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Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, former president, PSN; Prof. Pat Utomi, keynote speaker; Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, president, PSN; Pharm. Remi Adeseun, head of public health in Africa/GM, Nigeria, IQVIA; and Mallam Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, governor of Kaduna State, during the opening ceremony of the 92nd PSN conference, held in Kaduna last November.

## Fertility experts advocate early presentation of infertility conditions

By Yusuff Moshood

Leading fertility experts have urged Nigerians to embrace the culture of going to the hospital early to seek help when they have infertility challenges, instead of waiting and praying, noting that late presentation of infertility

conditions is a major reason many patients are unable to quickly get the desired results when they eventually seek medical intervention.

The experts, who spoke during a recent public

enlightenment programme organised by Association for Fertility and Reproductive Health (AFRH) and themed "Fertility Treatment: Fact not Fiction", included Dr Faye Iketubosin, immediate past

*continued on page 10*

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Pharmacist Margaret Oluwayemisi Adedapo is the coordinator, Logistics Management Coordinating Unit (LMCU) of the Lagos State Ministry of Health. Born on 12 December 1971 in Surulere, Lagos, she obtained her Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, in 1994, and a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Public Health from the University of Lagos in 2009.

A passionate professional, Adedapo went to Boston, USA in search of supply chain knowledge in 2019, and bagged a certificate in Supply Chain Fundamentals from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, USA.

Adedapo has had a notable career history, beginning at the Obafemi Awolowo University, where she had her internship, after which she went for her National Youth Service at the Police Clinic State Headquarters, Makurdi, Benue State. Thereafter, she resumed as a junior trainee fellow with the Obafemi Awolowo University in 1998 and proceeded to work as production pharmacist with Ranbaxy Nigeria Ltd between 1999 and 2001.

She ventured into community pharmacy practice in 2001 with Chez-Pharma Nig. Ltd (Sole franchise holder for Sanofi-Synthelabo at that time) where she marketed brands of Sanofi-Synthelabo product. In 2002, Adedapo became superintendent pharmacist at Meg Pharmacy and Stores, Lagos, before joining the Lagos State Health Service Commission in 2006.

She has also got hospital practice experience, having worked at Mainland Hospital, Yaba, General Hospital Lagos and Ifako-Ijaiye General Hospital, at different times.

Adedapo played key roles in curtailing the outbreak of Ebola Virus disease in Nigeria, as she was one of the volunteers at the Ebola Treatment Centre, Lagos, where the country recorded success in combating the Ebola Disease.

An astute team-builder, Adedapo coordinates supply chain management activities for public health commodities in Lagos State, working with MOH agencies directorates, and units, development partners, consultants, healthcare workers and volunteers in a way that has made Lagos the centre of supply chain excellence in the country.

The Lagos LMCU was central to development of the PSM section of the grant documents for the LSMOH / GF HIV/AIDS Grant, the first state government to be made Principal Recipient of the Global Fund in Africa.

Amidst her tight professional responsibilities, she also created time to serve the Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN) in different capacities. She was National Treasurer, AHAPN (2012-2015); National Financial Secretary, AHAPN (2015 - 2018); Treasurer, Lagos AHAPN (2009-2012); Assistant Secretary, AHAPN Lagos (2012-2015) and Financial Secretary (2015-2018).

A resource person for the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Adedapo facilitates the training of scores of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other health workers in supply chain management, quality data reporting and pharmacovigilance.

Adedapo has got several awards to her credit, including the 2018 Lagos State Health Merit Award as Outstanding Pharmacist, from the Lagos State Ministry of Health; and the National Distinguished Service Award (DSA) of AHAPN. She is happily married and blessed with children.



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The recently concluded Annual National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), tagged "Crocodile City 2019" and held from 4 to 9 November will be remembered for its uniqueness in the years ahead by many participants who attended the gathering.

In a rather unprecedented move, more than 4000 pharmacists stormed the city of Kaduna for the conference, which was held at the Kaduna Trade Fair Centre and themed "Navigating the Wind of Change in Professional Practice in a Volatile Economy." To have this huge turnout for the conference during a period when there was so much security concern in Kaduna and the adjoining cities as a result kidnapping and banditry was indeed phenomenal.

We commend the Kaduna State Government for not leaving any stone unturned in ensuring the security of lives and properties of all participants at the conference. Kudos must also be given to the PSN Conference Planning Committee (CPC) and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for mobilising pharmacists from all over the country to be part of the event. Most importantly, we salute the commitment of pharmacists themselves who placed their passion for the profession above every odd to be at the conference.

Another high point of the historic gathering was the presence of the Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai and the Deputy Governor, Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, at the

## The memorable 92nd PSN conference in Kaduna

opening ceremony. This was also unprecedented. It is rare to have the two helmsmen of a state at a single event; but the PSN made this possible at the conference in Kaduna. It was a testament to both the hard work of all who were involved in organising the conference and the goodwill of the state government towards the pharmacy profession.

The opening ceremony was also very colourful because of the presence of other top dignitaries, including Dr Olorunnibe Mamora, minister of state for health; Prof. Pat Utomi, the keynote speaker; Prof Mojisola Adeyeye, director general, NAFDAC; past PSN presidents, Pharm. (Alh.) Yaro Budah, Pharm. (Dr) UNO Uwaga, Pharm. Azubike Okwor, Pharm Olumide Akintayo and Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai as well as top captains of the pharmaceutical

industry.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Utomi, gave a powerful foretaste of what to expect throughout the conference with his insightful analysis of the conference theme which got him a standing ovation at the end of the presentation. Also, the introduction of a standup comedian to lighten up the mood at the opening ceremony was a delightful initiative, as it significantly added colour and glamour to the ceremony.

The idea of having live transmission of conference proceedings on a large screen in the exhibition ground was also a laudable idea as it allowed those at the exhibition to keep track of what was going on in the hall.

However, aside from the above high points and others that made "Crocodile City 2019" a resounding success, there were

also some lapses that should be noted and avoided in future conferences. The first of this shortcomings was the distance of hotels to the conference venue. The distance made commuting to and from the conference venue tedious. While the LOC must be commended for providing buses for transport, it would have been much better if the conference venue had been closer to the hotels.

Another drawback was the capacity of the conference hall, which was clearly too small to accommodate participants during the opening ceremony, forcing some of them to stand during this important session.

It is also important to note that, these days, conferences are live-streamed for people who are in far places, so they can keep track of proceedings. We urge the PSN to do all that is necessary to make this possible at its conferences while also ensuring maximum publicity for the annual event. We must also point out that since exhibition has become a major component of the PSN conference, more should be done towards making the exhibition ground comfortable and spacious for participants.

As we look forward to the next PSN conference holding in Osogbo, Osun State, the PSN CPC and LOC must take on board lessons learnt from the historic conference in Kaduna and ensure that the 2020 conference is an improvement on the just-concluded edition.

**The keynote speaker, Prof. Utomi, gave a powerful foretaste of what to expect throughout the conference with his insightful analysis of the conference theme which got him a standing ovation at the end of the presentation. Also, the introduction of a standup comedian to lighten up the mood at the opening ceremony was equally a delightful initiative, as it significantly added colour and glamour to the ceremony. The idea of having live transmission of conference proceedings on a large screen in the exhibition ground was also a laudable idea as it allowed those at the exhibition to keep track of what was going on in the hall.**

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## Enjoying divine health

By Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi

Everyone desires good health, and God has promised good health to His children. Nothing pleases God as seeing His people prosper and be in health. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ has provided healing of diseases for those who believe. But the soul must be prospering.

A soul that prospers is controlled by the Spirit of God. Proverbs 3:7-8 warns, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. This will bring health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Malnourished bones are responsible for poor quality of bone marrow and blood. Therefore, health of the bone is fundamental to health of the body.

Marrow nourishes and moistens the bones, thereby making them strong and healthy. Bone marrow produces red blood cells, platelets and white blood cells. When something goes wrong with the blood, the whole body is affected. The Bible says that life is in the blood. The condition of the blood is always an indication of someone's health.

What marrow is to the bones, the fear of God is to the soul of man. Fear of God will establish and strengthen you against sin and cause them to do the will of God. However, fear of God is not only useful in the salvation of the soul but also in the health and welfare of the body. It will prevent those diseases which are often contracted through sinful lusts and passions. It will keep the soul in good state. It is the beginning of wisdom.

Obeying, honouring and pleasing God brings health to the body. On the contrary, disobeying, dishonouring and displeasing God is responsible for some sicknesses. Proverbs 4:20-22 says, "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

The fear of the Lord prolongs life: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened (Proverbs 10:27). The more we internalise the word of God, the better for our health. The word of God is medicine that we need to take always to bring us healing and health. It has the power to change lives - to bring solutions to all

emotional, physical, spiritual and relational issues. If you believe that the word of God is medicine, how regularly do you comply with this divine prescription? How often do you take this medicine?

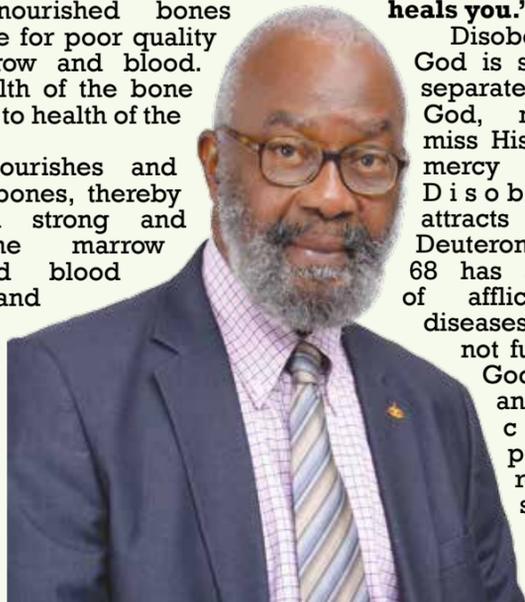
Obedience is a key to good health. Exodus 15:26 says, "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you."

Disobedience to God is sin. And sin separates us from God, making us miss His provisions, mercy and grace. Disobedience attracts curses. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 has a long list of afflictions and diseases caused by not fully obeying God. Doctors and medicines cannot provide relief for such curses imposed by God. Verse 29 says, "And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you."

Only God can reverse the prognosis of such disaster. Usually, sincere repentance, resulting in the forgiveness of sin can cause a reversal of the curse. Those who serve and please God will be blessed. You must be carrying out God's assignment wholeheartedly and giving generously to receive God's blessings. Exodus 23:25 says, "So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread, and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you."

Your vitality will be renewed as you serve God and you will not grow weary. You will be healed of your sickness and will be refreshed and strengthened. This will enable you to accomplish those things which God has planned for you to do.

This may appear like fantasy to some people because the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. In fact, they are foolishness to him. In order to discern the spiritual implications of health, you must be born again. You must have a personal and intimate relationship with God.



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# Top causes of infertility in men and women

By James Madhok

There are some couples who try and try and just cannot seem to get pregnant no matter what they do. The sad truth is that infertility is an issue that can affect anyone, no matter what age or gender they may be. There are a number of things that can go wrong in the female and male reproductive systems to cause infertility. Some of these things are permanent and there is nothing that can be done about them and then some of them do have treatment options that could help.

The first thing any couple who has been trying to conceive for a period of one year with no success should do is to seek the professional opinion of a fertility doctor to find out which of the two is having the issue and if there is a way to correct it. There are also a lot of other options that are available to help couples who cannot have a baby on their own. Following are some of the most prominent causes of infertility in men and women.

## Male infertility issues

Men can become infertile for a number of reasons. There are even some cases where men have become infertile due to childhood illness or injury and are not made aware of it until they become older and try to start a family. However, the most common causes of infertility are as follows:

**Sperm Count Low** – Most men who are infertile are this way because their sperm count is too low. Low sperm count simply means that there are fewer than 20,000,000 sperm in each ml of semen. There are a lot of things that could cause a man to have a low sperm count and sometimes it is very hard for doctors to find a definitive cause. This can be very hard on a man and it can cause him to have feelings of frustration and inadequacy. One common reason that men have low sperms counts is as a result of a condition called varicocele, which simple means there are varicose veins present in the testicles. This type of swelling in the vein often causes the man's temperature to rise and as a result the sperm mobility and production is significantly decreased.

**Low Quality of Sperm** – Another common cause of male infertility is the presents of abnormally shaped or slow moving sperm, this is considered low sperm quality and it can make conception very difficult as the sperm will not reach the woman's egg in time for fertilization. Most of the time this happens as a result of poor lifestyle changes or because of certain medications a man may be taking. There is also a lot of research to suggest that some of the following substances can lead to a lower quality of sperm as well as a low sperm count and should be avoided when trying to conceive a baby.

- Marijuana
- Nicotine
- Pesticides
- Certain Prescription Medications

## Female fertility issues

Women have much more complex reproductive systems than

men and so it stands to reason that there are a number of complications that could occur causing a woman to become infertile. There are also many different treatments and alternatives available to women that are not always available to men. Female infertility seems to be a lot easier to treat and correct. Some of the following reasons seem to be the most common when it comes to a woman being unable to become pregnant.

**Hormone imbalances** – One of the number one reasons that a woman will find herself unable to conceive is that she has some kind of a hormonal imbalance which is hindering ovulation. In fact, some hormonal imbalances could be so severe that a woman may stop ovulating altogether. The good news is that there are a number of different synthetic hormones which can be given to women in order to even out their hormone

levels and help things to go back to normal within their bodies. Some of these hormone therapies take a little while before they work and some of them are effective almost immediately. It depends a lot on the severity of the hormone imbalance and how badly it has affected the woman's body.

**Medical conditions** – There are some conditions such as PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) and Endometriosis that can cause a woman to build up scar tissue within her fallopian tubes. There is also some evidence to suggest that having abortions, even just one abortion can also result in scar tissue which will have the same effect. When a woman's fallopian tubes develop a blockage it becomes very hard or even impossible for sperm to pass through. Fortunately, this can also be corrected with a surgical procedure in most cases. In cases where there has been

severe damage IVF may become necessary. Ovarian cysts are another leading cause of female infertility.

