. He encouraged them to embrace their roles as innovators and caregivers who would drive progress in the sector.

Delivering the 10th Alumni Lecture titled "*Pharmacy in the Digital Age: Embracing AI for a Healthier Future*", guest speaker Pharm. Olanrewaju Awolokun defined artificial intelligence as the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems.

In his lecture, "*Revolutionising Healthcare with Artificial Intelligence*", Pharm. Awolokun explained that AI is designed to complement human abilities, enabling faster and more efficient task completion. He stressed that AI would not replace human pharmacists but would expand their capabilities.

He elaborated on AI's potential to enhance diagnosis, improve treatment plans, increase operational efficiency, accelerate drug discovery and development, and support remote patient monitoring and telehealth services. He highlighted the rise of telepharmacy, where pharmacists can now provide care without face-to-face interactions, as well as the emergence of teleconsultations and

e-prescriptions. He also noted the role of AI in big data analytics and drug development.

Awolokun stated that AI could significantly improve prescription accuracy, reduce operational costs, and ultimately enhance patient outcomes. He acknowledged challenges such as data privacy concerns, algorithm biases, and regulatory compliance but maintained that digitalisation is the future. He urged pharmacists to embrace technology in all areas of their work and emphasised the importance of collaboration between AI systems and human pharmacists.

The ceremony also featured the formal presentation of the inductees by Professor Ayoola to the PCN registrar, who administered the pharmacist's oath and presented provisional certificates of registration.

Another highlight was the presentation of prizes and awards to the best graduating student, Wuraola Comfort Olayiwola, and other outstanding students.

Wuraola Comfort Olayiwola received multiple awards, including the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria Prize for the Best Graduating Student, the Faculty of Pharmacy Dean's Prize for the Best Graduating Student, and the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists Prize.

Princess Kamsy Okeke was honoured with the Board of Fellows of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Prize for the Best Graduating Student in Clinical Pharmacy, alongside the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria Prize for Best Graduating Student in Clinical Pharmacy.

Grace Oluwanifemi Agbede received the Nigeria Association of Pharmacists in Academia Award for Outstanding Pharmacy Student, while Jesutofunmi Victoria Abisagbo was awarded the prestigious Bowl of Hygeia Award.

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

Tamar Foundation Spends N10m on free healthcare, drugs, foodstuffs for over 1,500 Lagosians

By Adebayo Oladejo

Tamar Homes Foundation (THF), a non-governmental organisation (NGO), recently provided free healthcare services, medications, and foodstuffs worth N10 million to over 1,500 residents of Ikota and its environs in Lagos State.

The initiative, held during the free medical outreach organised by THF at the open field of Ikota Primary School, aimed to alleviate the burden of healthcare costs and spread joy among vulnerable populations, according to Olajumoke Rhema, Chief Executive Officer of THF.

Speaking at the event, which attracted residents from various parts of Lagos, especially Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Rhema explained that this was their third outreach of the year, following similar initiatives in Badore Community and Ikota Primary School.

"Today, we are here for our annual medical outreach and food drive. We have medical doctors, nurses, and pharmacists offering free consultations for conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and early detection of prostate cancer. Children are also being attended to, and we're distributing free foodstuffs as well," she said.

Rhema emphasised the importance of the initiative, particularly during the holiday season when many people may not be aware of their health status. "Most people don't know their sugar or blood pressure levels, and this is the perfect time to provide them with the opportunity for early detection," she added.

The event was held in Ikota due to its enclosed community setting, which allowed better crowd control. However, attendees came from across Lagos, with buses mobilising individuals from various communities. Rhema noted, "We chose Ikota for security reasons, but



Olajumoke Rhema, CEO of Tamar Homes Foundation (middle), and members of her team with some of the foodstuff packs at the THF free medical outreach, at Ikota Primary School, Ikota, Lagos recently.

people came from Lafayette, Surulere, and other parts of Lagos. Our goal was to reach 1,000 people, but we're already catering to over 1,500 people."

Rhema also urged corporate organisations to support community welfare. "I want to encourage everyone, especially corporate organisations, to look beyond their immediate surroundings. Every little contribution counts. If each organisation contributes a small percentage of their profits, it can significantly improve the lives of people in these communities," she stated.

The cost of this year's initiative, which included medical personnel, logistics, food, and medication, exceeded N10 million. "We've invested heavily in this event, and it has been truly humbling to see the level of turnout. We could have spent even more, but we're trusting that we can

continue growing this initiative in the coming years," Rhema added.

Olabisi Abodunrin, a key official of THF, noted that beyond free medical services, the foundation provided cooked meals to ensure attendees stayed energised while waiting for their consultations. "We're also distributing essential food items like semovita, pasta, and oil to the community," she said.

Dr Maria Ayeni, one of the doctors present at the outreach, highlighted some prevalent health conditions in the community, including high blood pressure, respiratory infections, and malaria. "Many people are unaware of their high blood pressure or blood sugar levels, and some can't afford the medication. That's why initiatives like this are crucial," Ayeni remarked.

Pharmaceutical interventions included free prescriptions for hypertension, diabetes, and malaria, as well as guidance for those with chronic conditions. "Most people cannot afford these medications, and being able to provide them with free healthcare is incredibly rewarding," she added.

Apostle Samuel Adeyanju, an elderly resident from Oshapa, a neighbouring community, expressed his appreciation for the programme. "I'm from Oshapa, London, a neighbouring community," he said. Regarding the event, he described it as "very, very elaborated and very nice, indeed." He added, "We were here around 9:30 am, and the programme had already commenced. I really thank the organisers."

Reflecting on the impact of the initiative, Adeyanju prayed for the strength to contribute similarly in the future. "I'm praying that God gives me strength, power, and money to do this myself, because if we can do this, we can help ourselves and our country," he said.

Mrs Musunmola Shukura Sulaiman, the CDA chairman of Ikota Orile Community, also expressed immense gratitude to Tamar Foundation for the event. "We appreciate Tamar Foundation for the gesture, especially in the areas of free health screening, free drugs, and free food, both cooked and raw ones. We are very grateful," she said.

Sulaiman described the scale of the event as "massive," noting that close to 1,500 people attended and would not leave empty-handed. "It is something that I am happy about. I'm very, very happy because what they did today was so exciting. I never expected it to be this big. Although they did it last year, it wasn't as grand as this year," she said.

When asked about other organisations engaging in similar work, Sulaiman acknowledged their efforts but praised Tamar Homes Foundation's impact. "We have them, but I think Tamar's is the biggest," she concluded.

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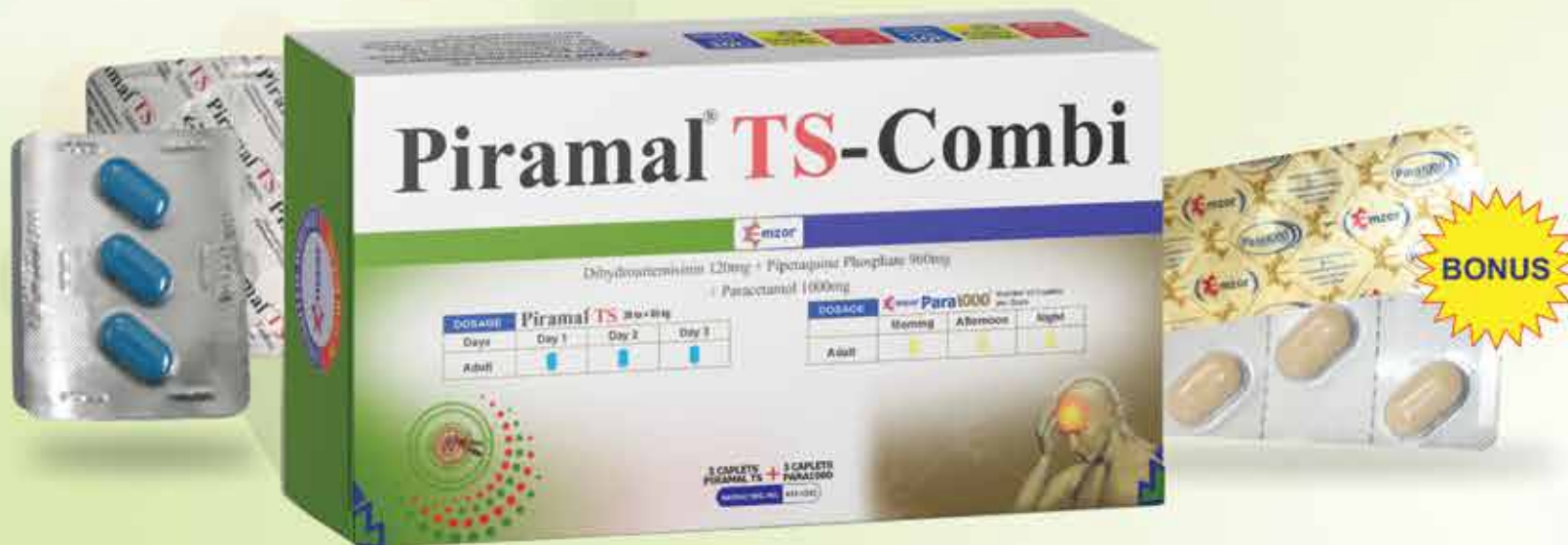
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Shortage of skilled human capital threatens Nigeria's pharmaceutical growth – Daily-Need GMD

Daily-Need Group, a key player in Nigeria's pharmaceutical manufacturing sector, has come a long way since its inception in the 1960s as a small medicine store. In this exclusive interview with **Adebayo Oladejo** at the company's corporate head office in Lagos, Mr Oluwatosin Jolayemi, the company's group managing director, sheds light on the company's evolution, its strategic approach to growth, and the pressing challenges faced by the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria.

From power and water self-sufficiency to addressing the critical shortage of skilled human capital, Jolayemi—who is also the chairman of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN)—discusses how these obstacles are impacting local manufacturing and the steps Daily-Need Group is taking to overcome them. **Excerpts:**



Mr Oluwatosin Jolayemi

Can you give us a brief history of Daily-Need Group and how the company has evolved under your leadership?

Daily-Need Group started in the 1960s as Matthew Medicine Store, a small retail medicine outlet. In the late 1960s, it transitioned to Daily-Need Chemist. By 1970, the company expanded its operations by starting a factory in Surulere, still operating under the name Daily-Need Chemist. In 1972, the company took a significant leap by building a multipurpose factory, marking its transition from a simple pharmacy to a full-fledged manufacturing entity.

Over the years, Daily-Need Group has evolved from a small trading company into a leading player in the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector. This present management has maintained this growth trajectory, focusing on expanding our production capacities and reaching wider markets. Our focus has always been on quality and innovation, which has kept us ahead in the industry.

What were the founding principles of Daily-Need Group, and how have they shaped the company's vision and operations?

The founder of Daily-Need

Group, Otunba (Dr) Matthew Oyin Jolayemi, began as a trader but soon realised that he was not attaining the level of self-fulfilment he had always aspired to through trading alone. This led him to venture into manufacturing, aiming to create a brand that could become a household name across the country.

This vision still guides us today. We aim to identify simple therapeutic molecules and formulations often overlooked by larger pharmaceutical companies. By focusing on these areas, Daily-Need Group provides essential and accessible solutions that meet the growing demands of the industry. This philosophy continues to shape our operations and sets us apart in the market.

How does Daily-Need differentiate itself in the competitive pharmaceutical and consumer goods market?

At Daily-Need Group, our greatest selling point is the quality of our products. We prioritise integrity, quality, and transparency, and these principles guide everything we do. While we don't have the big brand names to compete with, our commitment to exceptional quality ensures that our products—whether Rexall (Paracetamol) or De-

deon's Syrup of Haemoglobin—compete with the best in the market. We encourage people to try our products because we are confident they will experience a level of satisfaction that fosters loyalty to our brands.

What are some key challenges the company faces in the Nigerian pharmaceutical and FMCG sectors, and how have you been overcoming them?