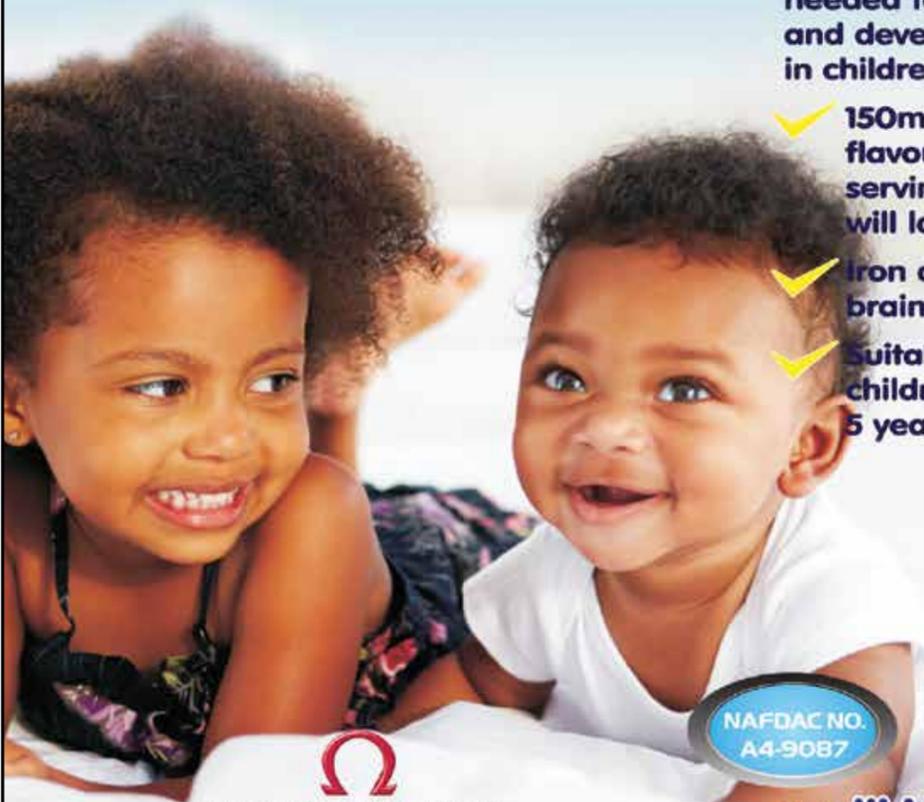
**Age and lifestyle** – There are also a number of poor lifestyle choices that can contribute to infertility such as excessive drug or alcohol use, smoking, stress and overall poor health habits. Smoking cigarettes has been associated with an increase in the chances for an ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, stillbirth, miscarriage and even cervical cancer. It is also a fact that women, as the age, begin to slowly lose their ability to become pregnant. This is because the amount of healthy eggs they release each month decreases significantly with each year that passes after about the age of 35.

Source: [healthguidance.org](http://www.healthguidance.org)

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# Harvest of awards at 92nd PSN Conference

## - As Esimone, Faduyile, MedPlus, others receive special recognition awards

By Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis

In appreciation of their individual and corporate support to the growth of pharmacy practice in Nigeria, the leadership of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) has honoured eight personalities and five companies with special awards.

The award ceremony took place during the gala night of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) held at Kaduna International Trade Fair Centre on 5 November, 2019.

Recipients of the awards included Prof. Charles Esimone, vice chancellor, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, who was honoured for attaining the peak of his career as head of a university; Prof. Chinedum Babalola, vice chancellor, Chrisland University (for same reason as Esimone); Prof. John C. Aguiyi, University of Jos - recognised for discovery of first anti-snake venom in Nigeria; HealthPlus Pharmacy, for practising pharmacy in the most ethical manner in 2019 (based on applications submitted and verifiable evidences); and MedPlus Pharmacy, for having the highest number



**Prof Charles Esimone, vice chancellor, Nnamdi Azikiwe University**

of pharmacists employed in 2019 (125 pharmacists based on application submitted and verifiable evidences).

Others were Alpha Pharmacy & Stores, for having the highest number of pharmacy interns employed in 2019 (based on application submitted and verifiable evidences); and Augustine Odibo, who was honoured as the most innovative and impactful young pharmacist in 2019.

In addition, Joedicta Ekeh was recognised for academic excellence for graduating from



**Pharm. Joke Bakare, MD Medplus Pharmacy**

UNILAG with a CGPA of 4.96; Mary Mbah, received an award for graduating from UNN with a CGPA of 4.94; while John Idoko Orgah received an award from UNIJS for graduating with a CGPA of 4.76.

Moreover, Dr Francis A. Faduyile, president, Nigerian Medical Association, was recognised for his efforts to bring harmony to the health team; Phillips Pharmaceuticals was honoured for being the biggest sponsor of Crocodile City 2019, while *Pharmanews* was awarded for being the most widely read and



**Dr Francis Faduyile, president, NMA**

consistent pharma journal in 2019

In another category, the duo of Pharm. Jibrin Aliyu and Pharm. Peters Joanna Olawunmi (Fellows of the profession) won the Pfizer Award while Pharm. Nwafor Maureen Ngozi clinched the Biogenics category.

In the category for Annual May & Baker Professional Award, Prof. Wilson Erhun was announced as winner of the 2019 edition, while Pharm. Adeola Adeogun picked the BASF Award at the ceremony.



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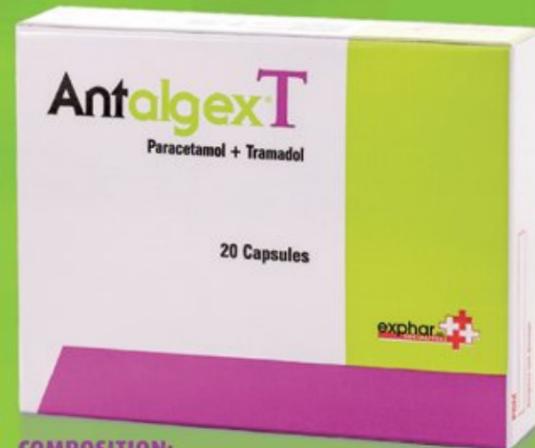


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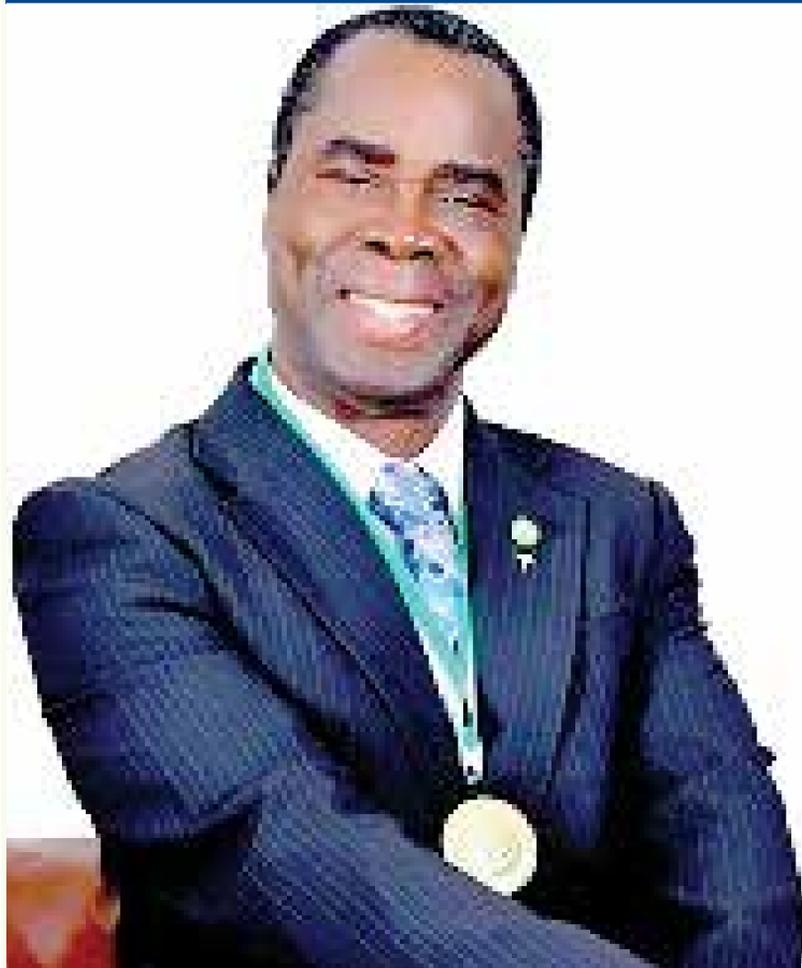
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# Professor Prosper Igboeli – World renowned IVF specialist

By Solomon Ojigbo



**Professor Prosper Igboeli**

Assisted reproductive technology (ART) is one of the most remarkable breakthroughs in modern medicine. Over four decades ago, ART by way of in vitro fertilization (IVF) produced its first success in the world through the birth of Louis Brown, after several years of rigorous research experimentation. About 10 years later, sub-Saharan Africa recorded a similar success. Since then many medical scientists have ventured into this medical field to offer hope to couples battling with fertility issues.

One of such notable medical professionals with significant contributions to ART development in Nigeria is Professor Prosper Igboeli, a former president of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and founder/director of M&M Fertility and IVF Hospitals in Abuja and Aba. His M&M Hospital has been providing specialised care in reproductive health, using state-of-the-art equipment, facilities and a team of experts pooled from internationally certified IVF centres across the globe. This has assisted many couples in having children of their own, as well as giving hopes to

many more.

## Background and education

Prof. Prosper Igboeli was born to the family of Mr Moses and Mrs Margaret Igboeli who hailed from Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. He passed his Elementary School Leaving Certificate with Distinction (at St. Peter's, Okija, Anambra State). Thereafter, he had his secondary school education at the prestigious Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), Onitsha, where his leadership qualities became manifest as he was elected the chapel prefect in his senior year. After the war, he was appointed the senior prefect. He was an Eagle Scout and troop leader of first Onitsha Boys' Scout troop.

In 1971, he was selected as a patrol leader by the Nigerian government to represent Nigeria at the 13th World Boys Scout Jamboree, on Asagiri Heights, Japan. It was there he met his American benefactor's son, Michael Peres, now professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, USA.

Igboeli showed exceptional

brilliance when he sat for and passed the West Africa Examination Council Examination with Grade 1 Distinction. He got scholarships and admissions into the University of Ibadan and the University of Benin but fate would take him to faraway USA, where he did a first degree in Biology at Utica College Of Syracuse University, New York, and in the process set the unequalled record of completing a four-year course in two and half years to the amazement of all. He became, with this feat, the graduating class salutatorian. Remarkably, throughout his university programme, he was on the Dean's high honour list.

Igboeli was admitted to study Medicine at the State University of New York College of Medicine, Syracuse, New York, in 1973, where he graduated in 1977 with Doctor of Medicine degree. He immediately proceeded to do his postgraduate training, first in Surgery, at the St Elizabeth Hospital of Boston; and then to his chosen field of specialisation, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at the Danbury Hospital, an affiliate of the Yale School of Medicine. In the process, he became a Fellow/Diplomate of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (FACOG) and the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ABOG).

Subsequent exposures would allow him to become a Fellow of the American Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Cytology; member of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine; member of the European Society of human Reproduction and Embryology; Fellow of the International College of Surgeons (FICS); Fellow of the West African College of Surgeons (FWACS) and Fellow of Nigerian Medical Association (FNMA).

Igboeli is a recipient of many national and international distinguished awards for both academics and his humanitarian services. In 1992, he received the highest award of the Syracuse University: "The Outstanding Alumnus Award." He also received an honorary award of "Doctor of Humane Letters" from Syracuse University, New York, USA, in 1994.

A surgeon per excellence, Igboeli on return to Nigeria, in 1982, had a brief stint working with the government. Thereafter he set up a thriving private practice in the east of the country, M and M Hospital, Aba. This later grew to become M and M Fertility and IVF Centre, with a branch in Abuja. The hospital remains a leading fertility unit in the country.

Igboeli has authored many publications and has made several presentations in national and international scientific conferences. He has been a research scientist since 1972. His landmark publications on the emerging field of Dermatoglyphics (Fingerprints) and on Carcinoma of the Cervical Stump deserve special mention.

Igboeli, indeed, is a man with a large philanthropic heart. He has given his resources and talents to every institution that shaped his life and has expended more to

bringing up the young and future generations. He simply believes in human investment and capacity building.

In serving as a zonal chairman of the NMA in 2001-2006, he was not allowed to hand over, for he completely turned the fortunes of Aba Zone to the point that members would not hear of his plans to hand over but continued in a standing ovation until he reneged on his plans to vacate the chairmanship seat on handover date. He immediately was elected unopposed by the doctors in Abia State to become the Abia State chairman of the NMA on completion of his third term as zonal chairman. The legacy he left is yet to be equalled. He single-handedly and personally constructed, equipped and donated an ultra-modern, one-story secretariat complex to the state NMA and medical doctors, as well as ensured the acquisition of a new 14-seater bus for the NMA.

It was not therefore surprising that he is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Distinguished Leadership Awards from NMA Affiliates. As national president (2008-2010), the testimonial of Igboeli is daunting. Within the two-year tenure as NMA president, this icon achieved many notable feats, two of which are mentioned here. One, he ensured the expedited movement of NMA national secretariat from Lagos to Abuja and subsequently negotiated and purchased the twin duplex building that was initially rented for a two-year period. This building, the first ever tangible asset of the NMA in the past 50 years, was fully acquired for the NMA at a staggering cost of 130 million naira. It is on record that Igboeli used his own money when needed to ensure that the dream of having a secretariat was achieved and is one president that is known to have spent his personal money to run the NMA. Two, he succeeded in working for the achievement of a separate salary structure (COMESS) for Nigerian doctors without resort to strike action.

Igboeli has strong interests in Boy Scouting, travelling, writing and deeply embedded in research. In 2013, he developed interest in stem cell research and was the first scientist to build a stem cell centre in West Africa in collaboration with an America stem cell processing centre in Florida, USA. This was officially opened in Abuja in 2015. Stem cell has been found beneficial in treatment and management of many conditions afflicting the human body.

Igboeli has therefore advanced beyond his practice of IVF (Reproductive Medicine) into stem cell research to rejuvenate premature ovarian failure to resume steroidogenesis and folliculogenesis with eventual restoration of fertility in collaboration with research associates (including Prof. Al-Hendy, principal investigator) in the USA. He is happily married to Dr Chidimma Joy Igboeli and they are blessed with children.

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## Public hospitals and perennial misconduct

**POLEMIC** with **Yusuff Moshood**

yusuffng@yahoo.com/08055212962

I had an experience on 22 October at one of the General Hospitals in Lagos that left me wondering again whether workers in public hospitals are exempted from the noble demands of the Hippocratic Oath. I had just returned in the evening of that day to my apartment in Agege, Lagos, very tired - not just from the hard day's work but also from the horrendous traffic that had become the lot of commuters in the city. As I sat down in my living room after having a warm shower, the only thing on my mind was to eat dinner and go to bed.

Just then, I heard a loud commotion downstairs and before I could even stand up, the voice of one of my neighbours was already blaring my name, calling me to come and help. I hurriedly dressed and rushed downstairs. On getting to the scene of the commotion, I saw that it was the wife of one of my neighbours who had passed out and was being revived.

The affected woman had had a stroke attack last year that had left her partially paralysed. Since then, she had been in and out of hospital. I was so worried

that this sudden sickness might be another stroke attack. In any case, the commotion was so much with everyone giving an opinion on what to do. But thankfully, the overwhelming opinion was that we should rush the woman to the hospital.

We managed to carry her to a car and whisked her to Orile Agege General Hospital - the same hospital where she had been receiving treatment for months and where she had been discharged a few months before this latest sudden sickness. We got to the hospital around 8:30 pm and despite explaining to the doctors and nurses the precarious nature of the woman and why we had to rush her to the hospital, they insisted they would not attend to her except we brought her registration card and the file containing her medical records.

We rushed to the card session and asked for the card after telling the attendant the patient's card number. Surprisingly, the woman at the medical records spent hours ploughing through her files looking for the card without success. Yet, this was a patient that had been at the hospital for

her last appointment just a few weeks back and was due in the hospital for her next appointment in just about a week plus.

In order to save time, we elected to pay for a new card so that the distressed woman could get the prompt response she needed but the doctor on duty insisted that until the medical records department produced the old card, he would not do attend to the patient. The wheelchair-bound woman was in visible discomfort but she was totally ignored. We pleaded and pleaded, yet the young doctor refused to even stabilise the woman while the search for the card continued. I was beside myself in anger but the patient's husband restrained me from blowing my top, saying that if I spoke out in anger, the doctors would refuse to treat his wife even after the card must have been found. Apparently, he, like multitudes of other Nigerians, had come to see workers in public health hospitals as unfeeling beings, who act like demigods and dare anyone to challenge their power and position.

Well, the old card was eventually found around 11:30

pm, three full hours after we got to the hospital. It was then the doctor eventually asked that the woman be brought in for examination. She was eventually admitted and was in the hospital for about a month before she was eventually discharged.

As much as I admit that the doctor must have had a good reason for asking for the card and that the delay was no fault of his but that of the medical records department, his refusal to stabilise a patient rushed to the hospital as an emergency was not only bizarre but unprofessional. To not care that the patient could die or suffer worse complications was preposterous and absurd.

Sadly, the unprofessional behaviour of this physician and other workers in the hospital is not an aberration. There have been many cases of caregivers, especially in public hospitals, behaving as if attending to a patient brought to them for treatment is doing the patient a favour. This is wrong, unacceptable and must stop.

A lot is wrong with Nigeria and there is a lot for the government to do. However, the government cannot singlehandedly build a sane society when citizens are failing to make contributions expected of them. The citizens, especially health professionals, must begin to do their very best at their various levels because that is fundamental to building the society.

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# Fertility experts advocate early presentation of infertility conditions

- Say women should target bearing children before 30

By Yusuff Moshood

continued from front page

president, AFRH; Dr Adewunmi Adeyemi-Bero, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president, AFRH; Dr Adeniyi Adewunmi, head of department, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH); Dr Preye Fiebai, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, AFRH; Dr Abayomi Ajayi, managing director, Nordica Fertility Centre; Dr Yemisi Adeyemi-Bero, managing director, Ark Medical Centre and Dr Abiola Idowu, executive secretary, Health Facility Monitoring and Accreditation Agency (HEFAMAA) Lagos State.

Speaking at the event, held at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Hall Alausa and graced by many couples with fertility challenges, the experts were unanimous in their view that many couples with infertility issues could have been better assisted if they presented early to relevant health professionals who could have been of help to them.

They noted that while early presentation is very important for all health conditions, it is a hugely determining factor for success for most assisted reproduction options, adding that couples diminish their chances of getting good results from assisted reproduction by not seeking help early.

Speaking further at the event, Iketubosin pointed out that age is one of the most important factors that determine the ability of a woman to have a child, adding that the best time to get pregnant and have children for women is between age 20 and 30.

He explained that by the time a woman clocks 35 years, it is already getting late, stating that it has become necessary to start educating girls and women about the need to plan their lives to accommodate bearing of children during their most fertile period.

"We have to realise that age is a factor for fertility, especially for women. We need to start that education. We need to let our girls and women know that they have a finite window of fertility period and should therefore find a way to accommodate their career and child bearing," Iketubosin said.

He disclosed the major problem infertile couples have is lack of access to proper treatment and lack of access to knowledge about their condition, noting that there have been a lot of myths about infertility in the country.

He also noted that there are many male-factor issues in infertility, noting that there is an



L-R: Dr Adeniyi Adewunmi, head of department, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH); Dr Preye Fiebai, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, AFRH; Dr Abayomi Ajayi, managing director, Nordica Medical Centre; Dr Yemisi Adeyemi-Baro, managing director, Ark Medical Centre and Dr Abiola Idowu, executive secretary, HEFAMAA, during the event.



L-R: Mrs Lanre Kazeem-Abimbola, panelist; Mrs Akudo Ujagbo, panelist Ms Chika Ofoegbuliwe, panelist; Mrs Dayo Yusuff, embryologist; Dr Faye Iketubosin, immediate past president, AFRH and Dr Adewunmi Adeyemi-Baro, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president AFRH, during the event.

increasing incidence of low and no sperm among male couples with infertility issues, saying that when couples have infertility problem, the men should be checked also.

Also speaking at the forum, Dr Fiebai said that studies had shown a worldwide decline in infertility in men and women, adding that it had become imperative to create awareness and educate the general public about In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and other fertility treatments.

The AFRH's 1<sup>st</sup> vice president said the association was aware of the myriad of wrong information, misconceptions and myths about

the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) practice in the Nigerian public space, especially in this age of social media where false and often harmful information is easily spread without fact-finding.

This wrong information, he said, often leads to harmful reproductive and fertility health seeking behaviour among the unsuspecting public, adding that this informed the decision of AFRH to engage the public to change the harmful narratives in the public space.

While reiterating the need for better health education,

he noted that the AFRH is committed to educating the public, not just about the association but to also ensure safe, ethical fertility treatment practice in the country.

The fertility forum, he said, was part of AFRH's corporate social responsibility (CSR) and also to promote interest in, and understanding of reproductive medicine and effective management of infertility in Nigeria.

At the event were journalists, patients, counsellors, support groups and other professionals.

Celebrating 40 Years of Uninterrupted Monthly Publication (1979-2019)

# Eliminating HIV/AIDS, STDs through communal collaboration

**H**IV/AIDS is a global public health burden, which threatens the young and old, from infancy to old age. None is immune to the disease as it can be transmitted through various means, from sharing of sharp objects to having intimate relationship with an infected person.

While several efforts have been made and are still being made by scientists and world health bodies to eradicate HIV/AIDS in the nearest future, say year 2030 as stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is heartwarming to know that those efforts are yielding positive results.

Nigeria, for instance, has consistently seen a decline in its HIV/AIDS burden since 2001, with the latest prevalence rate standing at only 1.4 percent, as revealed by the recent data presented by the Nigerian National HIV/AIDS Indicator and Impact Survey (NAIIS) in March 2019.

To sustain this progress, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) has called for communities participation in eliminating HIV/AIDS by 2030. UNAIDS, while commemorating the 2019 World AIDS Day, which had the theme: "Communities make the difference", noted that communities contribute to the AIDS response in many different ways.

According to him, their leadership and advocacy ensure that the response remains relevant and grounded, keeping people at the centre and leaving no one behind.

The agency explains further



that by "communities", it is referring to peer educators, networks of people living with or affected by HIV, such as gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs and sex workers, women and young people, counsellors, community health workers, door-to-door service providers, civil society organisations and grassroots activists.

UNAIDS stressed that to achieve zero prevalence, greater mobilisation of communities is urgently required to address the barriers that stop communities delivering services, including restrictions on registration and an absence of social contracting modalities.

"The strong advocacy role played by communities is needed

more than ever to ensure that AIDS remains on the political agenda that human rights are respected and that decision-makers and implementers are held accountable," the agency said.

Advocating for more stakeholders' participation in the campaign against HIV/AIDS, Pharm. Oby Ikwu, zonal coordinator of the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Oriade Zone, Amuwo Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State, lamented that Nigeria had the second highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world, adding that the greater percentage of infections were among the young people.

She explained her reason for focusing on secondary and primary school students, saying that she

was following the blueprint of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which had decided to focus on the adolescents, so as to enlighten them on the current challenges regarding the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Ikwu advised students to abstain from ungodly relationships that could lead to pre-marital sex. "This will not only save you from contracting HIV/AIDS," she counselled, "it would also prevent you from contracting other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Also, you should avoid sharing needles, syringes and any other sharp object, while you should also ensure blood is duly certified HIV-free before transfusion."

### About HIV/AIDS

HIV (which stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that leads to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which initially comes without symptoms until the late stages.

HIV can be transmitted when an infected person's body fluids (blood, semen, fluids from the vagina or breast milk) enters into his or her bloodstream. The virus can enter the blood through linings in the mouth, anus, or sex organs (the penis and vagina), or through broken skin.

Both men and women can spread HIV. A person with HIV can feel normal and still give the virus to others. Pregnant women with HIV also can give the virus to their babies.

HIV attacks and destroys a

*continued on page 13*

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## Eliminating HIV/AIDS, STDs through communal collaboration

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type of white blood cell called a CD4 cell, commonly called the T-cell. This cell's main function is to fight disease. When a person's CD4 cell count gets low, they are more susceptible to illnesses.

### Means of transmission

Anyone can get HIV if they engage in certain activities. You may have a higher risk of getting HIV if you:

**Have unprotected sex.** This means vaginal or anal intercourse without a condom or oral sex without a latex barrier with a person infected with HIV.

**Share needles to inject drugs or steroids with an infected person.** The disease can also be transmitted by dirty needles used to make a tattoo or in body piercing.

**Receive a blood transfusion from an infected person.** This happens in places where blood is not tested for HIV infection.

**Are born to a mother with HIV infection.** A baby can also get HIV from the breast milk of an infected woman.

If you fall into any of the categories above, you should consider being tested for HIV. However, there are other means through which HIV cannot be transmitted. You cannot get HIV from:

Touching or hugging someone who has HIV/AIDS

Public bathrooms or swimming pools

Sharing cups, utensils, or telephones with someone who has HIV/AIDS

Healthcare workers are at risk on the job and should take special precautions. Some healthcare workers have become infected after being stuck with needles containing HIV-infected blood, or less frequently, after infected blood comes into contact with an open cut or through splashes into the worker's eyes or inside his or her nose.

### Diagnosis of HIV

The only way to know if you have HIV is to take an HIV test. Most tests look for signs of HIV in your blood. A small sample of blood is taken from your arm. The blood is sent to a lab and tested for HIV.

Clinics that do HIV tests keep your test results secret. Some clinics even perform HIV tests without ever taking your name (anonymous testing). You must go back to the clinic to get your results. A positive test means that you have HIV. A negative test means that no signs of HIV were found in your blood.

### Before taking an HIV test:

Ask the clinic management what privacy rules it follows.

Think about how knowing you have HIV would change your life.

Ask your doctor or nurse any questions you have about HIV, AIDS, or the HIV test.

### Symptoms of HIV

Some people develop HIV symptoms shortly after being infected. But it usually takes more than 10 years.

There are several stages of HIV disease. The first HIV symptoms may include swollen glands in the throat, armpit, or groin. Other early HIV symptoms include slight fever, headaches, fatigue, and muscle aches. These symptoms may last for only a few weeks. Then there are usually no HIV symptoms for many years. That is why it can be hard to know if you have HIV.

AIDS symptoms appear in the most advanced stage of HIV disease. In addition to a badly damaged immune system, a person with AIDS may also have:



thrush — a thick, whitish coating of the tongue or mouth that is caused by a yeast infection and sometimes accompanied by a sore throat

severe or recurring vaginal yeast infections

chronic pelvic inflammatory disease

severe and frequent infections

periods of extreme and unexplained tiredness that may be combined with headaches, lightheadedness, and/or dizziness

quick loss of more than 10

pounds of weight that is not due to increased physical exercise or dieting

bruising more easily than normal

long periods of frequent diarrhoea

frequent fevers

and/or night sweats

periods of persistent, deep, dry coughing

increasing shortness of breath

the appearance of discoloured or purplish growths on the skin or inside the mouth

unexplained bleeding from growths on the skin, from the mouth, nose, anus, or vagina, or from any opening in the body

frequent or unusual skin rashes

severe numbness or pain in the hands or feet, the loss of muscle control and reflex, paralysis, or loss of muscular strength

confusion, personality change, or decreased mental abilities

Common infections

### associated with AIDS

People with AIDS are extremely vulnerable to infection, called AIDS-defining illnesses, and often exhibit the following conditions:

Kaposi's sarcoma, a skin tumour that looks like dark or purple blotches on the skin or in the mouth

Mental changes and headaches caused by fungal infections or tumors in the brain and spinal cord

Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing because of infections of the lungs

Dementia  
Severe malnutrition  
Chronic diarrhoea

### How to diagnose AIDS

If a person with HIV infection has a CD4 count that drops below 200 – or if certain infections appear (AIDS-defining illnesses) – that person is considered to have AIDS.