The challenges

facing the pharmaceutical sector are widespread and not unique to this industry. These include foreign exchange shortages, high borrowing costs, poor infrastructure, and unstable power supply—common issues across most manufacturing sectors in Nigeria.

However, one specific challenge within the pharmaceutical industry is the shortage of skilled human capital. Many young professionals trained in pharmaceutical sciences are not pursuing careers in manufacturing, opting instead for sectors like banking, telecommunications, or even migrating abroad. This shortage of competent professionals has made it difficult to find experienced personnel for vital roles.

To address the power issue, we disconnected from the national grid over a decade ago and now generate our own power and water. Additionally, we ensure that all our waste is properly treated before disposal, contributing to our green initiatives and social responsibility.

For human capital development, we invest in training young people who intern with us, sponsoring some for further education and offering them employment afterwards. We also collaborated with experts from India when building our factory, ensuring skills transfer to indigenous workers. This initiative trained over 60 people, although retaining them has been challenging, as many left once the factory was completed. Nevertheless, we view this as part of our contribution to the industry, improving skills and knowledge within the local workforce.

Financially, we approach funding cautiously. We carefully assess the need for external funding, ensuring we only borrow when necessary and have a solid repayment plan. By combining our internally generated funds with external capital, we maintain financial discipline and mitigate risks, ultimately ensuring the sustainability of our projects.

What role does innovation play in your company's strategy, and how do you ensure that Daily-Need Group stays ahead of trends?

Innovation in the pharmaceutical sector requires significant investment, with most of the focus today on biologics, injectables, and vaccines. While we're not yet fully engaged in that space, our current focus is on offering high-quality products that meet market demands. We aim to bridge the gap between imported goods and local production, especially in Nigeria and West Africa.

However, I believe businesses need to get the basics right before advancing into more complex innovations. Our approach is to build a solid foundation first, ensuring we can scale sustainably before venturing into uncharted territories.

Have any strategic initiatives or partnerships recently

strengthened the company's position in the market?

Five years ago, we decided to focus solely on manufacturing, acknowledging that we weren't experts in distribution or marketing. As a result, we partnered with WWCV for distribution and another company for marketing, allowing us to concentrate on our core competency: manufacturing. This strategic alliance has helped streamline operations and focus on what we do best.

Congratulations on the recent award won by the company. Could you share the significance of this recognition for Daily-Need Group and what it means to you as the Group Managing Director?

The Golden Brand Corporate Award reflects how we view our business. We believe in building a strong corporate image and investing in our human capital. The recognition shows that people are observing our efforts and appreciating the work we do. It's a reminder to continue striving for excellence, even if the acknowledgment is not immediate.

How does this award reflect the company's efforts and values, and how will it influence your strategy moving forward?

Our focus at Daily-Need Group extends beyond business profits. We aim to meet society's health needs while also caring for our staff's well-being. We foster a positive work environment with team-building events, cultural activities, and regular engagements that promote interpersonal skills and corporate bonding.

We take mental and physical health seriously, ensuring our staff feel valued and supported. As part of this, we've raised wages, provided transport subsidies, and invested in staff well-being. This commitment has led to high staff retention rates and a positive work culture, translating into greater company loyalty and performance.

What are your thoughts on the current state of the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry, and what opportunities do you see for growth and development?

The Nigerian pharmaceutical industry has huge potential, and the government is making strides to unlock the value chain. NAFDAC has introduced a 5+5 policy, requiring importers to begin local production five years after registering imported products. This policy offers significant opportunities for local manufacturers to scale operations and engage in contract manufacturing.

Currently, local manufacturers account for about 45 per cent of the market, with imports making up 55 per cent, especially for essential products. The industry can grow by producing generics locally and collaborating with international companies for innovative products. This will benefit both parties, improve the overall capacity of the industry, and boost technology transfer. However, policymakers must engage with the industry to fully realise these opportunities.

What are your plans as a company for 2025, and where do you see Daily-Need Group in the next five to ten years?

In 2025, we aim to significantly increase our market share, ideally doubling or tripling our current volume. A major focus will be on enhancing our distribution system to ensure wider product availability.

Looking ahead, I see Daily-Need Group as one of the best-run businesses in Nigeria—not necessarily the largest, but the most efficient in quality and impact. Success for us means making meaningful contributions to society through healthcare partnerships, NGOs, and education, positively impacting people's lives and supporting the Nigerian economy.

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No rivalry among healthcare workers in Anambra – CEO, ASPHDA

Pharmacist (Mrs) Chisom Uchem, the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Anambra State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (ASPHDA), recently shared insights into the transformative strides being made in primary healthcare in Anambra State. A former chairperson of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Anambra State Chapter, and board member of the Anambra State University Teaching Hospital, she spoke extensively with *Ranmilowo Ojalumo and Adebayo Oladejo*. Excerpts:

Tell us briefly about your achievements and the state of primary healthcare in Anambra State.

I am a pharmacist and a proud graduate of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, class of 2001. I am also a Fellow of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists and hold a Master's degree in Public Health, making me both a public health pharmacist and an administrator. I was appointed the executive secretary/CEO of ASPHDA on 4 March 2023 by Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, the executive governor of Anambra State.

Upon assuming office, I encountered a system that required expertise, dedication, and capacity building. One of my first initiatives was to conduct a comprehensive tour of the over 600 health facilities in the state, including health clinics, posts, centres, and primary healthcare centres. This helped us assess our starting point and prioritise immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals based on the governor's manifesto, which places a strong emphasis on primary healthcare and universal health coverage. The ultimate goal is to strengthen primary healthcare to reduce the pressure on secondary and tertiary facilities.

During the tour, I discovered significant gaps, particularly in human resources, due to many professionals retiring without replacements. To address this, the governor graciously approved the recruitment of over 500 healthcare workers to ensure skilled personnel were available at our primary healthcare centres.

Beyond addressing staffing needs, the governor approved significant funds to upgrade all primary healthcare centres. His vision is that every ward in the state should have at least one functional health facility, equipped with the necessary human resources, infrastructure, and technology. These upgrades include solar-powered systems with 5KVA capacity and functional boreholes, eliminating dependence on generators or fuel for water supply.

In addition to infrastructural improvements, we've elevated the quality of services offered. With over 600 health facilities, it is challenging to staff each with a medical doctor. To bridge this gap, we introduced telemedicine, a cutting-edge solution leveraging technology to diagnose and treat patients remotely.

How does telemedicine work in Anambra State?

Telemedicine involves using technology to diagnose, prescribe, and treat patients. In our case, we employed 42 senior medical doctors, two per local government area, across the 21 local government areas of the state. These doctors are trained in e-prescribing and e-diagnosing and are proficient in using technology.

Each local government has a hub situated in the general hospitals, equipped with computers and other necessary tools. From these hubs, doctors can attend to patients in health centres across the state in real time. Nurses at the health centres assist by using computers and cameras to communicate with the doctors, who guide them step-

by-step during consultations. For instance, the doctor might ask the nurse to examine a patient's head or observe a particular symptom, providing immediate feedback as though physically present.

Because these facilities are solar-powered, issues of electricity outages do not arise. Every facility is equipped to ensure patients can receive quality care anytime.

Tell us more about free antenatal and maternity services in the state.

Since 1 September 2023, the governor approved free antenatal services for all pregnant women in the state. This means that any pregnant woman can access antenatal care at our facilities at no cost. When it's time for delivery, they can deliver free of charge, with all necessary materials and services provided. Immunisation for their babies is also free.

The beauty of this policy is its inclusivity—it is not limited to Anambra State indigenes. Anyone, regardless of origin, can walk into our facilities and access these services without discrimination.

What more can we expect from the health sector in Anambra State?

The governor has demonstrated unwavering commitment to upgrading and upscaling healthcare services. This includes training and retraining staff, ensuring accountability, and improving transparency. For instance, all staff are now tagged with visible identification, and feedback channels are prominently displayed in facilities, including my contact details, the commissioner's, and the permanent secretary's. This way, people can report issues like improper charges or poor service directly to us.

Additionally, state-of-the-art equipment—delivery beds, couches, mannequins, and more—have been provided to enhance the quality of care. The governor has also pledged continued investments to ensure the healthcare system remains functional, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the people.

Health centres at the state level have access to the Basic Health Care Provision Fund. In some states, there are claims that the fund is not evenly distributed and, in most cases, is not judiciously utilised. How does your agency monitor the use of this fund to ensure it is spent appropriately? Also, is the state receiving the capitation regularly?

Ours is a very peculiar state. Our governor is an economist and a former CBN governor, so he is highly knowledgeable about financial management. He is meticulous when it comes to funds.

At the state level, we have the State Oversight Committee (SOC), while at the federal level, there is the Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC). Since your question pertains to the state, I will focus on the SOC.

The SOC is composed of key stakeholders, with the Commissioner serving as the Chair. I am a member as the Executive Secretary of Anambra State Primary Health Care. Other members include representatives from the State Health Insurance Agency, the Permanent Secretary, and others. It is not a one-man show. This committee grants approval to the

Commissioner for the business plan.

Whenever funds are allocated for basic healthcare provision, there is always a work plan prepared. This work plan is developed annually through the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP), ensuring integration and alignment across programmes.

In the work plan, facilities outline their priorities based on their specific needs, as it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. What one facility requires may not be what another needs. Each facility prioritises its needs, assigning tasks to specific quarters—first, second, third, or fourth. The SOC reviews and approves this business plan.

While all facilities receive the same amount of money, its utilisation varies depending on the priorities outlined in their respective plans. The SOC supervises implementation. For example, when funds are disbursed quarterly, we monitor what each facility planned to achieve in that quarter.

Our approach is unique because the SOC plays a supervisory role. The allocation of funds does not mean recipients have free rein to spend without oversight. Inspections are conducted regularly and unannounced. Even the inspection team is unaware of its assignment until the moment it is set to depart.

The governor himself oversees the process. He ensures that anyone who receives funds accounts for how they were spent and provides evidence to support their claims.

You have two doctors per local government area (LGA), whereas some states have only one. However, in terms of pharmacy staff, the best many PHCs can boast is a pharmacy technician, and some have none at all. Shouldn't there be pharmacists at the PHC and LGA levels? Secondly, how do you manage the issue of rivalry among healthcare workers, particularly given the various roles on the primary healthcare board?

There is no rivalry among healthcare workers in Anambra State. Everyone understands their schedule and portfolio. Where one professional's jurisdiction ends, another's begins.

As pharmacists, we adhere strictly to our scope of practice. For instance, as a licensed pharmacist, there are tasks I am not permitted by law to perform, just as there are tasks medical doctors are restricted from undertaking. Understanding and respecting these boundaries eliminates rivalry. It is simply about knowing and respecting our individual roles.

Regarding the absence of pharmacists at PHCs, I was previously the only pharmacist in primary healthcare before being appointed to head the agency. The government has since approved the appointment of another pharmacist to replace me in my former role as Head of Essential Drugs.



Pharm. (Mrs) Chisom Uchem

To address this gap, we collaborate with community pharmacies across LGAs. For example, any of our staff can walk into a pharmacy to seek advice on drug usage, reactions, or other pharmaceutical issues. Leveraging my profession, I have strengthened the state's resourcefulness by integrating pharmacies into the healthcare system.

Through the state's health insurance scheme, we have pre-qualified pharmacies to supply drugs to health facilities as needed. The SOC approved this procurement model, ensuring that PHCs in each LGA source medications from designated pharmacies within their locality. This arrangement has fostered a strong relationship between PHCs and community pharmacies across the state.

We are continually working to improve the services we provide to our people through these partnerships.

In Anambra State, where do pharmacists fit into healthcare programmes? You are the former state chairman of the PSN, but in some states, pharmacists are not given the recognition they deserve or their rightful place in activities such as vaccination.

Mr Governor has done a great deal for pharmacists in Anambra State, which is why we honoured him with the "Most Friendly Pharmacy Governor" award at the PSN Conference.