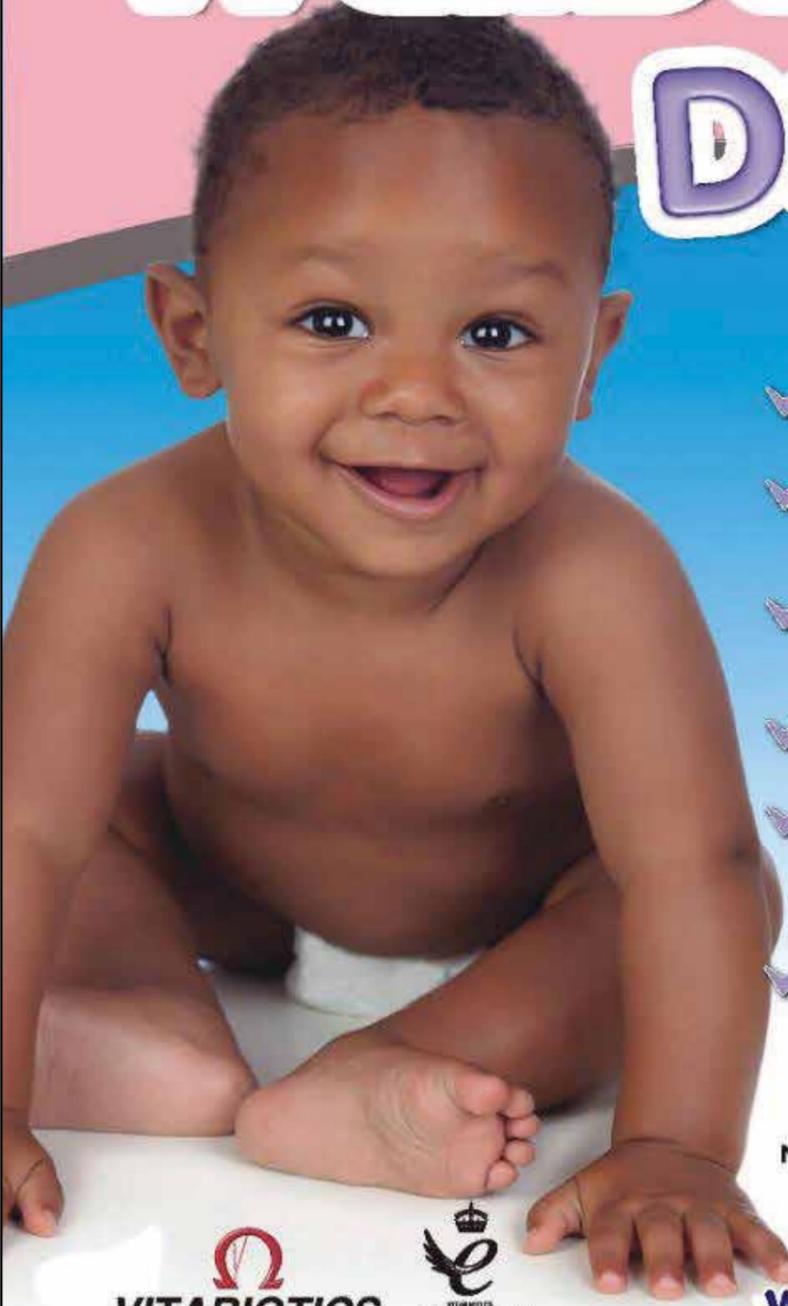
### Treatment for HIV

We've come a long way from the days when diagnosis with HIV equalled a death sentence. Today, there are a variety of treatments that, when used in combination,

continued on page 15

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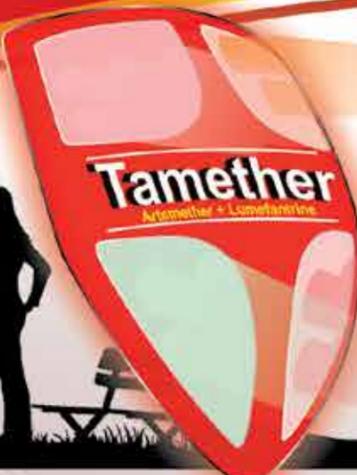
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## Eliminating HIV/AIDS, STDs through communal collaboration

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can significantly slow down and, in some cases, stop altogether, the progression of HIV infection.

After HIV infection is confirmed, your doctor will start you on a drug regimen, consisting of several drugs. Combinations of different types of anti-HIV drugs sometimes are called HAART, for highly-active antiretroviral therapy (HIV is a kind of virus called a retrovirus).

Taking HAART therapy is very manageable yet isn't necessarily easy. These drugs must be taken at the right time, every single day. Also, a range of side effects may occur, including: diarrhoea, nausea, rash, vivid dreams, or abnormal distribution of body fat. And, especially if medications are taken incorrectly or inconsistently, the virus can mutate, or change, into a strain resistant to treatment.

The good news is that there are now several HIV medications that are only taken once a day. If there is resistant virus, however, these may not work and other medication options must be used.

If your disease has progressed to AIDS, your treatment may also include drugs to combat and prevent certain infections.

Your doctor can monitor how well your HIV treatment is working by measuring the amount of HIV in your blood (also called the viral load.) The goal of treatment is to get the viral load undetectable on labs tests; ideally less than 20 copies. This does not mean the virus is gone or cured, it means the medication is working and must be continued.

### Prevention of HIV

The best way to protect yourself



Photo credit: © depositphotos.com | galinafrizaa

from HIV is to avoid activities that put you at risk. There's no way to tell by looking at someone if he or she has HIV. Always protect yourself.

Use latex condoms (rubbers) whenever you have any type of sex (vaginal, anal, or oral).

Don't use condoms made from animal products.

Use water-based lubricants. Oil-based lubricants can weaken condoms.

Never share needles to take drugs.

Avoid getting drunk or high. People who are drunk or high may be less likely to protect themselves.

You can help prolong your life by taking good care of yourself and developing a good relationship with an experienced doctor specialising in HIV and AIDS. Also, be consistent about taking your HIV medications as prescribed and getting regular lab work to catch any problems early.

What is the outlook for someone with HIV or AIDS?

It depends on if that person is on treatment and how the virus responds to early treatment. When treatment fails to decrease the replication of the virus, the effects can become life-threatening, and the infection can progress to AIDS.

Even with treatment, some people seem to naturally experience a

more rapid course towards AIDS. However, the majority of HIV patients who receive appropriate treatment do well and live healthy lives for years.

There is currently no cure for HIV/AIDS. But there are treatments for people living with HIV/AIDS.

If you have HIV/AIDS, you can take combinations of medicines called "cocktails." The drug cocktails are designed to strengthen the immune system to keep HIV from developing into AIDS or to relieve AIDS symptoms. These drugs are often very expensive, may have serious and very uncomfortable side effects, and may not be available to everyone. They only work for some people and may only work for limited periods of time.

But thanks to "cocktails" for the immune system and improved therapies for the symptoms of AIDS, people are now able to live

with HIV/AIDS for many years. New treatments and research may help people live even longer.

### Safer Sex and HIV

Some kinds of sex play are "safer" because they have lower risk of infection than others. "Safer-sex" activities are those we choose to lower our risk of exchanging blood, semen, or vaginal fluids — the body fluids most likely to spread HIV. Each of us must decide what risks we will take for sexual pleasure.

Here are some common sexual behaviours grouped according to risk.

### HIGH RISK

Millions of reported HIV infections are due to these behaviours

vaginal intercourse without a condom

anal intercourse without a condom

Talk with your healthcare provider about testing and treatment for STDs. Women and men with open sores from herpes and other infections get HIV more easily than other people.

Tests are available from most physicians, hospitals, and health clinics. Local, state, and federal health departments offer free testing. You can also buy an HIV home test kit.

HIV tests are a normal part of healthcare. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, talk with a health care provider about testing. Talking about what risks you've taken can help you decide whether testing is right for you.

### Steps to take after testing positive to HIV/AIDS

Consult a healthcare provider who has experience treating HIV/AIDS.

continued on page 17

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### "Abbreviated Product Information"

#### Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12

**DESCRIPTION:** Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 is a comprehensive blood building tonic and each 5 ml contains Ferric ammonium citrate (equivalent to 41 mg of elemental iron), Folic acid, Vitamin B12 for rapid and optimum formation of healthy red blood cells.

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

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

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

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

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

Please refer to the product insert for more information.

### "Abbreviated Product Information"

#### Ranferon<sup>®</sup>-12 Capsules

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

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

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

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

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

**DRUG INTERACTIONS:** Compounds containing calcium, magnesium, antacids and mineral supplements, carbonates, oxalates, phosphates, egg, coffee, tea or whole grain breads, cereals, tetracyclines may impair the absorption of iron. Iron salts can also decrease the bioavailability of drugs like bisphosphonates, entacapone, fluoroquinolones, levodopa, methylidopa, mycophenolate mofetil, etidronate, levothyroxine. Suitable interval is advised.

**ADVERSE EFFECTS:** It may cause gastrointestinal irritation and abdominal pain with nausea and vomiting, blackening of faeces. Rarely allergic reactions or rash may occur. Please refer to the product insert for more information.

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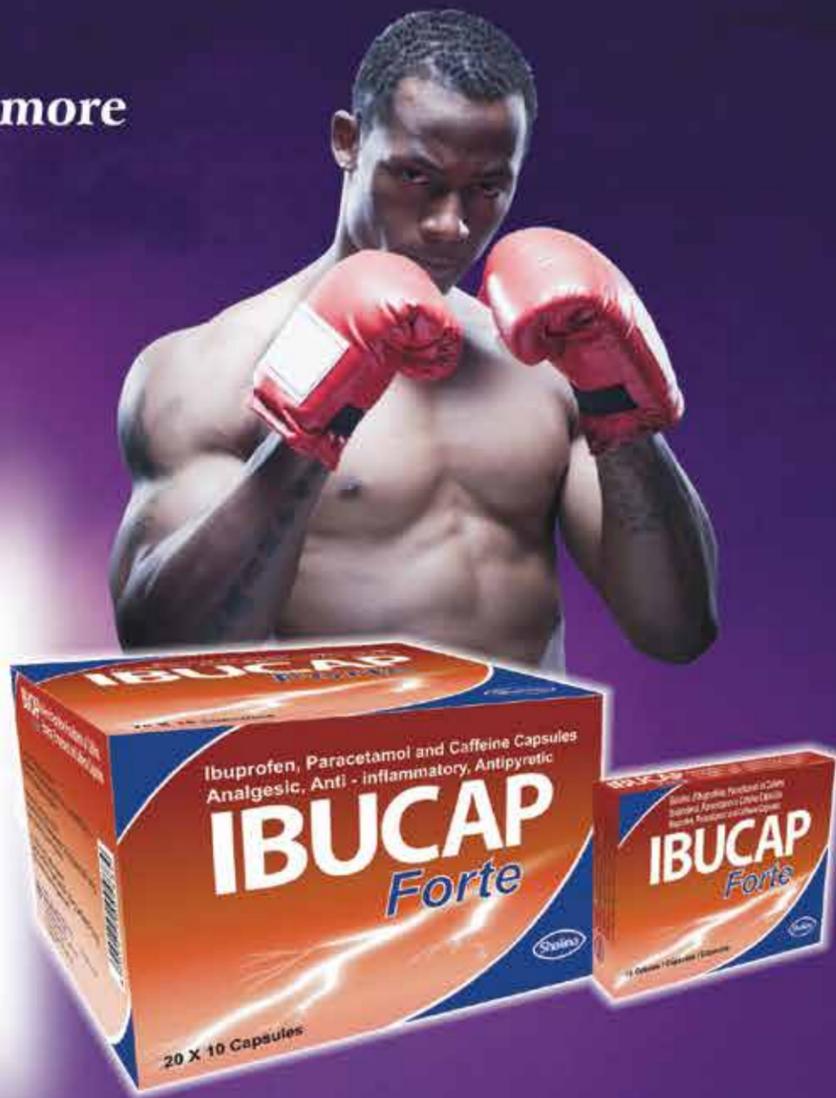
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## Eliminating HIV/AIDS, STDs through communal collaboration

continued from page 15

Inform sex partner(s) who may also be infected.

Protect your sex partner(s) from HIV by following safer sex guidelines.

Do not share needles or "works."

Get psychological support with a therapist and/or join a support group for people with HIV/AIDS.

Get information and social and legal support from an HIV/AIDS service organisation.

Don't share your HIV status with people who do not need to know. People with HIV may still face discrimination. Only tell people you can count on for support.

Maintain a strong immune system with regular medical checkups and a healthy lifestyle.

Eat well.

Get enough rest and exercise.

Avoid illegal or recreational drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.

Learn how to manage stress effectively.

Consider using medicines that may slow the progress of the infection.

### HIV/AIDS and pregnancy

If you have HIV and are pregnant, consult a healthcare provider who knows about HIV disease. Without treatment, about 25 out of 100 babies born to women with HIV are also infected. However, the use of HIV medicines, cesarean delivery, and refraining from breastfeeding can reduce the risk of transmission to less than 2 out of 100.

### Importance of PrEP for prevention of HIV

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a way to help prevent HIV by taking a pill every day. It reduces your risk of getting infected. When PrEP is combined with condoms and other prevention methods it works even better. PrEP may not work if you skip doses. Even if used correctly, there's no guarantee that PrEP will work.

PrEP is only used for people who are at very high risk for HIV through sex or IV drug use. PrEP might be right for you if

your partner is HIV-positive  
your partner is HIV-negative  
and either you or your partner has sex with someone whose HIV status isn't known

you're a gay or bisexual man who has had anal sex without a condom or been told you have an STD in the past 6 months

you're a heterosexual man or woman who doesn't use condoms every time you have sex with people who inject drugs or have bisexual male partners

you have injected drugs in the past six months and have shared needles or been in drug treatment for IV drug use in the past six months.

Talk with your doctor or nurse about whether or not PrEP might be good for you. They can tell you more about how it works and what you can expect while taking it.

### Essence of PEP in preventing HIV

PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) is a way to prevent HIV after being exposed to it. With PEP, you take anti-HIV medicines as soon as possible after you may have been exposed to HIV to try to reduce your chance of becoming HIV positive. This could happen because of a sexual assault, or having unprotected sex with someone who has HIV, or sharing needles with someone who has HIV.

One or more medicines are



taken several times a day for at least 28 days. The medicines work by keeping HIV from spreading through your body. Even if taken correctly, there's no guarantee that taking PEP will work.

It should only be used rarely, right after a possible exposure. Your doctor or nurse will help decide if PEP is right for you, depending on what happened, when it happened, and what you know about the HIV status of the person whose blood or body fluids you were exposed to.

### HIV and STDs

STDs are sexually transmitted diseases. This means they are most often – but not exclusively – spread by sexual intercourse. HIV, chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhoea, some forms of hepatitis, syphilis, and trichomoniasis are STDs.

STDs used to be called venereal diseases or VD. They are among the most common contagious diseases. STDs are serious illnesses that require treatment. Some STDs, such as HIV, cannot be cured and can be deadly. By learning more about STDs, you can learn ways to protect yourself.

You can get a STD from vaginal, anal, or oral sex. You can also be infected with trichomoniasis through contact with damp or moist objects such as towels, wet clothing, or toilet seats, although it is more commonly spread by sexual contact. You are at high risk if:

You have more than one sex partner

You have sex with someone who has had many partners

You don't use a condom when having sex

You share needles when injecting intravenous drugs

You trade sex for money or drugs

HIV and herpes are chronic conditions that can be managed but not cured. Hepatitis B also may become chronic but can be managed. You may not realise you have certain STDs until you have damaged your reproductive organs (rendering you infertile), your vision, your heart, or other organs. Having an STD may weaken the immune system, leaving you more vulnerable to other infections. Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is a complication of gonorrhoea and chlamydia that can leave women unable to have children. It can even kill you. If you pass an STD to your newborn child, the baby may suffer permanent harm or death.