The current permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health is a pharmacist—a notable achievement, considering that the ministry also comprises doctors. Additionally, the special adviser to the governor on medicals and pharmaceuticals is a pharmacist, as is the commissioner for housing. I, too, am a pharmacist and serve as the executive secretary/CEO of the Anambra State Primary Healthcare Development Agency.

Pharmacists are receiving their due recognition and responsibilities in Anambra State. I am a board member of the Anambra State University Hospital and was a member of the Governing Council of the State Health Insurance Agency.

Pharmacists are actively involved in family planning initiatives, monitoring vaccination programmes, and other activities as legally mandated. Nothing that a pharmacist is entitled to by law has been taken away from us.

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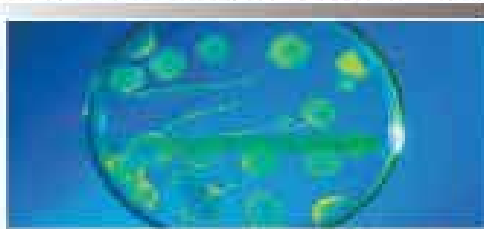
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By Pharm. Ngozika Okoye MSc, MPH, FPCPharm
(Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency)
Email: ngozikaokoye@yahoo.com



Fam. Caesalpinaceae)

C*aesalpinia bonduc* (Fam. Caesalpinaceae) is a prickly shrub with grey, hard, globular seeds and a smooth, shiny surface. It is commonly known as Bonduc nut, physic nut, yellow nicker nut, grey nicker nut, grey marble nuts, or fever nut in English. It is called *yan yan dara* in Hausa, *ayóo* or *ruwo* in Yoruba, *nnamake* or *atak ake* in Togo, and *huka* or *eze-ogu* among the Igbo in southeast Nigeria.

Constituents
The seeds contain significant chemical constituents, including triterpenoids, flavonoids, glycosides, saponins, amino acids, tannins, and alkaloids. Some amino acids in the seed kernel include

aspartic acid, lysine, glycine, leucine, histidine, isoleucine, serine, butyric acid, tyrosine, and citrulline. The primary glycoside in fever nut is bonducin. The fatty oil from the kernel consists of stearic, palmitic, oleic, linolenic, and linocerac acids.

Preparations
Caesalpinia bonduc is available in the form of roots, leaves, fruits, and seeds, which may be used dried or as powders or pastes. The powder can be mixed with warm water, blended into a smoothie, or sprinkled over a salad.

Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses
Studies reveal that *Caesalpinia*

bonduc has antipyretic, antibacterial, antidiarrheal, antihelminthic, antiasthma, anticancer, immunomodulatory, diuretic, antifungal, antifilarial, adaptogenic, and anxiolytic properties. Traditionally, fever nut powder mixed with pepper is used to treat indigestion and abdominal pain, while the seed paste is applied for skin ailments, particularly for hydrocele. In some medicinal practices, it is also used to treat leprosy.

The seed powder is traditionally used to expel worms, treat fever (especially malaria), relieve gum issues including boils and inflammation, alleviate cough and cold, ease indigestion, and address skin problems. It is also taken to promote liver health and treat liver disorders.

In gynaecology, fever nut serves as a uterine stimulant and is traditionally used to ease painful periods, manage polycystic ovarian syndrome, and cleanse the uterus after childbirth. Fever nut reduces oestrogen levels by inhibiting oestrogen secretion, which aids in managing polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Research shows that fever nut can inhibit mechanisms leading to asthma, block glucose absorption to reduce blood sugar spikes, and help relieve fever and inflammation, making it widely used in malaria treatment. It is also employed for skin diseases, boils, and wound care.

The water extract of the leaves

effectively expels worms and treats diarrhoea. Studies on leaf extracts have shown reductions in tumour size, tumour cell volume, and cell count in rats with carcinoma. The leaves and juice or paste are used to treat smallpox, elephantiasis, liver diseases, and to reduce body odour. Fever nut is also beneficial in easing toothache.

Topically, fever nut paste helps relieve abdominal flatulence and testicular swelling from hydrocele and trauma.

Adverse effects

Due to its uterine contraction properties, fever nut is best avoided during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Economic uses and potentials

Fever nuts are used in jewellery and various board games. The plant can also be cultivated as a live fence. Fifty grams of *Caesalpinia bonduc* or approximately 25 unpierced seeds cost \$14.75. The oil extracted from the seeds is used in cooking and cosmetics. Fever nuts have commercial potential for cultivation, distribution, processing, and sales in the pharmaceutical, food, and cosmetics industries.

References

Wild Turmeric (2019). 7 top medicinal uses and side effects of kalarchikai (fever nut). Available at: <https://wildturmeric.net/kalarchikai-medicinal-uses-side-effects-health-benefits/>.

PHARMANNEWS AWARDS

YEAR	AWARD	WINNER
2015	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi (SIA) Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN.
2016	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi (SIA) Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN.
2017	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay (SIA) & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, OAU, Ile-Ife.
2018	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi (SIA) Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN.
2018	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Isa Muhammad
2019	Ifeanyi Atueyi Essay & Debating Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN.
2019	PANSITE Award	- Yusuf Wada (Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto)
2019	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Frank Eze
2020	PANSITE Award	- Izukanne Emembolu (Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIZIK, Awka)
2020	Outstanding Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. (Mrs) Olubukola George
2020	Young Pharmacist Award	- Pharm. Daniel Uchechukwu Eze
2021	PANSITE Award	- Martin Chukwunonso Nwofia (Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, University, Anambra State)
2021	Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBEN
2021	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi (SIA) Essay & Debate Competition	- Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN
2022	PANSITE Award	Jennifer Ukamak Ekuma (UNIUYO)
2022	Young Pharmacist Award	Pharm. Ozioma Onyedikachukwu Ezeofor
2022	Dean's Award	Prof. Festus B. C. Okoye (UNIZIK)
2022	Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition	Prof. Dora Akunyili College of Pharmacy, Igbinedon
2023	PANSITE Award	Olasunkanmi Ahmed Ajilaran (UNILAG)
2023	Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition	Faculty of Pharmacy, Enugu State University
2023	Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi (SIA) Essay & Debate Competition	Faculty of Pharmacy, UNIBADAN
2023	Dean's Award	Prof. Azuka Oparah (UNIBEN)
2023	Young Pharmacist Award	Pharm. Uwem. O. Ebong
2024	Pharmanews Interschool Debate Competition	Faculty of Pharmacy, (UNILAG)
2024	PANSITE Award	Jumbo Victor Nengi (UNIUYO)
2024	Dean's Award	Prof. Ibrahim Adamu Yakasai (BUK)
2024	Young Pharmacist Award	Pharm Aminu Hashidu Danjuma

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Events in Pictures



L-R; Pharm. Gafar Madehin, national secretary, PSN; Prof Cyril Usifoh, immediate past president, PSN; Pharm. Tanko Ayuba, president, PSN; and Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa, former president, PSN, at the Closing Banquet of the 97th PSN Conference, in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.



Indian Consul General, Mr Chandramouli Kumar Kern (middle), presenting a floral bouquet to Prince Bayo Osiyemi, the special guest, during the health camp organised by IPMIN at Ilupeju, Lagos, with members of IPMIN and residents of the Ilupeju community in attendance.



L-R: Wife of former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, Mrs Bola Obasanjo; Chairman, Zinox Group, Mr Leo Stan Ekeh; and CEO, Emzor Pharmaceuticals, Dr Stella Okoli, at the 20th Annual Thanksgiving and 40th Anniversary dinner of Emzor Pharmaceuticals, held at Harbour Point Lagos, on December 11, 2024.



L-R: Pharm. Iyiola Gbolagade; Dr Joel Adagadzu, immediate past chairman (IPC), Board of Fellows (BOF) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN); Pharm. Damian Izuka, secretary; Pharm. Uchenna Apakama, BOF chairman; Dr Rametu Momodu, vice-chairman; Pharm. (Princess) Jaiyeola Osaretin, treasurer; and Pharm. Ngozi Onuorah, asst. secretary, at the handover ceremony of the IPC to the incumbent chairman, held at the BOF office, recently.



L-R: Director of Global Health, SD Biosensor; Derek Lee; COO, Colexa Biosensor Ltd; Kingsley Aguoru; Vice Chairman, SD Biosensor; Hyo-Keun Lee; GMD/CEO, Codix Group; Sammy Ogunjimi; COO, Codix Pharma Ltd; Mary Ogangwu; Director of Sales, SD Biosensor; Hugo Bang shortly after a meeting to mark Codix Group's landmark achievement of WHO's approval for local packaging of HIV rapid diagnostic test kit.



L-R: Chief Technical Officer, Cubecover, Sam Ishie; Head of Wealth Product, PalmPay; Habib Kowontan; Chief Distribution Officer, AXA Mansard Jumoke Odunlami; Chief Digital Officer, MTN Nigeria, A'isha Mumuni; CEO, Cubecover, Deji Macaulay; and Co-Convener, Insuretech Business Series, Adedamola Oloko, at the official launch of Cubecover recently in Lagos.



The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor E.A Adeboye with the celebrant, The Akire of Ikire Kingdom, HRH Oba(Pharm) Olatunde Falabi and wife of the celebrant, Olori Taiwo Falabi, during the 90th birthday celebration of Oba Falabi held recently in Osun state.



L-R: Hon. Festus Adegoke, former secretary of Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) and son of the celebrant, Pharm. (Prince) Gbenga Falabi, Prof. Francis Oladimeji, the celebrant, the Akire of Ikire Kingdom, HRH Oba(Pharm) Olatunde Falabi and wife of the celebrant, Olori Taiwo Falabi,, Prof. Moses Akanmu, Pharm. (Dr.) Bambo Akinbile and Pharm. Bunmi Onobumhe during the 90th birthday celebration of Oba Falabi held recently in Osun state.

Celebrating 46 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2025)

Lagos ALPs supports Ajeromi youths living with HIV

By Temitope Obayendo and Nneoma Kalu



L-R: Pharm. Veronica Achi; Pharm. Modupe Alli; Pharm. (Dr) Afusat Adesina, chairman, ALPs Lagos Chapter; Dr Jerome Nwokoro; Prof. Arinola Joda, Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Biopharmacy, UNILAG; Pharm. Bolanle Toki, secretary, Adolescent Refill Club; Pharm. Alice Iduh; Pharm. Kate Ameh-Okwah, chairman, Organising Committee, Adolescent Refill Club; and Pharm. Tamka Akpodee, at the Adolescent Refill Club End-of-Year Get-Together, held at Ajeromi General Hospital, Lagos.

As part of its mission to support vulnerable groups and enhance access to quality healthcare in society, the Association of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs), Lagos Chapter, recently provided free antiretroviral therapy (ART), health counselling services, and Christmas gifts to over one hundred members of the Ajeromi General Hospital Adolescent Refill Club. This club comprises children, teenagers, and adolescents living with HIV.

The lady pharmacists also used the occasion to celebrate an end-of-year party with these young individuals, combining the gift presentation with moments of joy and encouragement.

Speaking at the event, Pharm. (Dr) Afusat Adesina, chairman of ALPs Lagos, reaffirmed the association's commitment to supporting vulnerable groups as part of their mission. "This collaboration stems from our purpose as health professionals to care for individuals who require maximum attention. We identified a gap in the care of adolescents living with HIV, as most healthcare systems tend to focus more on adults," she stated.

Adesina further explained the initiative's essence, noting, "Adolescents living with HIV face unique challenges, such as stigma and difficulty adhering to medications. Our aim is to bridge this gap by offering psychosocial support, adherence counselling, ART dispensation, and career guidance."

Reflecting on the growth of the programme, she noted that it has expanded significantly, now encompassing educational scholarships for orphaned children living with HIV. "We've gone from sponsoring their education to offering comprehensive services, such as medication dispensing, counselling, and psychosocial support, directly in hospitals," she

said. "This initiative is not limited to Ajeromi General Hospital; similar programmes are being run in other locations, including St. Kizito Hospital, where an end-of-year event is also taking place today."

The Adolescent Refill Club, established several years ago, was created to address the specific needs of adolescents living with HIV, who often struggle to attend regular clinic appointments. Speaking in an interview, Pharm. Kate Ameh-Okwah, chairman of the organising committee for the club, highlighted its significance. "The club has become a vital support system for adolescents. It provides access to medications, counselling, and peer interaction for those facing similar challenges," she explained.

She also outlined other benefits of the club, including addressing gender-based issues through personal counselling and career talks to help members build a brighter future. The club currently supports over 130 adolescents, with membership steadily increasing as more children transition into adulthood.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics reveal that an estimated 1.4 million children aged 0-14 were living with HIV at the end of 2023, and 120 000 children were newly infected. An estimated 76 000 children died of AIDS-related illnesses. To reduce HIV-related mortality and morbidity among this highly vulnerable population, early testing and treatment is essential. Without access to testing and treatment, 50 percent of children with HIV will die by the age of 2, and 80 percent will not live to their fifth birthday.

The global health body recommends that children living with HIV should start antiretroviral treatment (ART) immediately. Yet in 2023, only 57 percent of children

were on ART, compared to 77 percent of adults. Once treatment begins, children must take their medicine regularly to stay healthy into adolescence and adulthood. Failure to suppress the HIV virus remains a serious problem among children, aggravated by a lack of child-friendly formulations of the newest and most effective antiretroviral drugs designed for adults.

Discussing challenges encountered over the years, Ameh-Okwah cited inadequate adherence to medication and unsafe sexual practices among older adolescent girls as significant issues. "Depression is another common challenge due to the stigma and emotional burdens associated with living with HIV. However, we strive to provide counselling and emotional support to improve their mental well-being," she added.

She also shared inspiring success stories, including individuals who, despite living with HIV, have married and started families, with their partners and children testing negative due to strict adherence to medication. Ameh-Okwah emphasised the need for more public awareness campaigns to combat discrimination and stigma, urging society to see HIV as a manageable condition.

Professor Arinola Joda of the Clinical and Biopharmacy Department, Faculty of Pharmacy, UNILAG, stressed the importance of initiatives like the Adolescent Refill Club in meeting the critical needs of adolescents living with HIV. "Beyond providing medications, these young people need good nutrition, consistent caregiver support, and self-confidence," she said.

Joda also highlighted the essential role of proper nutrition in ensuring the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy

and advocated for stronger partnerships between private organisations, government agencies, and NGOs to sustain programmes supporting people living with HIV. "NGOs may not always be around, but local partnerships can build a robust support system," she noted.

For Islamiat Olayiwola, a 21-year-old beneficiary of the Adolescent Refill Club, the initiative has been transformative. "This club has given me confidence. I can now speak openly about being HIV-positive without feeling less of a person," she said.

Olayiwola, who is currently acquiring tech skills and preparing for tertiary education, urged society to change its perception of HIV. "HIV is not a limitation. It's time people realised that those of us living with HIV can aspire and achieve our dreams just like anyone else," she asserted. She also expressed gratitude to ALPs for their unwavering support.

Dr Adesina addressed the importance of disclosing HIV status to adolescents, urging parents and caregivers to be open about their children's condition. "Disclosure is crucial for adherence. When adolescents understand their condition, they are more likely to take their medications seriously," she explained.

She also called on society to embrace and support individuals living with HIV. "Stakeholders must ensure that these adolescents feel accepted. We need to move beyond stigma and integrate them positively into society," she concluded.

The event, which featured games, career talks, and motivational sessions, underscored the importance of community in addressing the unique challenges faced by adolescents living with HIV.

Awosika, Lan urge lady pharmacists to pursue career growth, resilience

By Temitope Obayendo

Lady pharmacists have been urged to break barriers and rise to the zenith of their profession, despite domestic challenges and societal limitations. Speaking at the 2024 Association of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs) Lagos State Chapter Forum, Dr (Mrs) Dere Awosika, chairman of Josephine Consulting Ltd, urged female pharmacists to maximise their potential and demonstrate their worth in the healthcare space.

Awosika, a veteran pharmacist and former military hospital professional, highlighted the transformative impact pharmacists can have when they assert their expertise within healthcare teams. Drawing from her experiences, she called on women to earn respect and recognition by excelling in their roles, noting that their contributions are essential for national development.

She emphasised the critical role of women in achieving sustainable healthcare, quoting a World Health Organisation (WHO) report that revealed women constitute 67 per cent of the global health and social care workforce, yet occupy only 25 per cent of leadership roles. Despite their input being valued at over \$3 trillion annually, women in healthcare often remain underappreciated, clustered in lower-status, low-paid, or unpaid roles.

Addressing the forum's theme, "Career Advancement and Being Unrelegatable as a Woman in Healthcare Practice in Nigeria,"



Dr Dere Awosika, receiving an appreciative award plaque from Chief (Mrs) Yetunde Morohundiya, as the ALPs chairman, Pharm (Dr) Afusat Adesina and BrigGen Stella Ibeh look in admiration.

Awosika encouraged women to balance professional ambitions with familial responsibilities. She stated, "Women's career advancement, gender equity, and economic empowerment are crucial for nation-building. Lady pharmacists must seize opportunities by applying knowledge, demonstrating resilience, and striving for leadership in pharmaceutical services."

The National ALPs Chairman, Pharm. (Mrs) Scholastica Lan, echoed these sentiments, urging female pharmacists to persevere in their professional journeys

despite challenges. Represented by ALPs Vice-Chairman, South-West, Pharm. (Mrs) Omobolanle Ajao, Lan commended the Lagos Chapter for its inspiring leadership and innovative initiatives.

Lagos ALPs Chairman, Pharm. (Dr) Afusat Adesina, provided an overview of the chapter's achievements, including cancer awareness campaigns, drug abuse education, and girl-child support initiatives. She described the forum as a platform for networking and reflection, especially as women across sectors continue to break barriers.

Plans for a humanitarian outreach to Igbobi Orthopaedic Special School were also unveiled, aimed at celebrating and supporting children with special needs. Adesina encouraged lady pharmacists to embody innovation and collaboration in delivering effective healthcare across Lagos State and Nigeria.

Pharm. (Mrs) Foluke Akinniranye, chairman of the ALPs Forum Planning Committee, urged female pharmacists to reject inferiority complexes and entitlement mentalities, asserting, "No one can relegate you unless you allow it. Prove your competence and earn your place in leadership

roles."

The event concluded with the presentation of awards to distinguished individuals, including Dr (Mrs) Stella Okoli, GMD of Emzor Pharmaceuticals; Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, publisher of *Pharmanews*; and Dr (Mrs) Dere Awosika, among others, for their contributions to the group's initiatives.

Scholarships were also awarded to two female students from Alimosho Grammar School Complex, further highlighting the association's commitment to empowering the next generation.

UNILAG's pharmacy faculty honours Silva, Adeluola at retirement

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, recently held a grand celebration to honour the retirement of two distinguished scholars, Professor Boladale O. Silva and Dr Adebawale O. Adeluola. The event recognised their remarkable contributions, invaluable impact, and enduring legacy during their years of service at the institution.

Professor Silva, a renowned professor of pharmaceuticals, joined the university in 1983 and rose to the rank of professor in 2013, completing 41 years and three months of dedicated service. Dr Adeluola, an expert in pharmaceutical microbiology, joined the faculty in 2005, attaining the rank of senior lecturer and serving for 19 years.

Speaking at the retirement ceremony themed "Golden Years, Timeless Impact: Legacy of Learning and Innovation," Professor Afolabi Lesi, a former provost of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, and chairperson of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, lauded the retirees as dedicated scholars who made immense contributions to the faculty.

In her welcome address, the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Gloria Ayoola, noted that the theme of the event encapsulated the extraordinary journeys and achievements of Silva and Adeluola.

"Throughout their years with



R-L: Prof. Adebawale O. Silva; Prof. Grace Otinwa; Prof. Glory Ajayi; Mrs Adeluola, one of the celebrants, Dr Adeluola, the other celebrant, Prof. B. I. Silva, and the wife; Prof. Lesi (2nd left) with other dignitaries cutting the celebration cake at the programme.

us, they epitomised scholarship, leadership, and innovation. They not only imparted knowledge but also fostered a culture of critical thinking, resilience, and creativity among students and faculty alike," she said.

Represented by former Dean, Professor Glory Ajayi, Professor Ayoola added, "Their tireless efforts have nurtured generations of thinkers and achievers, leaving an indelible mark on the academic community."

Distinguished Professor C. Igwilo described Silva as a gentle and wise scholar, commending his dedication, while applauding Adeluola for his exemplary service.

Professor Adebawale O. Silva, a US-based lecturer, also praised their outstanding contributions to the faculty.

Guest speaker, Professor Grace Otinwa, reflected on the theme, highlighting the celebrants' commitment to building sustainable academic programmes. She noted their legacy of excellence, innovation, and humility, which should serve as a model for future generations.

"Their works have fostered synergy and innovation, leaving a timeless impact that the faculty should emulate," Otinwa remarked, urging academics to focus on positively influencing students

and peers.

Pharma Bisi Oyeleye, managing director of Pharmasolutions, described Silva, her former lecturer and mentor, as meticulous and approachable. "He related with us as a friend, even while we worked on formulations. I wish every lecturer were like Professor Silva," she said.

Several other faculty members shared glowing tributes. Professor Chukwuemeka Azubuiké commended Silva's love for innovation, while Dr Kehinde Salako described him as a meticulous and intelligent individual. Professor Arinola Joda noted that the celebrants' contributions would always be remembered, while Dr M.O. Ologunagba characterised Silva as a brilliant and innovative formulation scientist who inspired and supported his colleagues. She also acknowledged Adeluola's self-discipline and dedication, particularly in the field of antimicrobial resistance research.

The Sub-Dean, Dr Foluke A. Ayeni, alongside department heads, lecturers, and other faculty staff, also praised the retirees for their invaluable contributions, wishing them a fulfilling retirement.

Responding to the tributes, Dr Adeluola expressed gratitude to the faculty and attendees, thanking God for enabling him to complete his service successfully. Professor Silva similarly appreciated the faculty and well-wishers, reflecting on his 41 years and three months of service without blemish.

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Ezeh advocates stronger role for community pharmacists in primary healthcare

- As 75 pharmacists bag ACPN's DCPharm award

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo and Adebayo Oladejo

Pharm. Ambrose Ezeh, newly inaugurated as the 16th national chairman of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), has called for a redefinition of community pharmacy's role in Nigeria's primary healthcare system.

Speaking at his inauguration ceremony last December in Lagos, Ezeh emphasised the need for full accreditation of pharmacies as primary healthcare facilities, expedited approval of professional stamps and seals, and the establishment of a national drug revolving fund through collaboration with stakeholders.

The high-profile event, attended by leaders in the pharmaceutical industry, also recognised 75 pharmacists with the ACPN Distinguished Community Pharmacist (DCPharm) Award for their outstanding contributions to the profession and healthcare delivery.

In his inaugural address, Pharm. Ezeh expressed gratitude to ACPN members for their trust and support. "The road ahead is filled with both opportunities and challenges. Together, we shall elevate our practice to new heights, ensuring community pharmacists are recognised as pivotal healthcare providers and drivers of positive health outcomes in Nigeria," he affirmed.

In his speech, Pharm. Babashehu Ibrahim Ahmed, registrar of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), represented by Dr Taiwo Filusi, highlighted the transformative potential of technology in pharmacy.



L-R: Pharm. Ambrose Ezeh, new ACPN national chairman; Dr Fidelis Ayebae, MD / CEO Fidson Healthcare PLC; Pharm. Tanko Ayuba, PSN President, and Pharm. Olumide Akintayo, former president, PSN, at the inauguration of ACPN national Chairman, Pharm. Ezeh.

He urged community pharmacists to adopt innovations like telemedicine, personalised medicine, and artificial intelligence to enhance patient outcomes.