### Causes of STDs

STDs include just about every kind of infection. Bacterial STDs include chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis. Viral STDs include HIV,

genital herpes, genital warts (HPV), and hepatitis B. Trichomoniasis is caused by a parasite.

The germs that cause STDs hide in semen, blood, vaginal secretions, and sometimes saliva. Most of the organisms are spread by vaginal, anal, or oral sex, but some, such as those that cause genital herpes and genital warts, may be spread through skin contact. You can get hepatitis B by sharing personal items, such as toothbrushes or razors, with someone who has it.

### Symptoms of STDs

Sometimes, there are no symptoms of STDs. If symptoms are present, they may include one or more of the following:

Bumps, sores, or warts near the mouth, anus, penis, or vagina.

Swelling or redness near the penis or vagina.

Skin rash.

Painful urination.

Weight loss, loose stools, night sweats.

Aches, pains, fever, and chills.

Yellowing of the skin (jaundice).

Discharge from the penis or vagina. Vaginal discharge may have an odour.

Bleeding from the vagina other than during a monthly period.

Painful sex.

Severe itching near the penis or vagina.

Transmission of STDs to new born

During early prenatal care, most women undergo tests to determine whether or not they have any STDs. Some STDs can be transmitted to the foetus during pregnancy and others may be transmitted during the birth process if a woman has a STD at that time. If you suspect that a partner is having sex with others, talk with your doctor about your risks for STDs and how to reduce the chances of passing them to your baby.

### STDs and pregnancy

Chlamydia can impair a woman's ability to become pregnant. This is especially true if she has the infection for a long time or multiple times and her reproductive organs become damaged. Other STDs can also lead to infertility if they are left untreated. If Chlamydia or any other STD is treated early, it is less likely that it will affect your ability to get pregnant later on. This is one of the reasons it is important to get tested for STDs on a regular basis and get any infection treated as soon as possible.

However, having a STD does not automatically cause infertility, so anyone wishing to avoid pregnancy should use reliable birth control even if they've had an STD in the past.

### Management of STD

First off, don't panic. You should go see a medical provider and get

tested right away. It's also a good idea to hold off on having sexual contact with anyone until you know for sure what is going on and whether or not you have a STD.

People with multiple sexual partners, those who think they may have been exposed, those who've had unprotected sex with a partner whose health status was unknown, or anyone who has symptoms of an STD should definitely get tested. It's the first crucial step on the road to proper treatment.

Talk to your doctor. He or she can examine you and perform tests to determine if you have an STD.

Treatment can:

Cure many STDs

Lessen the symptoms of STDs

Make it less likely that you will spread the disease

Help you to get healthy and stay healthy

### Many STDs are treated with antibiotics

If you are given an antibiotic to treat an STD, it's important that you take the entire drug, even if the symptoms go away. Also, never take someone else's medicine to treat your illness. By doing so, you may make it more difficult to diagnose and treat the infection. Likewise, you should not share your medicine with others. Some doctors, however, may provide additional antibiotics to be given to your partner so that you can be treated at the same time.

### Prevention of STDs

Here are some basic steps that you can take to protect yourself from STDs:

Consider that not having sex or sexual relations (abstinence) is the only sure way to prevent STDs.

Use a latex condom every time you have sex. (If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water-based.)

Limit your number of sexual partners. The more partners you have, the more likely you are to catch an STD.

Practice monogamy. This means having sex with only one person. That person must also have sex with only you to reduce your risk.

Choose your sex partners with care. Don't have sex with someone whom you suspect may have an STD. And keep in mind that you can't always tell by looking if your partner has an STD.

Get checked for STDs. Don't risk giving the infection to someone else.

Don't use alcohol or drugs before you have sex. You may be less likely to use a condom if you are drunk or high.

Know the signs and symptoms of STDs. Look for them in yourself and your sex partners.

Learn about STDs. The more you know, the better you can protect yourself.

If you have an STD, stop having sex until you see a doctor and are treated.

Follow your doctor's instructions for treatment.

Use condoms whenever you have sex, especially with new partners.

Don't resume having sex unless your doctor says it's okay.

Return to your doctor to get rechecked.

Be sure your sex partner or partners also are treated.

Reports compiled by Temitope Obayendo with additional materials from: UNAIDS; Nigerian National HIV/AIDS Indicator and Impact Survey (NAIIS) March 2019; Planned Parenthood Organisation; WebMD Medical Reference; nigeriahivinfo.com and Premium Times.

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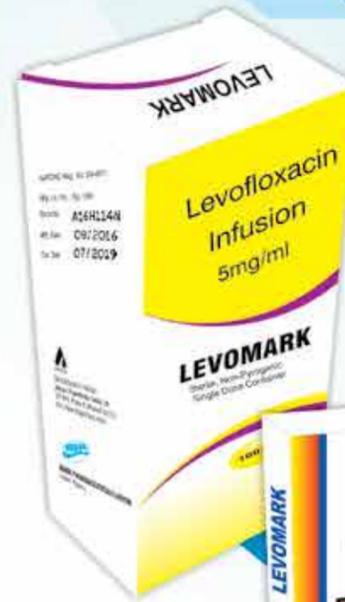
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# HealthPlus bags PSN Presidential Award for ethical practice

**H**ealthPlus Pharmacy has bagged the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Presidential Award for practising pharmacy in the most ethical manner, making it the first pharmacy in the industry to win the prestigious award.

The award presentation to the company took place during the closing banquet of the 92nd Annual National Conference of the PSN, tagged Crocodile City 2019, held in Kaduna on 8 November.

Presenting the award, PSN President, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam I. Ohuabunwa, commended HealthPlus for constantly raising the bar in pharmacy practice in Nigeria, adding that the award was in line with PSN's objective of maintaining a high standard of professional ethics and discipline in Nigeria.

PSN, he said, remained the pivot organisation responsible for the value-added services that pharmacists and Pharmacy bring to healthcare and national development.

Speaking after receiving the award plaque from the PSN helmsman, Pharm. Foluke Akinniranye, chief retail operations officer, HealthPlus Limited, said: "The Board and Management of HealthPlus Limited are delighted to receive the first-ever PSN Presidential Award for practising pharmacy in the most ethical manner. The



**L-R: Pharm. Foluke Akinniranye, chief retail operations officer, HealthPlus Limited; Pharm. (Mazi) Sam I. Ohuabunwa, president, PSN; Pharm. Toyin Arifayan, head, School of Pharmacy, HealthPlus Limited; Pharm. Valentine Ezeanochikwa, pharmacy manager, HealthPlus Limited receiving (PSN) presidential award for practising pharmacy in the most ethical manner at the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Conference held in Kaduna, Kaduna State, recently.**

award reflects our sustained commitment to our shared values and also serves as further motivation to us as we continue to go above and beyond in providing Nigerians with safe, quality and convenient access to medicines and related health

products.

"We thank the PSN President, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa and the leadership of PSN for acknowledging HealthPlus' efforts and contributions to healthcare in Nigeria. We also appreciate all members of staff for their

dedication, professionalism and commitment to the mission and vision of HealthPlus Limited."

HealthPlus, she said, is Nigeria's first integrative pharmacy and fastest growing pharmacy in West Africa with a mission to help people achieve optimum health and vitality.

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# AHAPN commends NAFDAC's fight against fake medicines

By Yusuff Moshood

The leadership of the Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN) has praised Prof. Moji Adeyeye, director general of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) for the various achievements of the agency in the fight against fake, adulterated and counterfeit medicines that the efforts of the agency had gone a long way to safeguard the lives of Nigerians.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the NAFDAC head office in Isolo, Lagos, Dr Kingsley Chiedu Amibor, national chairman, AHAPN who led a delegation of the national executive committee of the association to pay the visit, also commended the NAFDAC DG for her commitment to fighting the menace of drugs and substance abuse which he said had assumed a monstrous dimension in recent times and continued to take its tolls on the health and economy of the nation.

The AHAPN helmsman told the NAFDAC leadership that members of his group had been actively involved in the fight against drug and substance abuse in Nigeria, adding that AHAPN had a dedicated Committee on Drug and Substance Abuse that was fully engaged in the societal collaboration against drug and substance abuse and determined to reduce the scourge to the barest minimum.

The AHAPN leader also informed the NAFDAC head that pharmacists working with the agency were automatic members of his group and were therefore expected to participate in all AHAPN organised activities and



The NAHAP executives in a group photograph with NAFDAC leadership during the courtesy visit.

functions. He implored the DG to encourage pharmacists working with NAFDAC to begin to identify with the activities of AHAPN.

Responding, the NAFDAC DG commended the AHAPN for its efforts against drug and substance abuse, noting that professionals and indeed all Nigerians must work together to fight the menace.

Adeyeye reiterated the commitment of NAFDAC to continue the fight against falsified drugs and assured the AHAPN leadership that she would encourage pharmacists working

with NAFDAC to participate in the association's activities.

The DG further urged all Nigerians to join hands with the agency to rid the nation of the menace of substandard drugs, noting that all citizens must take health matters seriously and not leave it for government or regulatory agencies alone.

Adeyeye also urged members of AHAPN to become key partners of NAFDAC as it intensifies efforts to end unethical drug distribution in the country, adding that they had to be at forefront of discouraging

open drug markets patronage.

"So let us become evangelists and tell our colleagues that we took an oath to protect public health and we must fight against falsified drugs.

"We all have to join hands and fight against this evil as anybody can become a patient. We should urge even the churches and mosques to get involved. We cannot do too much on this issue," she said. The highlight of the visit was the presentation of excellent leadership award to the DG NAFDAC by AHAPN.

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# Sanofi, May & Baker sign local contract manufacturing agreement

## - Ohuabunwa, Adeyeye, Soremekun hail initiative

By Yusuff Moshood

Global pharmaceutical giant, Sanofi, has signed a contract manufacturing agreement with leading Nigerian pharmaceutical manufacturer, May & Baker Plc. Under the terms of the agreement, May & Baker will henceforth manufacture some of Sanofi's products hitherto imported into Nigeria.

Speaking during the official contract signing ceremony held at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja GRA, Lagos, and chaired by Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, president, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Pharm. Folake Odediran, general manager & country chair, Sanofi Nigeria-Ghana, said that the partnership with May & Baker was a reflection of Sanofi's commitment to Nigeria and the company's long-term view to continually serve the healthcare needs of the citizens.

She noted that the policy direction set by the federal government was to assure national drug security through self-sufficiency in supply of essential medicines, adding that to achieve this, the government had chosen the noble path of building local capability and expertise for sustainable growth.

Sanofi, Odediran said, understands that local sourcing of essential medicines is central to achieving government's objectives, adding that the company remains committed to this noble aspiration.

The formal signing of the manufacturing agreement with May & Baker, she said, is a proof of Sanofi's commitment to localisation, noting that the company will continue to contribute its quota towards availability of very efficacious, high-quality made-in-Nigeria medicines.

Odediran opined further that building a strategic partnership with May & Baker Nigeria Plc to support local manufacturing was based on May & Baker's rich history of producing high quality medicines in Nigeria, adding that the agreement had been preceded by rigorous due-diligence exercise and successful compliance outcomes in line with local laws and Sanofi's global policies.

Also speaking at the event, Pharm. Nnamdi Okafor, managing director/CEO, May & Baker Plc, said that the partnership between the two companies was significant for the health sector and the Nigerian nation, disclosing that there had been a long history and relationship between May & Baker and Sanofi.

Okafor, while expressing happiness with the contract-signing ceremony, stated that the journey of the partnership and collaboration with Sanofi started three years ago when May & Baker started manufacturing two products for Sanofi. He said that with the agreement, two more products of Sanofi will now be manufactured by his company through contract manufacturing.

The May & Baker boss said that the collaboration between the two companies is a partnership of quality, noting that May & Baker's factory, set up in 2011, is not just the biggest in West Africa but in the whole of Africa.

He disclosed further that out of the pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities granted the WHO certification in 2014 in Nigeria, the May & Baker's Pharma Centre is not just still standing but actually waxing stronger.



L-R: Pharm. Nnamdi Okafor, managing director/CEO, May&Baker Plc; Pharm. Folake Odeniran, general manager/country chair, Sanofi Nigeria-Ghana and Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, president, PSN, during the event.



L-R: Pharm. Nnamdi Okafor, managing director/CEO, May&Baker Plc; Pharm. Folake Odeniran, general manager/country chair, Sanofi Nigeria-Ghana; Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, president, PSN; and Dr Monica Eimunjeze, director of registration and regulatory affairs, NAFDAC after the signing of the contract agreement.

Okafor stated further that making the Pharma Centre available to Sanofi, a company that is quality-conscious was great and urged other companies to follow the footsteps of Sanofi and take advantage of the opportunity and capacity available at Pharma Centre to manufacture their drugs, locally instead of importing.

Earlier in his welcome address, the chairman of the occasion, Mazi Ohuabunwa said he was quite joyful that the song of local manufacturing which he had been singing for a long time was finally being heard, noting that he had always posited that local manufacturing of pharmaceuticals was the only way to ensure drug security for the nation.

He said while it may be difficult to produce all the medicines needed by the nation, the starting

point and a target already set was to produce 50 per cent of the nation's drug needs, adding that by having more of such collaborations, as the one between Sanofi and May & Baker, a company with quality pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, it will make achieving the goal easier.

The special guest of honour, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, director general of NAFDAC, who was represented by Dr Monica Eimunjeze, said that the Agency was quite pleased and proud of the collaboration for local drug manufacturing by Snofi and May & Baker, adding that national drug security would be impossible without strengthening local drug manufacturing.

She said that NAFDAC hoped that the partnership between the two reputable companies would be the beginning of many

of such collaboration in the pharmaceutical industry, noting that the agency would continue to build confidence in regulation which would further help build confidence in regulated products.

She urged all stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry to begin to look inward and embrace innovative ideas like partnership to ensure a better future for the pharmaceutical and health sector.

In his goodwill message at the occasion, Mr Femi Soremekun, managing director/CEO, Biofem Group, and chairman of Nigerian Representative of Overseas Pharmaceutical Manufacturers (NIROPHARM), congratulated Sanofi and May & Baker for working together to boost local drug manufacturing, noting that the partnership was good for the nation's pharmaceutical sector.