Keynote speaker Dr Uzoma Ezeoke, executive director of Emzor Pharmaceutical Industry Limited, advocated for servant leadership in the pharmaceutical sector. She outlined its core attributes—empathy, foresight, stewardship, and persuasion—as vital tools for building trust and transforming organisational culture.

Pharm. Tanko Ayuba, president of

the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), pledged his unwavering support to Ezeh's administration, describing community pharmacists as crucial to Nigeria's healthcare delivery system. "With me as PSN President, you have a partner. Together, we will address challenges and advance the profession," Ayuba stated.

Also speaking, Dr Fidelis Ayebae, managing director of Fidson Healthcare Plc and chairman of the occasion, underscored the importance of collaboration within the pharmaceutical industry. He called

Chairman, Pharm. Wale Oladigbolu, commended the awardees for their contributions to community pharmacy and healthcare advancement, urging Ezeh to build on these successes through partnerships and servant leadership.

The ceremony attracted an array of dignitaries, including past PSN presidents, NAFDAC representatives, and other key stakeholders, including Pharm. U.N. O Uwaga; Pharm. Olumide Akintayo; Pharm. Azubike Okwor, all aligned in their commitment to advancing community pharmacy practice in Nigeria.

on community pharmacists to form a mega drug distribution conglomerate while encouraging Nigerians to support locally made pharmaceutical products.

The event's high point was the conferment of DCPharm Awards on 75 pharmacists, including notable figures such as Pharm. Alli Bakau Oyinloye, Pharm. Abasiana Uwatt, and Pharm. Abdullahi Sanni Galadima.

While giving his speech, the Immediate past ACPN National

Obayendo, again, wins Nestlé's best story award

By Nneoma Kalu



Business Manager, Nestlé Professional, Nestlé Nigeria, Mrs Funmilayo Osineye, presenting the Award Prize of a laptop and plaque to Temitope Obayendo, at the Nestlé Media Awards Ceremony, held recently.

Temitope Obayendo, the *Pharmanews* online editor, has again emerged victorious at the Nestlé Nigeria Media Awards, securing the **1st Prize for Best Story in the Youth Empowerment category**.

The recognition was conferred during the 4th Annual Nestlé Nigeria Media Award ceremony, held recently at the 157 Gardens & Event Centre, Ikorodu Road. Obayendo was celebrated for her impactful solutions journalism piece, "How Nestlé is Empowering, Shaping the Future of Nigerian Youths". In the same category, Hyacinth Nwafor of *Hybrid News* was awarded second prize for his story titled "Nurturing Young Talent Through Nestlé's Development Programmes."

This marks another milestone in Obayendo's journalistic career, having previously won second place in the Nutrition and Affordable Foods Solutions category during the inaugural edition of the Nestlé Awards in 2021.

The prestigious event received **285 entries**, which were meticulously evaluated by an esteemed panel of judges. The panel included Dr Chioma Emma-Nwachukwu, programme lead for the Lagos Chapter of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria; Rosemary Otor, account director at APO Group; Dr Sunday John, senior lecturer at the School of Media and Communications, Pan-Atlantic University; Oreva Atanya, director at the LBS Sustainability Centre; and Victoria Uwadoka, a

leader in corporate communications and public affairs at Nestlé Nigeria.

In her congratulatory remarks, Uwadoka commended the professionalism and creativity evident in the submissions. She remarked that the winning articles showcased excellence in capturing the essence of truth, integrity, and social responsibility. She further acknowledged the power of journalism in shaping public perceptions, challenging societal norms, and promoting accountability.

Dr Emma-Nwachukwu highlighted the originality and depth of the awarded entries, noting their engaging narratives, ethical adherence, and significant impact. Dr John echoed the importance of authentic storytelling and cautioned against the misuse of AI-generated content in journalism, emphasising that a compelling story requires a human touch to resonate effectively with its audience. Otor added that closing stories with a strong call to action enhances their influence and leaves readers with a lasting impression.

In addition to the Youth Empowerment category, other winners were recognised across several categories. In the Finance category, Odume Festus Azubuike of *Financial Edge* claimed the top prize

for his article, "Navigating Turbulent Times: Nestlé Nigeria's Journey to Recovery", while Joan Chioma Obinagwam of *Confiance News* and Nkiruka Nnorom of *Vanguard Newspaper* took second and third prizes, respectively.

The Agriculture category saw Godwin Anyebe of *Consumers Assembly* emerge as the winner with his piece, "Nestlé Nigeria's Agricultural Ventures: A Model for Multinational Corporations in Nigeria". He was followed by Edet Udoh of *The Revealer Online* for his article on regenerative agriculture and food security.

For Environmental Sustainability, Vivian Ihechu of *News Agency of Nigeria* won the first prize with her story, "How WASH Facilities Foster Hygiene Practices in Ogun State". Usukuma Ntia of *Brand Communication* and Obinna Odogwu of *The Gavel* received the second and third prizes, respectively.

In the Nutrition category, Edet Udoh of *The Revealer Online* once again excelled, claiming the top prize for his story on enhancing nutritional levels for sustainable growth. Innocent Eneta of *Daily Global News* followed closely in second place with his submission on combating malnutrition through accessible and nutritious food solutions.

The event concluded with the presentation of plaques, laptops, and phones to the winners, celebrating their outstanding contributions to impactful journalism. The ceremony reinforced the vital role of the media in driving social change, fostering accountability, and promoting excellence in storytelling.

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Unlocking your transformative leadership potential (3)

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

(Contd from last edition)

3.1. Understanding self-awareness

In a recent YouTube video, Brian G. Johnson, a renowned leadership expert, emphatically proclaimed self-awareness as the quintessential skill required for effective leadership. Roy Menig, another well-respected figure in the field, reinforced this belief by explaining how self-awareness plays a central role in personal and professional growth. Undoubtedly, it is clear that self-awareness holds immense significance in various realms. However, what does self-awareness truly entail? And why is it crucial to understand its profound impact?

Self-awareness refers to the ability to introspectively understand oneself by diligently monitoring and analysing one's inner thought processes, emotions, and behaviours. With heightened self-awareness, individuals gain the invaluable capacity to delve deep into their cognitive workings, achieving a comprehensive understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. This insight is not confined to a surface-level comprehension; it extends to cultivating an intimate awareness of one's cognitive processes.

One of self-awareness's most widely acknowledged benefits is its role in creating a clearer perception of oneself. By actively engaging in self-reflection and introspection, individuals with high levels of self-awareness can align their actions and decisions with their deeply held beliefs and values. They possess an acute understanding of their aspirations, principles, and ambitions. Consequently, such individuals are empowered to make choices that align with their true desires, enabling them to seize opportunities they genuinely believe in while minimising the impact of threats that could impede an organisation's financial outcomes.

Scholars and experts have thoroughly examined various aspects of leadership effectiveness within this domain. Time and again, research has demonstrated that self-awareness serves as the bedrock upon which future leaders' talents are built. Individuals possessing heightened self-awareness are more likely to tap into their full potential, leveraging their strengths while acknowledging and addressing their weaknesses. Armed with deep self-understanding, these leaders can navigate complex challenges and inspire those around them.

Furthermore, the allure of neuroscience and its implications for effective leadership cannot be overlooked. Carlzon's groundbreaking concept of "human business" resonates deeply here, highlighting the significance of embracing our humanity in the business landscape. By developing a state of mindfulness rooted in self-awareness, leaders cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and the people around

them. This shift in perspective fosters a more humanistic mindset, promoting empathy, compassion, and inclusivity. The result is a virtuous cycle where organisations flourish, individuals thrive, and the overall business environment experiences sustainable growth.

In closing, the importance of self-awareness transcends mere theoretical discourse; it presents a compelling business case for organisations of all sizes. Leaders who possess a heightened sense of self-awareness not only enhance their personal growth and potential but also contribute immeasurably to the broader success of their companies. Recognising the value of self-awareness and harnessing its power is pivotal in fostering a harmonious and prosperous work environment, propelling businesses towards excellence and long-term success.

3.2. Developing emotional intelligence in personal and professional life

Emotional intelligence is an essential aspect of successful leadership and effective communication. It allows leaders to gain a deeper understanding of their own emotions, as well as the emotions of those around them. This insight enables them to manage their emotions productively and constructively, thereby creating harmonious and efficient work environments. By being self-aware, leaders can accurately assess their strengths and weaknesses, empowering them to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in self-management. Leaders who possess this skill can regulate their emotions, preventing unnecessary outbursts or impulsive reactions. Rather than being controlled by their emotions, they have the capacity to master them, allowing them to remain calm and composed even in high-pressure situations. This self-control enables leaders to approach challenges and conflicts with a level-headed mindset, focusing on finding solutions rather than exacerbating problems.

Relationship management is another crucial aspect of emotional intelligence in leadership. Leaders who excel in this area possess strong interpersonal skills and are adept at building and maintaining positive relationships with their team members. They understand the importance of effective communication, active listening, and empathy. These leaders create a supportive and inclusive environment where collaboration and cooperation flourish, thereby enhancing productivity and success.

Moreover, emotional intelligence enhances social awareness. Leaders who possess this attribute are attuned to the emotions and needs of others. They can accurately perceive team dynamics and identify potential conflicts or issues. By considering the perspectives and feelings of their team members, these leaders

make more informed decisions and implement strategies that support the well-being of the entire workforce.

Emotional intelligence is not only beneficial for leaders but also for the overall success of an organisation. When leaders prioritise emotional intelligence, they cultivate a positive organisational culture where employees feel valued and understood. This, in turn, leads to higher levels of employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. Emotional intelligence fosters trust, loyalty, and team cohesion, ultimately driving the company towards its goals and objectives.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is a fundamental aspect of effective leadership. By developing and honing their emotional intelligence skills, leaders can create a positive and productive work environment, build strong relationships with their team members, and make informed decisions that benefit both individuals and the organisation as a whole. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, emotional intelligence is crucial for leaders to navigate challenges, inspire their teams, and achieve long-term success.

4. Communication skills for leaders

Expanding your knowledge and understanding of communication skills is essential for enhancing your effectiveness as a leader and strengthening your relationships with your team members.

This comprehensive section will delve into the intricacies of various communication techniques crucial for leaders. We will explore the power of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), transactional analysis, and DiSC profiling. These techniques will equip you with the tools to effectively connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds and personalities.

Furthermore, we will take a closer look at specific communication techniques that successful leaders frequently employ. By examining these techniques, you will gain a deeper understanding of their practical applications in a leadership context. Through this exploration, you can refine your approach and develop a highly effective communication style that resonates with your team.

Each article in this section will provide valuable insights and strategies for mastering the art of leadership communication. You will be guided through a logical sequence of techniques designed to optimise your skills. Applying what you learn will foster a supportive and collaborative environment within your team, paving the way for effective communication and, ultimately, unparalleled success in your leadership role.

4.1. Effective listening

Leadership is a complex and multifaceted process whereby an individual exerts their influence over others,



inspiring and motivating them to dedicate their efforts towards achieving a shared purpose. While the concept of leadership may appear straightforward, it is far from simplistic. Effective leadership requires a profound level of skill and proficiency, and among the indispensable skills is effective listening — a critical element in functioning adeptly and triumphantly as a leader.

Four fundamental communication skills have been identified within the leadership domain, each of undeniable significance: eloquent speaking, adept writing, confident presenting, and active listening. Mastering the art of communication involves not only the ability to articulate ideas and concepts with clarity and coherence but also the proficiency to express information across various formats and to construct compelling, persuasive arguments. However, the realm of human relations reinforces the notion that effective leadership necessitates more than just being a skilled orator, writer, and presenter. The power of effective listening becomes apparent as it assumes an equally vital role in forging connections, fostering understanding, and collaborating with others. Thus, the domain of leadership mandates the ability to listen effectively in diverse situations and to respond attentively based on the insights gained from these exchanges.

In the following section, we will delve into the intricate facets that underpin the art of effective listening, highlighting its unparalleled importance in leadership. Furthermore, we shall explore the profound impact that can be achieved through practising effective listening and elucidate why it stands as a cornerstone in one's journey towards leadership excellence. It is essential to recognise that effective listening, as an integral component of communication skills and overall leadership prowess, is a skill that can be continuously enhanced, refined, and perfected. Conversely, ineffective listening carries substantial adverse consequences that can permeate various aspects of organisational dynamics. These repercussions may include suboptimal decision-making, an increase in complaints, errors, and misunderstandings, elevated levels of absenteeism and tardiness, the emergence of cover-ups, heightened stress levels among employees, rising mental health costs, strained relationship dynamics, and increased turnover rates, to name but a few.

continues next edition



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3. Adefarasin Hebert Ade	1/04/37	Oyo
4. Adegoke Ayoola (Mrs)	7/01/39	Ondo
5. Adeleke Ebenezer	23/09/42	Kwara
6. Adelusi-Adeluyi Julius (Prince,Sir, Dr) OFR	2/08/40	Ekiti
7. Adetona Samuel Olalekan	20/01/40	Oyo
8. Adewunmi Julius Adekunle	1/07/42	Oyo
9. Adeyemi Adekemi Olu (Mrs)	28/06/42	Ogun
10. Adimekwe Cyprian	20/04/44	Imo
11. Agbakwuru Evans O. P. (Prof.)	27/08/37	Imo
12. Aguwa Cletus Nze (Prof.)	24/11/42	Imo
13. Aina Obafunmi Claudius	26/07/44	Ogun
14. Ajisehiri Michael	23/04/44	Ondo
15. Akinfolajimi Moboluwaji	7/04/44	Edo
16. Akinkugbe Oludolapo Ibukun,CFR,CON	5/12/28	Ondo
17. Akinmoji Alex Oladele	20/12/43	Ondo
18. Akubue Paul Iwegbunam (Prof.)	25/02/34	Anambra
19. Aluko Abiodun (Mrs)	29/12/43	Ogun
20. Amanerimi Alfred	11/05/42	Plateau
21. Amole Tunji (Chief)	12/10/43	Oyo
22. Amorha Kenneth Ezikeanyi	15/03/41	Enugu
23. Anyafulu Lawrence Okwu	30/06/31	Anambra
24. Atasie Michael Chijioke (Sir, Dr)	12/05/31	Abia
25. Atueyi Ifeanyi (Sir)	1/10/39	Anambra
26. Ayeni Aderemilekun (Mrs)	19/08/44	Ogun
27. Ayoade Joko (Chief, Mrs)	3/10/35	Oyo
28. Azuike Moses Chiedozi	21/08/38	Imo
29. Bankole Gabriel	24/08/41	Ogun
30. Basse Sebastian	25/06/41	Akwa Ibom
31. Brown Albert A.	28/03/38	Oyo
32. Chugbo Cyril Okwudi	22/12/35	Anambra
33. Daromosu Abdul Yekini (Alh.)	10/06/40	Kaduna
34. Egbuonu Douglas	30/01/39	Anambra
35. Ekpo Benjamin (Dr)	28/08/34	Akwa Ibom
36. Emafo Philip Onagwele OFR (Dr)	15/03/36	Edo
37. Emelifonwu Christopher	1/12/31	Delta
38. Enemmo Ben	9/08/37	Anambra
39. Enemmuo Ralph	29/04/42	Anambra
40. Eradiri Lambert (Sir,Dr)	25/11/34	Bayelsa
41. Essien Etienne E. (Prof.)	18/01/33	Akwa Ibom
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44. Ezugwu Raymond Obinwanne	30/06/44	Enugu
45. Falabi Olatunde (HRH)	20/01/35	Osun
46. Hugbo Peter Gbewa (Prof.)	15/09/39	Delta
47. Hunponu-Wusu Babatunde (Chief)	11/03/37	Lagos
48. Ifudu Dave (Prof)	13/12/44	Enugu
49. Inga, Atondo Tim	5/05/41	Benue
50. Jackson SDP	12/05/40	Bayelsa
51. Jayesimi Modupe (Mrs)	18/01/43	Ogun
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58. Mustapha Bola Fatimah (Mrs)	13/07/44	Kwara
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61. Nwachukwu Cyprian	12/08/43	Anambra
62. Nwankwo Bruno Nnaemeka	15/09/39	Anambra
63. Nwoke Dick	15/11/33	Abia
64. Obasi John	15/09/39	Abia
65. Obianwu Hope (Prof.)	6/10/37	Anambra
66. Obiorah Bona (Prof.)	21/02/41	Anambra
67. Odujobi Francis FineBoy	18/10/41	Ogun
68. Ogunbona Festus Adio (Prof)	30/10/44	Ogun
69. Ogundana Olu Oluropo (Mrs)	27/10/44	Ekiti
70. Ogundare Jacob Bamidele	23/07/40	Oyo
71. Ogunyemi Babatunde Adegoke	15/11/34	Ogun
72. Okeke Cornelius	17/09/40	Imo
73. Okoli, Stella (Dr) OON	30/07/44	Anambra
74. Okolo Dennis	13/03/34	Anambra
75. Okonkwo Eugene	20/03/39	Anambra
76. Okoye Ebenezer Ifeanyi	21/11/38	Anambra
77. Okunoren Patience (Dame)	21/06/39	Ogun
78. Olaniyi A. A. (Prof.)	25/08/40	Ekiti
79. Olarogun Joe Oyewole (Asiwaju)	18/05/38	Kwara
80. Olawore Josiah Olafaju	8/07/44	Oyo
81. Olawoye Babatunde	27/11/41	Ondo
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85. Olurinola Philip (Prof.)	6/10/39	Ogun
86. Oluwadiya James Olabisi (Prof.)	2/10/42	Kwara
87. Oluwasanmi Florence	29/06/43	Ekiti
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Free radicals and antioxidants

By Christopher Job

A free radical is a molecule that has lost one of its electrons, which normally orbit in pairs. To restore balance, the free radical frantically tries to steal an electron from a nearby molecule or give away its unpaired electron. In doing so, it wreaks molecular havoc on proteins, fats, and the genetic DNA of cells, disfiguring and corroding them. Over time, free radical damage leaves the body aged and diseased.



We need free radicals to live, but they are also the bane of our existence. Through free radical reactions in our body, it is as though we are being irradiated at low levels all the time. They grind us down. It has been estimated that each of our cells endures 10,000 oxidative hits every day from errant free radicals, but most of these cells are immediately repaired.

Even if we lived in a pure environment, our own bodies would produce free oxygen radicals. There is no way to avoid their presence within the body. Many free radicals are produced in our personal environment, such as sunlight, smog, high altitudes, exposure to X-rays, toxins in food and water, pollen, ozone, moulds, dust, etc. They are everywhere. What we can do is diminish their impact on the body.

Free radical damage can impair the immune system and result in various types of cellular damage. As might be expected, such cellular damage is associated with many of our degenerative diseases, such as arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, some types of cancer, cataracts, heart attacks, hardening of the arteries, Parkinson's disease, cerebral vascular changes (senility), and many others.

Free radicals are rendered harmless by antioxidants. An antioxidant is a substance that can donate a sought-after electron to a free radical without becoming dangerous itself. An antioxidant that comes into contact with a free radical puts an end to the rampage of cellular and bodily destruction.

Antioxidants can prolong life. Antioxidant means "against oxidation". Antioxidants are the good guys that continually combat the harmful effects of oxidation in the body. They are constantly on duty to render wayward free radicals harmless. The net result of their work is that they prolong the life of cells, and thus, prolong life itself. Taken in sufficient amounts, antioxidants can saturate all of our cells and tissues to provide protection against free radicals. Antioxidants are the good guys in the war against ageing. They can prevent or repair damage to the cells. They are important nutrients in detoxifying the body and cleaning up harmful wastes. Your body makes special antioxidant enzymes, but you can also get many antioxidants in foods and nutritional supplements.

The major antioxidants are Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Selenium, and Beta-Carotene. Others include bioflavonoids, ginseng, molybdenum, zinc, ginkgo biloba, B vitamins (folic acid, riboflavin, B12), carotenoids (lycopene, beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, lutein/zeaxanthin), garlic, manganese, CoQ10 (Coenzyme Q10), glutathione, and grape seed extract.

Two antioxidants are variations of Vitamin A. Vitamin A (known as retinol or retinyl) is always found in animal products such as liver, milk, eggs, butter, cream, and fish liver oil. Beta-carotene is converted to Vitamin A once inside the body. It is found in carrots, sweet potatoes, and many other dark green vegetables, as well as fruit characterised generally by yellow/orange pigment. Virtually all carotenoids work as antioxidants to rid the body of potentially cell-damaging free radicals.

High blood levels of carotenoids are usually associated with a lower risk of degenerative disease. Carotenoids lower the risk of certain cancers, such as lung, stomach, cervix, breast, oral, and bladder cancer. It has been shown that eating fruit and vegetables regularly slashes your chances of getting cancer in half. Carotenoids also appear to enhance the immune system and protect against age-related ailments, such as stroke and heart disease.

Phytonutrients, also known as phytochemicals, refer to plant-derived nutrients. Carotenoids are phytonutrients, the nutritional elements that occur naturally in fruit and vegetables, giving them their distinctive yellow, orange, and red colours. Green leafy vegetables are also high in carotenoids, but chlorophyll hides the yellow and orange pigments.

Vitamin C is one of the most widely acclaimed antioxidants. The proper use of Vitamin C throughout life may provide the long-awaited breakthrough in geriatrics. Vitamin C can prolong the period of vigorous and healthy maturity. Signs of old age are actually symptoms of subclinical scurvy. Vitamin C may well be one of the best life-extending and anti-ageing products available today.

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Chemiron donates N2 million worth of medicines to Agbara community

By Adebayo Oladejo

Chemiron Care Limited, a pharmaceutical company based in Agbara, has extended its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts by donating pharmaceuticals worth over N2 million to the Agbara community.

The donation, which includes blood tonics, cough syrups, paracetamol suspensions, and vitamins, aims to improve healthcare access for over 1,000 residents.

Speaking at the handover ceremony held at the Palace of the Alagbara of Agbara Kingdom, Oba Lukman Jayeola Agunbiade, Olute III, Pharm. Rajnikant Singh, head of sales and marketing, highlighted the company's unwavering commitment to community development through CSR initiatives.

"Since our inception in 1986, it has been our goal to help communities with high-quality medicines free of charge. Today's donation is part of that long-standing tradition," Singh stated.

He also revealed plans for a long-term partnership with the Agbara community, disclosing



Pharm. Rajnikant Singh, head, Marketing and Sales, Chemiron Care Limited with the Alagbara of Agbara Kingdom, Oba Lukman Jayeola Agunbiade, Olute III, and the donated items.

discussions with the King about constructing a healthcare facility in the area. "We intend to work

on building a healthcare centre for the Agbara community as part of our future CSR projects," he said.

Chemiron's representative encouraged other corporate organisations to prioritise CSR initiatives aimed at community development. "We urge companies to join hands in creating a better society through targeted interventions that address pressing needs like healthcare and employment," he added.

In his reaction, the Alagbara of Agbara Kingdom, Oba Agunbiade,

expressed profound gratitude, describing the donation as timely and impactful.

"The medicines donated will greatly benefit our people, especially as they address everyday health needs like coughs, fever, and vitamin deficiencies," he noted.

The revered monarch also used the occasion to appeal for the construction of a healthcare centre to cater to the community's rapidly growing population.

Furthermore, Oba Agunbiade called on Chemiron to create employment opportunities for local youths, which he described as critical to addressing social vices.

"We have qualified graduates and skilled artisans in Agbara who can contribute meaningfully to your organisation. Offering them employment would further strengthen our partnership and bring development to our community," he said.

The event not only showcased Chemiron's dedication to improving lives but also underscored the importance of sustained collaboration between corporate entities and host communities for mutual growth and development.