# The truth about caffeine: How it really affects your brain and body

By Adam Sinicki

It seems that the vast majority of the earth's population – myself included – have been content to consume large quantities of a neuroactive drug without really knowing what it's doing or how it works. All of us are hooked, to the extent that we often roll out of bed experiencing withdrawal and can't function until we get it. It sounds like something out of science fiction, but in fact it's reality: the vast proportion of us rely on a morning cup of coffee simply to motivate us out of bed and we're happy to continue this pattern despite not really knowing that much about how it causes the effects we're all so dependent on.

I love coffee and tea and that makes it hard for me to be objective about these matters. Still though, looking at the evidence it appears that caffeine may have a number of negative effects on the brain and

also the body – even leading to weight gain.

Below is a very straightforward, honest and detailed explanation of how caffeine affects the brain and body. As you can see there are some definite advantages as it can help you to get through a tired hour at work and to increase attention. It can aid learning and memory and it may even facilitate brain plasticity. At the same time though, it also ramps up your body artificially which can lead to exhaustion and it can increase cortisol and insulin levels too. Read on and come to your own conclusions as to what place caffeine should have in your life.

## Caffeine and adenosine

Before we can understand how caffeine works, we first need to get acquainted with a substance called adenosine. Adenosine is a 'purine nucleoside' that is pretty

important for us humans. It is used in energy transfer throughout the body (in the nucleotide ATP – adenosine triphosphate where breaking bonds between adenosine molecules releases energy) and is also important for signal transduction. On top of all that it is also a vasodilator, meaning that it widens the blood vessels allowing more blood, oxygen and nutrients to get around the body.

In the brain this stuff acts as a neuromodulator which is used to promote sleep and reduce arousal. Throughout the day we produce more and more of this adenosine and as this is picked up by the adenosine receptors of our neurons, it tells the brain to slow down and to fire the old neurons a little less as you wind up ready for bed. This is probably quite an important function, because sleep allows your brain to cement what you've learned during the day

while making repairs.

The role of caffeine is to block the adenosine 'A1' receptors (which it does because it's able to fit into them by mimicking adenosine) thereby meaning that the adenosine fails to be effective. Caffeine is an A1 antagonist.

## Caffeine and neurotransmitters

With the A1 antagonists blocked by caffeine, this then increases the activity of the neurons in the brain. In turn the brain thinks something important must be happening, and thus it increases production of two neurotransmitters which act as stimulants themselves and aid with attention and learning. These are dopamine and glutamate, so let's take a little look at what each of them does.

- **Glutamate:** Glutamate is the main 'excitatory' neurotransmitter in the brain. It plays a role in the long-term potentiation (a persisting stronger signal between two neurons as a result of simultaneous stimulation – one of the components of neuroplasticity) of the brain and is important for memory as a result. This may be why caffeine can aid learning.

- **Dopamine:** Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in motivation and reward. Our brain releases dopamine when we do something that's 'good for us' and this helps with learning too and in particular the reinforcement of particular behaviours. Note though that the connection between dopamine and reward is actually quite complicated and a lack of dopamine doesn't mean you won't enjoy things – it just helps to cement the associate between action and a reward. Interestingly though, dopamine also gets released when you have a 'near miss', reinforcing behaviours that almost worked last time.

All this reward stuff is due to the action of dopamine in a specific area of the brain (the mesolimbic pathway) where the D2 receptors are located. D2 receptors are affected by several stimulants and are also linked with psychosis – though caffeine is unlikely to trigger any psychotic bouts!

Dopamine has many other roles beyond this though, which include directing attention and also regulating movement. It even stimulates the production of breast milk.

## Caffeine and adrenaline

Caffeine also stimulates the release of adrenaline. This is the 'fight or flight' hormone that gets released whenever we're scared, excited or stressed. Its job is to make us a little more physically able and works to enhance our focus (giving us almost a 'tunnel vision'), to increase heart rate thereby delivering more blood and oxygen to the muscles, and to shut down/slow down the function of other organs. It appears that the adrenal gland is stimulated to fire as a response to the increased firing of neurons, which in turn is caused by the blocking of adenosine (ACTH – adrenocorticotrophic hormone may play a role).

Source: [www.healthguidance.org](http://www.healthguidance.org)



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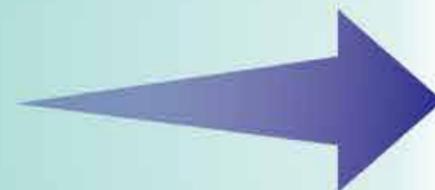


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# Change your thoughts, change your life

By Pharm. Sesan Kareem



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

**O**ur thoughts create our reality. Thoughts lead on to purposes, purposes go forth into action, actions form habits, habits decide character, and character fixes our destiny. To change your external conditions you must first change your inner thoughts.

Thought is the foundation of all life experiences. For things to change for you, you must change within. For your life to progress, you must fill your heart with thoughts of success, greatness and joy.

Below are three tips to improve on your thoughts

**1. Understand what shapes your results:** You are a spiritual being that uses intellect and lives in a physical body. As a spiritual being, your creative power is in your thoughts. You use thoughts to create idea in your intellect which determines your results in your physical world. Your ability to think of something and turn it to reality is what makes you the vicegerent of the earth. Your ability to think is what separates you from all other creatures and empowers you to create, build and make things happen. Therefore, for you to experience anything in the physical world, you must first experience it in your subconscious mind.

Let me make this more practical for you. For you to eat a particular food, you must first think about the food; for

you to put on a particular outfit, you must first think and decide which one of your outfits to wear out of the various clothes in your wardrobe. My point is, your everyday life experience is happening first within you before expressing itself in the physical form.

If everyday experiences like eating and dressing are shaped by your thoughts, then all other results in your life right now are products of your previous thinking and conditioning. To change your results, you must change your thoughts. For you to change your thoughts, you must understand how your thoughts shape your results. Honestly, there is real power within you and the earlier you are conscious of this phenomenon the better your ability to create your reality.

**2. You become what you think most of the time.** A lot of scholars, strategists and life coaches have shared various principles, strategies and tactics about how to live a good life. While they all have different approaches to success and happiness, they all agree on the fact that man becomes what he thinks most of the time. I

f your heart is filled with thoughts of peace most of the time, your mind will develop the idea of serenity and your body will be calm and relaxed. On the flip side, if your heart is

filled with fear, your mind will develop the idea of stress and your body will become rigid. Your dominant thoughts affect your state. Your state affects your result.

Think about what you want most of the time and things will happen for you. Focus your thoughts most of the time on your problems or challenges and you keep experiencing more problems or challenges. Focus your thoughts on solutions and you keep finding innovative ways to get results. To achieve lasting change in any area of your life, you must always focus your thoughts on what you want, regardless of the conditions surrounding you proving otherwise.

**3. Fill your mind with wonderful thoughts:** Think of success, joy, peace, abundance and greatness. Fill your mind with beautiful aspects of life. Think positively and progressively. Think creatively and consciously. Let your thoughts be filled with possibilities, progress and peace. Back your positive thoughts with faith, action, gratitude and expectancy. Life gives us what we expect. When you strive hard for result with faith, gratitude and expectation, life has a strange way of making the impossible possible for you.

You can move your life to a fast track of success, happiness

and peace, if you understand what shapes your results, think of what you want most of the time and filled your mind with thoughts of possibilities because when you change the thoughts in your heart you will change your condition for better.

**ACTION PLAN:** Create time to study how your thoughts shape your reality. Be conscious of your dominant thoughts and how they affect your action and reaction. If you identify any negative thought, quickly replace it with a positive thought.

**AFFIRMATION:** I think positively, differently, deeply and constructively. I am blessed and highly favoured.

*Sesan Kareem is a life coach and management consultant. He inspires ordinary people to do extraordinary things. He helps organisations to have a fast tempo for action and a bias for results.*

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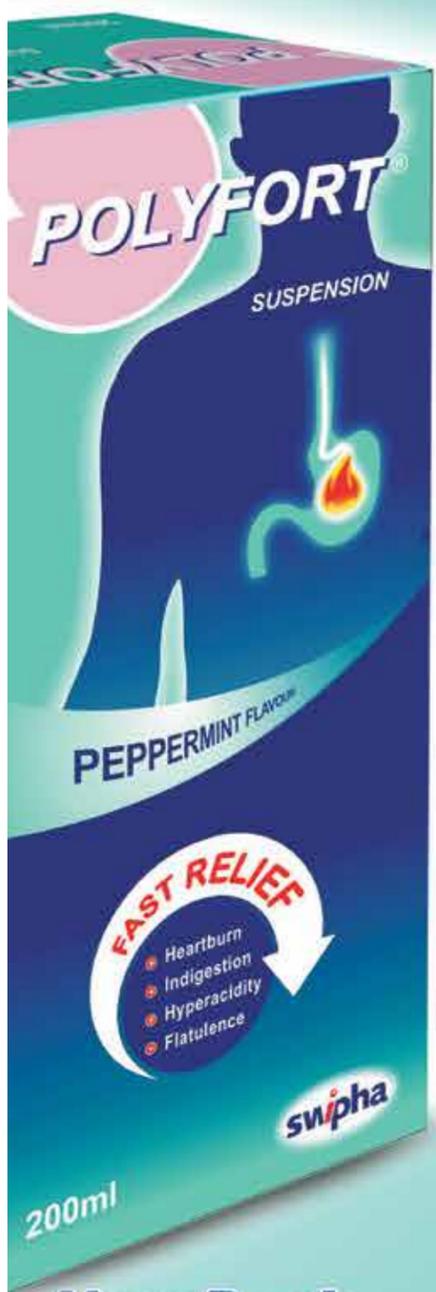
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# Ferring launches Minirin Melts to curb kids' bedwetting

By Yusuff Moshood

**F**erring Pharmaceuticals has launched a new drug, Minirin Melt (Desmopressin oral Lyophilisate) for the treatment of enuresis (bedwetting) in children.

The ceremony, which was held recently at Protea Hotel, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos and chaired by Professor Augustine Isikhuemen, president of Paediatric Association of Nigeria, had several physicians from all over the country in attendance.

At the launch of the new medication, two eminent physicians, Prof. Johan Vande Walle from Ghent University, Belgium, and Dr Chris Esezobor, an associate professor of paediatrics and paediatric nephrology, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, presented educative papers on "Treatment optimisation in children with monosymptomatic nocturnal enuresis: The role of Minirin Melt" and "Management of enuresis in Nigeria) Opportunities and challenges".

Speaking with **Pharmanews** at the event, Pharm. Yemi Aladeniyi, country manager for Ferring Pharmaceuticals, reaffirmed the company's purpose in helping people live better lives and also building healthier families, noting that



**L-R: Dr Chris Esezobor, associate professor of paediatrics and paediatric nephrology; Rowa'a Hijazi, strategic brand leader for Minirin; Prof Johan Vande Walle, paediatric nephrologist from Ghent University, Belgium; Prof Augustine Isikhuemen, president of Paediatric Association of Nigeria; Pharm. Yemi Aladeniyi, country manager, Ferring Pharmaceuticals and Godfrey Ayoka, promotional manager, SSA, Ferring, during the event.**

this is the reason the company is looking for ways to take care of children, as it is meeting the needs of parents.

He stated that bedwetting is a major problem that is hardly talked about and usually mishandled, adding that research had shown that the ways the condition was being handled was having serious

negative impacts on children.

He stated further that Ferring was introducing Minirin Melt 60/120 into the Nigerian market because the company believed it would be of great benefit to healthcare professionals treating enuresis, and families who have children with the condition.

Pharm. Aladeniyi however

stressed that there is an urgent need to educate the general public about the condition and create awareness that bedwetting is a medical condition that can be properly treated, disclosing that the global health authorities have realised the need to amplify public awareness about the condition by introducing World Bedwetting Day which was first marked in 2015 and was also celebrated on 28 May 2019.

The World Bedwetting Day, he said, is a great avenue to create

awareness that bedwetting is a disease that can and should be treated, noting that the more people become aware that something can be done, the more there will be reduction in crude methods of dealing with the condition by parents and the attendants negative effects of such negative treatments on children.

## FG, regulatory agencies must encourage local pharma manufacturers, says Afon

- As Afonchies Pharma unveil new outlet in Ajah

By Adebayo Oladejo

**I**f Nigeria is to reduce its overdependence on foreign medicines, the federal government and its relevant agencies like the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) must improve their relationship with genuine local manufacturers by reducing the challenges that cause delays in registration processes, which have become a great source of frustration and discouragement.

This charge was given by the managing director, Afonchies Pharma Nigeria Limited, Pharm. Adebayo Afon, while speaking at a "Free Diabetes Screening" programme, organised by the company to commemorate this year's World Diabetes Day.

In his address at the event, which was also used to unveil the company's new ultra-modern outlet at 3, Hitech Road, Lagos Business District (LBS) Area, Sangotedo, Lagos State, Afon remarked that doing pharmacy business in Nigeria is tough because of the stifling operating environment.

He added that if the government can solve the problem of poor power supply and poor regulation alone, it would be of great help to manufacturers.

Speaking further at the low-key event, Afon stated that the unveiling of the new outlet, which is its 11th branch office, had opened a new page in the history of retail pharmacy in the area, adding that today's business world is undergoing disruptive technological advancement and Afonchies would be proactive in



this regard.

On what prompted the decision of the company to open the new outlet, its second in the Sangotedo axis, the Afonchies boss said the company was determined to continue to contribute to availability of affordable quality medicines for Nigerians, adding that this informed its choice of ensuring that kits for free screening were made available at every of the company's branches.

Speaking further, Afon explained that the free medical screening and awareness was also

organised to have an impact in the community where his pharmacies were located and to celebrate this year's World Diabetes Day, which aimed at raising public awareness and understanding of diabetes as one of the common diseases that affect millions of people worldwide.

According to him, "World Diabetes Day was first introduced in 1991 and founded by both the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organisation in reaction to the rise in cases of diabetes worldwide. It was decided to choose a day of the

year to raise awareness of diabetes and related causes and the day chosen was the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, a medical scientist who co-discovered insulin and was the first person to use it on humans."

In her submission, the pharmacist in-charge of Afonchies Pharma, Pharm (Dr) Angela Oyuonvo Evbodi, described the unveiling as part of the company's expansion policy, adding that the success was achieved through efficient and innovative delivery of quality products and services that benefit the general public. She added that the company remains passionate in achieving the its set vision.

While thanking Afonchies for organising the screening, one of the benefactors, Mrs Olusola

Akinyele, expressed happiness that such a programme could be organised in the community, saying if other organisations around could replicate the good gesture, life would be good for all in the community and beyond.