In a touching display of compassion and community support, The Roses Ministry recently distributed essential items—including rice, Ankara fabric, groundnut oil, and loaves of bread—to approximately 2,400 widows.

The event, marking the 2024 edition of the ministry's Annual Widows' Day programme, underscores the ministry's unwavering commitment to supporting, uplifting, and empowering widows through acts of kindness and love.

Speaking at the event, held on 28 November 2024 at Bishop Adalakin Howells Memorial (BAHM) Church Event Centre, Surulere, Lagos, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Roses Ministry, Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, commended the widows for their resilience and reaffirmed the ministry's dedication to empowering marginalised groups. He also encouraged the widows to continually seek God through prayer.

"At The Roses Ministry, we are deeply committed not only to supporting widows but also to inspiring them to embrace a brighter future. This is a token of our love, and we hope it brings smiles and relief," said Oluabunwa.

Emphasising the importance of trust in one's relationship with God, Oluabunwa cautioned the widows against taking God for granted. He advised, "Do not try to fool God. Do not play pranks with God. It can be a costly mistake. Remain faithful to Him."

The Chairman of the occasion, Sir Raymond Obieri, represented by his wife, Lady Bethel Obieri—founder and CEO of Living Foundation Orphanage—praised The Roses Ministry for consistently bringing joy and encouragement to widows.

She also commended the Co-Coordinator of the ministry, Pharm. Regina Ezenwa, for her compassionate leadership. "She has the heart of Christ. When you see Mrs Ezenwa, you are seeing Jesus Christ in action," Lady Obieri remarked.

Providing updates on the

The Roses Ministry empowers over 2000 widows with lifesaving support

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo



L-R: Managing Director, Nemitt Pharmaceuticals, Pharm. Ernest Okafor; CEO of Living Foundation Orphanage, Lady Bethel Obieri; Co-Coordinator of The Roses Ministry, Pharm. Regina Ezenwa; guest speaker, Dr Victoria Ekhomu; Mrs Yvonne Isichei and Chairman, Board of Trustees of The Roses Ministry, Mazi Sam Oluabunwa at The Roses Ministry's Annual Widow's Day programme.

ministry's activities, Pharm. Ezenwa shared that The Roses Ministry began in 2007 by supporting just 33 women but has since grown to serve about 2,400 widows. To date, the ministry has sponsored 20 university graduates and is currently sponsoring 12 undergraduates.

Additionally, the ministry has facilitated vocational training for five youths and reached over 13,000 young people through seminars. In 2024 alone, it funded 10 secondary school students by covering expenses for books, uniforms, and examination fees.

Ezenwa also highlighted the ministry's business empowerment initiatives, noting that over 700 women have been trained in various skills and bookkeeping. Furthermore, more than 82 widows have received funding to start small-scale businesses.

Healthcare is another priority for the ministry. Ezenwa revealed

that over 2,500 women receive quarterly medical care, with many on antihypertensive and antidiabetic treatments, along with general healthcare medications. She added that over 200 women have undergone cervical cancer screening, and more than 300 have been screened for HIV.

Food and clothing distribution remain central to the ministry's outreach. Ezenwa noted that over 2,000 clothing items are distributed annually, and more than 2,500 widows receive essential food items, including bags of rice, vegetable oil, salt, bread, and noodles.

She expressed heartfelt gratitude to the ministry's donors, trustees, and the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria, Surulere Zone, for their collaboration in providing medical services to the widows.

Ezenwa further described The Roses Ministry as a praying ministry, acknowledging God's constant

answers to their prayers. "When I received this call and we started, many people asked if I was leaving pharmacy. But it wasn't about leaving pharmacy; it was about doing what God asked me to do. God has shown me things beyond what I can explain. The most important reason I am alive is this ministry," she shared.

Addressing the widows, the guest speaker, Dr Victoria Ekhomu, Managing Director of Transworld Security, encouraged them to stay prayerful and diligent. She emphasised that many widows struggle because they neglect hard work, urging them to remain industrious while trusting in God's faithfulness.

Several beneficiaries expressed heartfelt appreciation for the ministry's consistent support. One recipient said, "This gesture is more than material support; it reminds us that we are seen, heard, and valued."

Another widow, identified as C. Maduka, testified that the ministry provided her with an interest-free loan to sustain her business and is currently sponsoring her daughter's university education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK).

Similarly, Salomi Onabayo shared that The Roses Ministry has transformed her life, enabling her to become self-reliant.

The event featured uplifting speeches, prayers, and moments of celebration, reflecting The Roses Ministry's mission to create a ripple effect of kindness, love, and hope within the community.

The Roses Ministry is a faith-based non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting widows, orphans, and the less privileged through empowerment programmes, donations, and community-building initiatives.

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Pharmacists charged to promote drug affordability and accessibility

continued from back page

Speaking at the event, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Fidson Healthcare PLC, Dr Fidelis Ayebae, who chaired the occasion, congratulated the Board of Trustees for their consistency and dedication. He also commended the Omololu-Mulele estate for the endowment that made the annual lecture possible.

Dr Ayebae, ably represented by an executive director of the company, Mr Olugbenga Olayeye, lamented the current economic challenges in Nigeria, describing them as unprecedented. He emphasised that medicine affordability is critical and called for greater attention to medicine security, noting that no nation can achieve sound health without access to medicines.

According to the Fidson Healthcare boss, the cost of packaging materials constitutes a significant portion of drug production expenses in Nigeria. He advocated for creative solutions, including local production of packaging materials through collaboration between academia and industry. Furthermore, he stressed that while making medicines affordable is vital, ensuring accessibility without compromising quality is equally important.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Ladipo Mobolaji Abisogun-Afodu Annual Lecture in Pharmacy, Professor Oluwole Familoni, highlighted the lecture's role as a platform for discussing critical pharmacy and health-related issues. He called for concerted efforts to guarantee the affordability and accessibility of medicines for all Nigerians.

Delivering the 7th annual lecture, Professor Mbang Femi-Oyewo, provost of the College of Pharmacy, Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti (ABUAD), underscored the pivotal role pharmacists play in ensuring drug affordability and accessibility worldwide.

Quoting former US President John F. Kennedy, Prof. Femi-Oyewo described pharmacists as an indispensable link in the healthcare system. She reinforced this with a statement by former World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Hiroshi Nakajima, who remarked in 1989 that "without drugs, a health service has no substance and no credibility."

The guest lecturer defined medicine as any substance, apart from food, used to prevent, diagnose, treat, or relieve symptoms of diseases or abnormal conditions. She explained that medicine affordability reflects the ability of individuals or society to pay for drugs and noted that socio-economic factors such as income levels, poverty, and social inequality significantly affect affordability. She stressed that new drugs have limited value if patients cannot afford them and no value if they do not exist.

Femi-Oyewo also addressed medicine accessibility, which she described as the reasonable ability of individuals to obtain necessary medicines to achieve health. She linked this to the fundamental right to health.

Highlighting Nigeria's current economic challenges, she noted their significant impact on medicine availability and advocated for job creation and infrastructure investment as solutions.

The professor explained that the primary mission of the pharmacy profession is to positively impact



Guest of honour and Managing Director, Pharma Solutions, Pharm. Olabisi Oyeleye; Prof. B. O Silva with his wife; Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, Prof. Gloria Ayoola; Chairman, Board of Trustees, Prof. Oluwole Familoni; representative of the Omololu-Mulele family, Mrs M.A Sasegbon; guest lecturer, Prof Mbang Femi-Oyewo; Ag Registrar, UNILAG, Mrs Olakunle Esther Makinde and the executive director, Fidson Healthcare PLC, Mr Olugbenga Olayeye at the 7th annual lecture.

public health by ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines. She outlined pharmacists' responsibilities, including dispensing prescription drugs, administering medication, reviewing drug regimens, and providing patient counselling.

Femi-Oyewo emphasised pharmacists' essential role in bridging gaps between pharmaceutical companies and underserved communities, promoting community pharmacies in remote areas, and advocating for improved medicine distribution channels. She encouraged pharmacists to engage in healthcare policy development to support sustainable drug availability, strengthen supply chains, and leverage technology.

"As pharmacists, our expertise, advocacy, and innovative and collaborative practices are key to tackling challenges related to drug availability and accessibility while improving patient outcomes. Pharmacists should actively participate in healthcare policies to ensure sustainable drug availability, strengthen pharmaceutical supply chains, and leverage technology. Together, we can make a difference," Femi-Oyewo stated.

In her goodwill message, the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, Professor Gloria Ayoola, hailed the event as a testament to the enduring legacy of Pharmacist Ladipo Mobolaji Abisogun-Afodu and the exceptional foresight of his daughter, the late Chief (Mrs) Abimbola Aina Omololu-Mulele, whose generous endowment made the lecture possible.

"This year's theme, 'Medicine Affordability and Accessibility in a Challenging Economy: The Role of the Pharmacy Profession,' resonates deeply in today's complex healthcare landscape. The economic realities we face demand innovative and sustainable solutions to ensure lifesaving medicines are within everyone's reach. Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between pharmaceutical advances and patients' access," Prof. Ayoola noted.

Pharm. Olabisi Oyeleye, managing director of Pharma Solutions and guest of honour, encouraged pharmacists to adopt a broader perspective. "We have discussed many challenges, but I see numerous opportunities. As

a pharmacist, there are various areas to explore. You just need to start somewhere and change your mindset. Pharmacists are intelligent; don't limit yourself. Go out, dare, and start small," she urged.

Prof. Emmanuel Nwanolue Anyika, chairman of the event planning committee, expressed gratitude to the Omololu-Mulele family and the guests. He urged pharmacists to unleash their potential to make medicines accessible and affordable for all Nigerians.

The event's highlight was the announcement of the winner of the 5th Ladipo Mobolaji Abisogun-Afodu Research Grant Award Competition in Pharmacy, endowed by the late

Chief (Mrs) Abimbola Aina Omololu-Mulele.

The award, worth N2 million, went to Pharm. Dr Bamisaye Olaofe Oyawaluja, a lecturer in the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, for his proposed research titled *Artificial Intelligence and Pharmacophore Modelling as Tools to Improve Access to Medicines and Enhance Quality of Patient Life*.

Representing the Omololu-Mulele family, Mrs M.A. Sasegbon commended the winner and past recipients for their commitment to research. She reiterated the family's dedication to supporting the grant in the years ahead.

Codix secures landmark approval to locally package HIV rapid test kit

By Samuel Dike

Colexa Biosensor Limited, a subsidiary of Codix Group, has received World Health Organisation (WHO) Change Notification (CN) approval to package a WHO Prequalified Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kit at its facility in Nigeria.

According to a press release made available to *Pharmanews*, this approval makes Colexa Biosensor Limited the first African entity to locally package a WHO Prequalified HIV RDT kit, the *Standard Q HIV 1/2 Ab 3-Line Test*. This milestone will enable the diagnostic kits to be procured not only by Nigeria but also by international donors, thereby improving access and affordability across the continent.

Sammy Ogunjimi, group managing director and chief executive officer (GMD/CEO) of Codix Group, highlighted the transformative potential of this achievement.

"This approval marks a leap forward for Nigeria's healthcare ecosystem, enhancing access to high-quality In-Vitro Diagnostics (IVDs) and driving local production," Ogunjimi stated. "It is not just a win for Nigeria but a monumental stride for the entire African continent."

He also reiterated the company's commitment to collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Health, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and the Prequalification Validation and Accreditation Committee (PVAC) to establish Nigeria as a hub for quality diagnostic products in Africa.

Mary Ogangwu, chief operating officer of Codix Pharma, credited the success to the combined efforts of international partners and local stakeholders. She praised the technical support provided by NAFDAC, PVAC, and the Federal Ministry of Health, while acknowledging the dedication of the company's team.

"This achievement is the result of tremendous effort from our organisation and our partners. I also want to recognise the exceptional leadership of our group managing director, Mr Sammy Ogunjimi, whose hard work has been the backbone of our success," Ogangwu remarked.