Also speaking, another beneficiary, Mr Yaya Aminu, a local security man, commended Afonchies for the programme, while urging the company to extend the exercise beyond the World Diabetes Day period.

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## Garden egg: The amazing benefits

Pharm. Ngozika Okoye  
MSc, MPH, FPCPharm  
(Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency)

**G**arden egg is called *igba* in Yoruba, *afufa* or *anyara* in Igbo, and *ganyen gauta* in Hausa. Its botanical name is *Solanum melongena* (Fam: Solanaceae).

Also known as eggplant, garden egg comes in a range of colours, shapes, and sizes. They vary from small and oblong to long and thin, and from shades of purple to white and green.

**Constituents:** Garden egg is a good source of dietary fibre, as well as other mineral and vitamins such as vitamin B1, potassium, folate, manganese, magnesium, Vitamin B6, niacin, vitamin K, vitamin C and copper. It also contains alkaloids.

**Preparations:** The fruit and the leaves can be eaten raw alone, with groundnut or made as a sauce for eating boiled yam or plantain. Cooking methods include steaming, roasting, boiling, baking, or frying, but steaming appears to preserve the antioxidant levels most effectively.

**Pharmacological actions and medicinal uses:** The anthocyanins and chlorogenic acid in garden egg may protect heart health, function as antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory compounds.

Another chemical in garden egg, nasunin, may help improve blood flow to the brain. In a study, an increased intake of



*Solanum melongena*

anthocyanins was associated with significantly lower blood pressure. Polyphenols in garden egg have been shown to have anti-cancer effects.

The anticancer action of anthocyanins appears to include preventing new blood vessels from forming in the tumour, reducing inflammation, and blocking the enzymes that help cancer cells to spread.

The green garden egg is beneficial in weight reduction because it contains low carbohydrates and calories essential for weight management.

Garden eggs are fibrous fruits that help in controlling **bowel movement**, reducing

constipation and improving digestion. They contain iron and calcium that aid in reducing the chance of osteoporosis, thereby keeping the bones strong and healthy.

Garden eggs are **rich in folic acid** which is beneficial to pregnant women (folic acid protects infants from neural tube defects that do occur); rich in iron and copper, which help to increase the red blood cell in the body, thereby aiding in fights against anaemia.

Garden egg is an excellent food for people suffering from diabetes, as it goes a long way in the reduction and prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Garden eggs contain a high

amount of minerals that help in maintaining **electrolyte** balance, thereby reducing blood pressures. It aids in neutralising sodium effects in the body, thereby controlling blood pressure levels.

Regular consumption of garden egg helps in maintaining good blood pressure and cholesterol levels because of its chlorogenic acid content.

**Adverse effects:** Garden egg is diuretic in nature which can cause stimulation of menstruation in pregnant women. Consuming garden egg regularly can also lead to acidity problems.

Too much potassium can cause vomiting, stomach upset; excess fibre can cause diarrhoea, constipation, difficulty in nutrients absorption.

Garden egg may cause allergies like nausea, itchiness, rashes and swelling of the throat. Therefore, it is advisable to consume garden eggs moderately to avoid its side effects.

**Economic potentials:** A study showed that the mean net return per hectare from garden egg production was N105, 140.07. The results also showed that cost of agro-chemicals and size of farm land were the major determinants of net returns from garden egg production by showing a statistically significant effect at 5% level. Provision of these inputs in adequate quantities and at affordable prices will ensure enhanced net returns from garden egg production.



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# Erhun bags 2019 May & Baker Professional Service Award

By Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis

Consolidating on the achievements of previous years, Prof. Wilson Oyekigho Erhun, a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) and former dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), has been declared winner of the 2019 May & Baker Professional Service Award in Pharmacy.

The award was presented during the opening ceremony of the 92nd Annual National PSN Conference, held in November at the International Trade Fair Centre in Kaduna.

Erhun had his secondary school education at St Peter Clavers College, Aghalokpe; Government College, Ughelli; and Federal Government College, Warri, Delta State. He is a 1978 pharmacy graduate of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and holds a Master of Science degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry (1980). He also holds a Master of Business Administration (1992) degree from Obafemi Awolowo University.

In 1984, Erhun became the first to bag the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Pharmacognosy, awarded by Obafemi Awolowo University. He had earlier begun his career at the same institution as an assistant lecturer in Pharmacognosy in 1980, immediately after his National Youth Service in Ilaro, Ogun state, Nigeria. He was further appointed as curriculum development officer of the Faculty in 1983 to monitor and report to the dean on a new pharmacy curriculum that had just been approved by the OAU Senate for the faculty. He soon rose through the ranks to become a senior lecturer in Pharmacognosy in 1987.

After a long battle for recognition in the emerging discipline of Pharmacy Administration in OAU, Erhun finally succeeded in transferring his services to the newly created Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Administration. He became a senior lecturer in Pharmacy Administration in 1999 through a formal selection process. He was pronounced a Professor of Pharmacy Administration effective 2006, thereby becoming the first Professor of Pharmacy Administration in West Africa. His promotion to the rank of Professor which ended a cumulative 21 years as a senior lecturer in both Pharmacognosy and Pharmacy Administration is now a great source of inspiration to many academics.

Erhun had previously served as a visiting international professor of Pharmacy Practice Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1992, with a travel scholarship



Prof. Erhun posing with the dummy cheque for the May & Baker Professional Service Award.



L-R: Eugene Olewuenyi, consultant, May & Baker Plc; Pharm. Chukutem Chukuka, executive director, May & Baker Plc; Mazi Sam Oluwabunwa, president, PSN and Prof. Wilson Erhun receiving the award plaque.

provided by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). He is the foundation dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Niger Delta University, Amassona (2003/2004) where he insisted that Pharmacy could only operate as an autonomous faculty and if otherwise under a collegiate system; and that any healthcare professional including a pharmacist should be able to aspire and attain the provostship of the college. Ultimately, Pharmacy was ultimately granted an autonomous status.

Erhun also worked with Prof. David Okpako (pioneer dean) as consultant in the establishment of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Delta State University, Abraka. He is an adjunct professor of Pharmacy Administration at the University of Ibadan.

While serving as the Head of Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Erhun facilitated the establishment of a Pharmacy Information Centre in the Faculty of Pharmacy. He was also the arrowhead in the development of the postgraduate programme in Pharmacy Administration at the institution, which was the first of its kind in West Africa.

Erhun was a member of the Management Board of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex. A one-time executive secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (1991/92), Erhun has also served as editor-in-chief of Nigerian Journal of Pharmacy. He was coordinator of the first Group Dynamics Session of the

PSN National Conference held in Kaduna in 1992.

Erhun is a Fellow of West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (1994); Fellow, Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy (2014); Fellow, Institute of Management Consultants (2018); and Fellow, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (2019).

Over the years, the May & Baker Professional Service Award in Pharmacy has become a flagship professional award in the pharmaceutical landscape in Nigeria.

It rewards excellence and innovation in the practice of pharmacy in Nigeria. The award carries a prize reward of N500,000, plus a passage allowance to enable the winner attend the National Conference of PSN to receive the award.

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# Business Hallmark honours Atueyi, Obiano, 13 others with "People of the Year" awards

## - As Ozekhome lauds man who returned N2.2bn to bank

By Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis

In recognition of his exceptional contributions towards the promotion of the pharmaceutical industry, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, publisher of *Pharmanews*, was among the eminent personalities who were recently honored with the 2019 Business Hallmark People of the Year awards.

The glitzy ceremony was held 10 November, at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, and attracted a horde of professionals from different sectors of the nation.

The event, which was hosted by Nigeria's former Ambassador to the United States and Chairman, Business Hallmark Advisory Board, Professor George Obiozor, and chaired by former Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG), Professor Anya O. Anya, witnessed colourful displays by the Lagos Cultural Troupe and the Nigerian Police Band, among others, who thrilled guests with their performances.

In his opening remarks, Obiozor noted that the award was organised to celebrate achievers and encourage other Nigerians to aspire to greatness by doing right things.

This, he said, had become more urgent given the dire economic and social situations in the country and the need for expedited efforts to reverse the trend.

Aside from the *Pharmanews* boss, notable winners of the 2019 edition of the awards included Chief Willie Obiano, Anambra State governor - who won the Hallmark Man of the Year Award; Kennedy Uzoka, CEO, United Bank for Africa - Banker of the Year Award; Chief Mike Ozekhome (SAN) - Professional Excellence Award in Law and Jurisprudence; Chief Sam Maduka Onyishi, CEO, Peace Mass Transit Limited - Business Integrity Award; Chief Bisi Olatilo, founder, Biscon TV - Professional Excellence Award in Media and Communication; Mrs Folake Ani-Mumuney, group head, marketing & corporate communication, First Bank of Nigeria - Professional Excellence Award in Marketing & Corporate Communication; and Prof. Olufemi Adelowo, consultant rheumatologist, Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) - Outstanding Achievement Award in Medicine.

Others were Air Peace Airline - Company of the Year; Collins Chikeluba, CEO, GMO Group - Entrepreneur of the Year; Fidelity Bank Plc. - co-winner, Special Product of the Year; Sterling Bank H.E.A.R.T Initiative - co-winner, Special Product Award; Mr Jackson Agbai Abbah, CEO, Dover Hotel - Outstanding Achievement Award in the Promotion of Hotel and Hospitality; Mr Abubakar Bello, MD NEXIM Bank - Professional Excellence Award in Banking and Financial Services; Dr Godwin Ehigiamusoe, MD, LAPO Microfinance Bank - Outstanding Achievement Award in Micro



L-R: Engr. Titus Abiola, Mrs Funke Abiola, Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, Lady Joan Atueyi, Mrs Ugonwa Nnubia and Barr. Emeka Nnubia.



L-R: Chairman of the occasion, Prof. Anya O. Anya congratulating Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi for his outstanding achievement in promotion of Pharmaceutical industry while Sir Marc Wabara, CEO, Overt Energy and Member, Hallmark Advisory Board look on.

Financing; Mrs. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, chairman, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission - Public Servant of the Year Award and Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) - Parastatal of the Year Award.

The Business Hallmark People of the Year Award is an annual event organised by Business Hallmark to celebrate institutions and individuals who are deemed to have influenced national development in positive ways in the course of the year.

While thanking the organisers on behalf of the awardees, Chief Mike Ozekhome applauded Business Hallmark for finding them worthy of the honour.

The SAN noted that he was particularly impressed by

the fact that recipients of the awards were not governors and political appointees as many would have expected, but mostly professionals who were honoured strictly on merit.

He used the platform to demand accountability in government, stressing that Nigeria had to be restructured to avert its imminent collapse.

Ozekhome also singled out Peace Mass Transit CEO, Chief Sam Maduka Onyishi for praise, noting that patriots like him were rare.

"I must not forget to thank Onyishi who found N2.2bn in his account and dared to return it to the bank."

"Others would have said, what the hell? After all, the banks are making money. But you see, it was God speaking to you. We thank you for that large

heart. God has not yet started with you," he said.

On his part, Onyishi explained that he took the decision to return the said amount because he could not bear to invest money that didn't belong to him into his business.

Recalling how he started life as a bus conductor, bus driver and spare parts dealer, the transport mogul said God had blessed him beyond his imagination and he could not therefore fail Him at this point.

"The amount they paid in was N3,219,500,000 but my own money there was N1,000,000,000, so the remaining balance was not mine", he said amid applause.

"I resolved that I cannot invest this money by reaping from another person's sweat. I can't keep \$7million that doesn't belong to me," he stressed.

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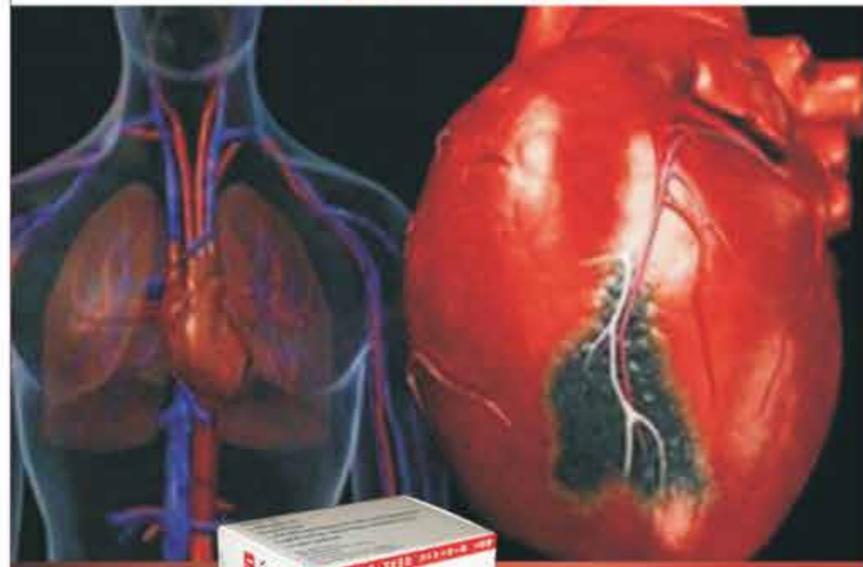


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# Scientists chart path to eradicating Ebola, Lassa fever in Africa

By Temitope Obayendo

For the burden of zoonotic diseases to be reduced to the barest minimum in Africa, it is imperative to adopt a multidisciplinary approach, which requires the collaboration of veterinary doctors, clinicians, basic scientists, environmentalists, and social scientists, to design an effective prevention formula, experts have said.

The scientists, who described zoonotic diseases as infectious animal diseases transferrable to humans, such as Ebola virus disease, Lassa fever, monkey pox, and others, submitted that the collaboration of stakeholders in tackling the spread of these diseases is crucial to the attainment of individual and global health security.

Addressing participants at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR)'s 6th International Scientific Conference with theme: "One Health and Global Health Security: Need to be Proactive Through Health Research", the Director General, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), Prof. Babatunde Salako, said more than 75 per cent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic in origin and many of the same microorganisms infect both animals and humans, since they share the same ecosystem.

He added that to combat the outbreak of zoonotic infections, there is need to break professional, disciplinary and institutional boundaries, and work in a more integrated fashion to effectively prevent, detect and respond to zoonosis and food safety problems.

Salako further called on policy makers, researchers and workers across sectors to implement joint responses to health threats, as well as develop framework and indicators to ensure effectiveness of one health activities, as well as share epidemiological data and laboratory information across sectors for quick response.

While fielding questions from journalists at the conference, the Chairman of the conference, Dr Aubrey Cunnington, from the Imperial College London, United Kingdom, noted the key factors to enhance the achievement of one health to include availability of infrastructure and funds for researchers, which will make them prepare for emerging outbreaks.