The statement further emphasised that the approval of the *Standard Q HIV 1/2 Ab 3-Line Test* for local packaging is a historic first for Africa. It highlights Codix Group's unwavering commitment to enhancing Nigeria's healthcare value chain. Since its commissioning in December 2023, Colexa Biosensor has garnered global recognition from esteemed organisations such as the WHO, Global Fund, UNITAID, FIND, and PEPFAR.

This achievement not only underscores Nigeria's growing capacity in the healthcare sector but also aligns with the vision of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to promote local production and self-sufficiency in essential healthcare products.

Rotary Club of Ikeja promotes hygiene, commissions 12-unit toilet facility at Lagos school

By Nneoma Kalu

In a bid to improve hygiene and education in local communities, the Rotary Club of Lagos Prime, Ikeja, District 9112, has inaugurated newly renovated pupils' toilet facility at Bola Memorial Primary School, Lagos.

The commissioning ceremony, held recently, underscores Rotary's global commitment to disease prevention, water sanitation, hygiene, and basic education.

Speaking at the event, the Charter President, Rotarian (Pharm) Gbenga Olubowale, highlighted the initiative's dual focus on health and education. He emphasised the importance of addressing community needs to ensure a conducive learning environment for children.

"We are not only preventing diseases but also ensuring these children grow healthy and study in a conducive environment," he said.

The revamped facilities include 12 rehabilitated toilets and water storage drums to guarantee uninterrupted access to clean water.

According to Olubowale, this project reflects Rotary's guiding principle of "service above self" by stepping in where government resources may be insufficient. He urged the school and local authorities to ensure proper maintenance of the facilities to inspire similar interventions in the future.

Representing the Lagos State government, Mr Afolabi Awobuyide, head of section, Planning, Research and Statistics, Ikeja Local Government Education Authority, commended the Rotary

Club for its impactful initiative.

He stressed the importance of collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable development. "The government cannot do it all alone. Clubs like Rotary are showcasing how partnerships can create a better world," he remarked.

The headmistress of Bola Memorial Primary School, Mrs Cecilia Sipeolu expressed profound gratitude to the Rotary Club, describing the renovation as transformative for the school's environment. "We will never forget the great impact you have made," she stated, adding that the improved facilities would significantly enhance the well-being of students and staff.

The event also highlighted Rotary's broader goals of preventing diseases and promoting hygiene. The upgraded sanitation infrastructure aims to reduce infections among students, enabling them to focus on their education in a healthier setting.

As the ceremony concluded, Rotary representatives reaffirmed their commitment to sustaining the partnership with the school and exploring additional avenues for support. "Our profit lies in the satisfaction of seeing these children thrive," one of the speakers noted.

This intervention by the Rotary Club of Ikeja exemplifies its dedication to creating lasting value in communities through targeted actions that address critical gaps in health and education.



Rtn. Femi Adenekan, pioneer governor, District 9112, and Rtn (Pharm.) Gbenga Olubowale, charter president, Rotary Club of Lagos Prime, Ikeja, District 9112, (middle), flanked by other personalities at the inauguration of the newly renovated pupils [toilet facilities at Bola Memorial Primary School, Lagos.



Some students and personalities at the inauguration of the newly renovated pupils toilet facilities at Bola Memorial Primary School, Ikeja, Lagos.

PSN-YPG felicitates with SFH at 40

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria-Young Pharmacists Group (PSN-YPG) joined the Society for Family Health (SFH) in celebrating its 40th anniversary recently in Abuja.

The event, held at the Transcorp Hilton, also featured the launch of a book chronicling SFH's impactful journey as a leader in healthcare solutions across Nigeria and beyond.

The Coordinating Minister of Health, Dr Muhammad Ali Pate, along with representatives from prominent organisations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, attended the ceremony.

The occasion highlighted SFH's achievements in addressing key healthcare challenges, including reproductive health, infectious disease control, maternal and child health.

Commenting on the significance of the event, PSN-YPG National Chairman, Pharm. Tekena George, remarked, "Our presence at SFH's 40th anniversary inspires us to continue building strategic alliances that deliver value to young pharmacists and contribute to a healthier Nigeria."

According to the YPG president, the event also served as a platform for PSN-YPG to connect with stakeholders, donors, and global health leaders. Discussions revolved around forging partnerships and advancing initiatives aimed at supporting young pharmacists in Nigeria.

Pharm. George concluded stating, "SFH's legacy of innovation and impact motivates us to create solutions that foster professional growth for our members while contributing to sustainable healthcare in Nigeria."



L-R: Omokhodu Idogho, managing director, Society for Family Health (SFH), and Pharm Tekena George, national chairman, PSN-YPG at the SFH 40th anniversary celebration, held recently in Abuja.

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FG reaffirms commitment to pharma industry, unlocking healthcare value chain

continued from back page

reliance on imports for even the most basic healthcare products. He explained that the push for self-sufficiency inspired the president to launch the initiative to unlock the healthcare value chain in October 2023. Since then, the government has consistently engaged with players in the pharmaceutical industry.

According to Pate, the drive to position Nigeria as a hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing also led the president to sign an executive order in June 2024. This order aims to stimulate local production of pharmaceuticals, diagnostic test kits, medical textiles, and other critical healthcare products. It also introduces market-shaping interventions to encourage domestic industry growth.

"The executive order has been gazetted into law by the Attorney General," Pate stated. "Although there were delays in finalising the list of exempted items and ensuring Customs' cooperation, its implementation is now on the verge of gaining the necessary momentum to move forward."

Beyond regulatory support, the minister revealed that the government plans to pool resources to purchase from local manufacturers. He assured industry stakeholders that significant government intervention is imminent, aimed at fostering growth, reducing production costs, and making



Prof. Alli Pate

pharmaceuticals, test kits, reagents, and consumables more affordable—especially for Nigeria's most vulnerable populations.

However, Pate urged the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) to implement supportive regulations rather than predatory practices or bureaucratic bottlenecks. He stressed the importance of creating an environment where pharmaceutical companies can thrive and operate successfully.

Addressing challenges in the sector, Pate acknowledged

that some multinational pharmaceutical companies had shut down operations in Nigeria. However, he argued that their decision was short-sighted, as they focused only on the country's difficulties without recognising its potential for growth.

"About a year and a half ago, several multinationals exited the country. We believe they made a strategic mistake. Betting against Nigeria's future is unwise. This is a large, diverse, and entrepreneurial nation, as seen in Lagos and many other parts of the country. Those who focused only on Nigeria's challenges failed to see that this country is resilient and on the

rise," he said.

Professor Pate commended Jawa International for its dedication to completing the beta-lactam factory despite obstacles. He highlighted the local production of essential antibiotics like amoxicillin-clavulanic acid—once dominated by multinational firms—as evidence that Nigeria is overcoming its challenges.

"This achievement is only the beginning. There are many better days ahead. The health sector is not just about consumption. Health is a fundamental right, and governments must invest in it. I can confidently say that this administration, along with state governments, is making significant investments in healthcare under the President's leadership."

The minister also stressed the economic benefits of the health sector, noting that companies like Jawa International contribute to job creation and economic growth.

"We are witnessing the healthcare value chain in action with Jawa International. Hundreds of young Nigerians are employed in this industry. Consider the impact of this employment on the staff, their families, and future generations. These are quality jobs that offer stability and growth. This creates not only economic value through increased earnings but also societal value by providing meaningful employment for our youth," Professor Pate concluded.

Xcene Research advocates expanded clinical trials in sub-Saharan Africa

By Adebayo Oladejo

Xcene Research has reiterated the need for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to play a more significant role in global clinical trials, highlighting its potential to address healthcare disparities, drive economic growth, and accelerate the development of innovative treatments.

This call was made at the 2024 Impact Africa Summit (IAS), held recently at the Marriott Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

Speaking at the summit, Adebukunola Telufusi, convener of IAS, described the platform as pivotal in championing clinical trials across Africa. She noted, "Africa is experiencing a paradigm shift towards harnessing the power of science and research.

"By bolstering local partnerships and advocating for active participation, we can cultivate an environment that propels medical research forward, ultimately enhancing healthcare outcomes for communities across Africa."

Dr Faramola Ogunkoya, project lead at Xcene Research, emphasised the summit's comprehensive programme,

which included workshops, symposiums, and market exchange forums addressing topics such as haematology, nephrology, regulatory practices, clinical operations, and patient advocacy.

"This conference transcends dialogue; it is a catalyst for tangible change in the realm of clinical trials, bringing us

one stride closer to a healthier, more inclusive future for all," she remarked.

The summit has made notable progress in regulatory harmonisation, ethical research practices, and capacity building for local researchers. It has also fostered partnerships between global pharmaceutical companies, local research institutions, and regulatory bodies, while showcasing the

economic benefits of clinical trials, including job creation, increased investment, and technological advancement.

To date, the IAS has organised 11 workshops, eight forums, two scientific symposiums, and three conferences, featuring over 80 speakers, attracting 1,500 attendees, and engaging representatives from 13 regulatory bodies across SSA.

Xcene Research, the driving force behind the IAS, is committed to reshaping the clinical research landscape in Africa. As a leading Contract Research Organisation (CRO), it provides clinical trial management, data handling, and regulatory services. Additionally, the Xcene Research Academy was established to bridge the skills gap by training and empowering the next generation of African researchers, ensuring a sustainable pipeline of talent for the industry.

Through initiatives like the IAS, Xcene Research continues to leverage collaboration, innovation, and advocacy to position SSA as a key player in global healthcare advancements. By embracing clinical trials, the region can significantly contribute to the development of life-saving treatments, improve patient outcomes, and establish itself as a global healthcare hub.



L - R: Prof Ubaka Chukwemeka Micheal, commissioner for health, Imo State; Prof. Akin Abayomi, commissioner for health, Lagos State; Dr Oyebanji Filani, commissioner for health, Ekiti State; Adebukunola Telufusi, executive director, Xcene Research; Dr Michael Esan, chief safety lead, medical director, Xcene Research; Dr Tomi Coker, commissioner for health, Ogun State; Dr Obidike Afam Ben, commissioner for health, Anambra State; and Dr Mohammed Lawan Gana, commissioner for health, Yobe State, at the Summit

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FG reaffirms commitment to pharma industry, unlocking healthcare value chain

- Says Executive Order on pharma sector soon to be implemented

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

The Coordinating Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Professor Muhammad Ali Pate, has reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to advancing Nigeria's health sector, stressing that the current administration fully supports the pharmaceutical industry.

Professor Pate made this statement during the commissioning of the newly completed beta-lactam factory built by Jawa International in Isolo, Lagos. He emphasised that his personal presence at the event was not only to show support for Jawa International but also to demonstrate the government's commitment to all stakeholders in Nigeria's pharmaceutical sector.

Highlighting the need for a reliable pharmaceutical industry and sustained government support, the minister stated that Nigeria must move past total



L-R: Pharm. (Chief) Olaitan Sunday Ogunlade; Pharm. Tanko Ayuba, president, PSN; Pharm. Iyiola Gbolagade, immediate past chairman, PSN, Lagos; and Pharm. Tolu Ajayi, chairman, ACPN, Lagos State, at the 80th birthday ceremony of Lady Pharm. Abayomi Olayinka Osinoiki, held at Time Square Event Centre, Ikeja Lagos.

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Pharmacists charged to promote drug affordability and accessibility

- As Oyawaluja wins N2m Ladipo Mobolaji Abisogun-Afodu Research Grant

By Ranmilowo Ojalumo

As Nigeria continues to grapple with the challenges posed by the rising cost of efficacious medicines, pharmacists have been urged to make extra efforts to ensure that medicines are affordable and accessible to all Nigerians, regardless of gender, location, or socio-economic status.

This call was made during the 7th edition of the Ladipo Mobolaji

Abisogun-Afodu Annual Lecture in Pharmacy, held recently at the Old Great Hall, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Idi-Araba, Lagos State.

The theme of the 7th annual lecture was "Medicine Affordability and Accessibility in a Challenging Economy: The Role of the Pharmacy Profession."

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