He said this will enable constant surveillance on human and animal health, in looking out for these emerging diseases.

"This requires funding from government and preparation of individuals as well as sharing of knowledge among countries",



Director General, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), Prof. Babatunde Salako, unveiling the newly launched locally developed medical devices at the conference.



Cross-section of participants at the international conference

he stressed.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Moses Bockarie, speaking on the topic: "The role of African governments and research institutions in implementing one health", pointed out that health security is how we can use one health to prevent public health emergencies like the Ebola crisis, Lassa fever, monkey pox and how the government needs to take drastic measures to manage it.

He added that the governments of Africa need to prioritise research to prepare for outbreaks of infectious diseases, as well as promote public health.

The international conference also witnessed the unveiling of innovative local diagnostic and medical devices, developed by NIMR researchers, including: NIMR Biotech DNA/RNA extraction kits for biological and botanical samples; NIMR-electrophoretic machines model I&II; NIMR-Haematocrit Centrifuge; NIMR-

biological incubators; NIMR-laboratory fitted oven, and NIMR-Bucket Centrifuge.

Speaking on the unveiled products, Dr Nkiruka Odunukwe, noted the importance of the devices saying they are more suitable for Nigerians than foreign kits, as they are clinically tested within the country.

"Another merit of the products is their economic value, as they are more affordable than imported devices," she said.



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# NANNM-Lagos elects new executives, as Awojide hands over to Israel

By Temitope Obayendo

The Lagos State Chapter of the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) has elected new executives to direct the affairs of the association for the next four years, just as the outgoing Chairman, Comr. Olurotimi Julius Awojide, has appreciated all members of the association for their support throughout his tenure. In the election, which took place at NANNM's 9th Quadrennial State Delegates Conference, held at the Nurses House, NANNM Secretariat in Lagos recently, Comr. Blessing Israel, emerged as chairman; while Comr. Mary Lateef- Yusuf, as vice-chairman.

Other executives that emerged as winners at the polls were: Comr. Adeola Morolake, financial secretary; Comr. Taiye Uledor, treasurer; Comr. Kayode, auditor I; and Com. Sanni Habeeb, auditor ii.

Speaking on the achievements of his tenure, Awojide appreciated all members of his administration, saying that, his administration had enjoyed the maximum support of every nurse in the state, which explained the successes attained by his leadership.

His words: "We took over from the caretaker committee in 2016. We made promises to our members on what we intended to achieve and the time has come to render account of our stewardship. To God be the glory, we did our best to move the association forward. This is because the delivery of value to members is the fundamental objective of any democratically-elected administration".

He highlighted the achievements of his tenure to include: passage of Bill establishing Lagos State College of Nursing, Igando; harmonisation



Outgoing NANNM's Chairman, Comr. Olurotimi Julius Awojide, second from right, receiving a recognition plaque, while other executives cheer him on.

of scheme of service for nurses; accountability; election of NANNM into NLC and JNC; honouring of heroes of NANNM; Image laundering for nurses/war against quackery; new utility bus for nurses; new giant generators for NANNM House; uniform allowance for nurses; financial assistance to nurses in need; reversal of denial of promotion; mentoring of student nurses; and capacity building

He further urged the new crop of leaders to continue to work towards meeting other pending needs of the association, which he could not meet. These, according to him, included: Upgrading of graduate nurses; central payment of uniform allowance; lateral conversion; domestication

of internship programme in Lagos State for graduate nurses; promotion of nurses to directorate cadre; conflict resolution among nurses and nurse leaders; demoted apex nurse re-instead; resuscitation of elongated salary; employment of more nurses, and so on.

Addressing the nurses on the theme of the conference: "Employer-Employee Relationship and the Union", the guest speaker, Mrs Remi Iherijika, emphasised the need for the nurses' union leaders to be proactive and reliable, noting that employer-employee relationship is a conflict-laden relationship, requiring careful management.

She highlighted the qualities of a vibrant union to include strength, independence, dynamism, and

proactivity, adding that it is one whose executives can confront employers to discuss employees' issues without losing focus.

She asked the leaders, "What is the position of your union on the privatisation move of hospitals? If you fold your hands, in five years' time, the story will change."

Iherijika further tasked the delegates on the need to update their knowledge regularly, saying the currency of knowledge is the currency in unionism, thus, they must acquire it daily.

The highpoint of the conference was the presentation of awards of recognition to the outgoing chairman, Awojide, and DSP Olatunji Disu.

## "Young Pharmacist of the Year" winner, Muhammad, emerges PSN-YPG chairman

By Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis

Amidst rapturous applause, Pharm Isa Muhammad was recently sworn in as the new chairman of Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria - Young Pharmacists Group (PSN-YPG).

Muhammad, who won the recent "Young Pharmacist of the Year" award, organised by Pharmanews Limited, took over the mantle of leadership from the outgoing chairman, Pharm. Muyiwa Olagunju.

The election of executive officers into office which took place at the group's Annual General Meeting on 6 November, during the 92<sup>nd</sup> PSN Conference, had many notable pharmacists in attendance. They included Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, president of PSN; Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, immediate past president of PSN; Sir Ifeanyi Atueyi, managing director, Pharmanews Limited; Pharm. Samuel Adekola, chairman, Association of Community Pharmacists in Nigeria (ACPN); and Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley Chiedu Amibor national chairman, Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN).

Other newly elected executives of the PSN-YPG included Abdullahi Abdusalam,



Pharm. Isa Muhammad

national vice chairman; Nzomisaki Shadrach, national PRO/editor-in-chief; Abubakar Jibo, national secretary/project coordinator; Zainab Muti, national treasurer; Chado Baba, national assistant secretary; Abdullahi Muhd, national financial secretary; Egbon

Temitope, south west zonal coordinator; Chukwumeke Nwabugwu, south east zonal coordinator; Umar Sabiu, north west zonal coordinator; Ignatius Da'ap, north central zonal coordinator; Raji Abdulrazaq, north east zonal coordinator; while Muyiwa Olagunju was given the post of an ex officio.

In his acceptance speech, the new PSN-YPG chairman recalled that the weeks leading up to the election were very eventful and interesting, judging by the volume of campaign posters, stickers, jingles, mails, text messages and calls made to ensure the emergence of a preferred candidate.

"I want to thank all candidates for the zeal to contest and the sportsmanship they exhibited in Kaduna. It is evident that what binds us as *pharmily* before anything else is love.

"I want to thank (Pharm. Muyiwa) Olagunju, former

chairman of YPG for ensuring a smooth transition process for my tenure. My campaign slogan is #TheFutureIsNow and I chose it because I believe in doing something about our common challenge," he said.

Muhammad also noted that the new executives would be working with state coordinators to develop and strengthen the group's structures through the regional committees.

Commenting on his tenure, Olagunju, the immediate past president, remarked that whatever has a beginning must have an end.

"My profound gratitude to everyone who has been instrumental to the success of PSN-YPG, including family, friends and colleagues. I deeply appreciate every young pharmacist in Nigeria for your support throughout my administration.

"Your input was indeed immeasurable and I do not take this for granted. I also thank the leadership of the PSN, led by Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, for the massive support and warm embrace we enjoyed throughout my tenure," he disclosed.

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## Events in Pictures



L-R: Prof Pat Utomi, keynote speaker; Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Oluabunwa, president PSN and Dr Olorunnibe Mamora, minister of state for health, during the opening ceremony of the 92nd PSN conference in Kaduna.



L-R: Pharm. (Sir) Valentine Ezeiru, MD/CEO, Oculus Pharmacare Limited and Pharm. (Alh.) Yaro Budah, former president, PSN, during the opening ceremony of the PSN conference in Kaduna.



L-R Pharm. (Dr) Kingsley Amibor, national chairman, Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists (AHAPN), presenting an award plaque to Prof Mojisola Adeyeye, director general, NAFDAC, when the leadership of AHAPN paid a courtesy visit to the NAFDAC head office in Lagos, recently.



New couples Paul Nnoaharam Dike and Betty Uchenna Dike with Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi during their wedding ceremony in Lagos recently.

## MeCure Smartbuy partners HMOs, revolutionises healthcare market

By Adebayo Oladejo

As part of its strategic move to penetrate the Nigerian market and present an opportunity for disruption to startups that can use the right mix of technology innovation and smarter operations, MeCure Healthcare Nigeria Limited has launched MeCure SmartBuy, a complete healthcare mobile app that offers free teleconsultation with doctors, along with home delivery of medicines, healthcare products and diagnostic services anywhere in Nigeria.

The app, which is available on both Android and iOS smartphones is said to have hit more than 50,000 user registrations and thousands of orders nationwide, since after its presentation, as well as ramping up partnerships with HMOs and corporate institutions across the country.

According to a press release signed by Dr Adekunle Megbuwawon, chief medical officer of MeCure, following up on his achievements so far, the diagnostic giant is now targeting the B2B segment through tie-ups with Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs), hospitals and corporate institutions by offering them attractive discounts on medicines for their customers and employees.

Megbuwawon revealed that so far the company had started pilot operations with more than 10 organisations and was in various stages of discussions with several more.

He said: "With MeCure SmartBuy, we leverage this existing relationship and provide additional value to all of our clients by taking care of medication needs for their employees or end consumers.

"Consider this. As a responsible organisation you would want your employees and customers to have access to genuine medication at an affordable price, right? Nigeria is already infamous for counterfeit drugs and furthermore, the pricing and availability is highly volatile, but with MeCure SmartBuy, all of these concerns are addressed because we offer genuine drugs at a flat discount with doorstep delivery! It is technically a no-brainer for our clients and hence we are witnessing rapid growth.

"The pace of growth also



Dr Adekunle Megbuwawon

comes with its own set of challenges from a tech and operations perspective. I remember at one point, we were receiving around 4000+ signups in a single day. It was a crazy time for our tech team, as we had to ensure our network infrastructure could scale and support the huge spike in traffic.

"While we did run into some minor issues, it gave us a clear indication with regards to the demand for our offering and validated the magnitude of the problem that we are trying to solve".

According to Adil Shaikh, chief technology officer, MeCure Smartbuy, "From the time an order is placed on the app till the time our delivery agent hands over the medication to the customer, we track each and every interaction minutely.

"We can track the exact location of each of our delivery agents in real-time. This helps us understand bottlenecks and optimise our operations on a daily basis, while constant feedback from our customers is also helping us improve and expand our offerings.

"Tech is only an enabler; executing to delight the customer is key. So, if you look at our reviews from customers on the app stores you will understand how seriously we pay attention to detail. If your customer is not happy, nothing else matters." he said.

He disclosed that the app is available through their website [www.mecuresmartbuy.com](http://www.mecuresmartbuy.com), adding that users can also search for "MeCure SmartBuy" on the Android and iOS stores through their phones to download it.

He, however, added that the app uses a geo-fence to only allow registrations from Lagos at the moment.

# Gbagada Rotary takes health awareness to the grassroots

By Oladejo Adebayo

In the spirit of this year's Rotary Family Health Days 2019, the Rotary Club of Gbagada, District 9110, Nigeria, recently held a health awareness campaign and conducted free screening on residents of Gbagada, Anthony, Oshodi, Mushin and the adjoining communities.

The event, which featured distribution of insecticide treated nets and sanitary towels for girls, HIV test and counselling, deworming for kids, vitamin A and B administration, eye test and treatment for cataract and pterygium, polio immunisation, as well as screening and treatment for malaria, cervical, breast and prostate cancer, diabetes, glucose level, hypertension, hepatitis b and c and tuberculosis, was held at the General Hospital, Gbagada, between 31 October, 2019 and 2 November 2019.

According to the President, Rotary Club of Gbagada, District 9110, Rotr. Akinwale Odotola, having noticed that many people were not going for medical check-up, Rotarians for Family Health and AIDS Prevention (RFHA), decided to make the process easier by bringing healthcare and checkups closer to the people and of course, making it free of charge, while going into partnership with the government and private organisations.

Speaking further, Odotola said health screening was important because it had been discovered that a lot of people were coming down with chronic disease conditions and health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes, hepatitis and other silent killer diseases, adding that the awareness is very important as it will afford many Nigerians opportunity to know their health status.

Speaking in the same vein, Rotr Bola Oyebade, District Coordinator, RFHA, District 9110, Nigeria, stated that the initiative had been initially targeted at fighting AIDS but was soon expanded to accommodate other rampant health issues, adding that the RFHA programme holds concurrently in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda.

Oyebade further stated that the goal of the programme was to have everyone be in good health and live well, noting that the yearly event done in collaboration with Rotary International Districts over the years, had made remarkable progress.

"It was a three-day event which was planned to have more 1,000 participants," he said.

In their contributions, the duo of Rotr Flavia Mirro, from the Rotary Club of Uganda, and Rotr Gbenga Olubowale, former chairman, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Lagos State Branch, noted that the programme was an impactful Rotary-led health campaign held over three days in multiple African countries, providing comprehensive free healthcare and screening service.

According to the duo, the three-day health programme was a complete cycle as all hands were on deck - including the nurses, physicians, medical laboratory scientists, pharmacists and others - to attend to the participants, adding that many participants

were surprised to hear about their medical results as they had largely been unaware that they had the diseases they came down with.

Some beneficiaries of the free medical programme, including an octogenarian, Madam Adekunle Victoria Folakemi, who came for eyes test and who also benefited from the free eyeglasses, and Miss Adewale Simisola, who came for malaria



President, Rotary Club of Gbagada, District 9110, presenting an eyeglass to one of the beneficiaries at the programme, while Pharm. Gbenga Olubowale looks on.

screening, appreciated the support to enable poor Nigerians live a meaningful life. Rotary Club and called for more

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## Events in Pictures



Dr Ifeanyi Offor of Ranbaxy, a Sun Pharma Company (right) and Mr Samuel Kapoor also of Ranbaxy (left) presenting the prize won by one of the winners of the company's promo contest at the company's exhibition stand during the PSN conference in Kaduna.



Mr Alfred Shehu, North Zonal Manager, Shalina Healthcare (left) and Cornelius Okafor, brand manager, Ibucap/pain portfolio, Shalina Healthcare (right) posing with winners of the company's lucky deep generators at the 92nd PSN Conference in Kaduna recently.



Mr Jasbir Singh (3rd from right), managing director of Pharma Ethics Limited and other staff at the company's exhibition stand during the PSN conference in Kaduna.



Pharm (Mrs) Chovwe Emaniru of Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc and other staff at the company's exhibition stand during the conference in Kaduna.

## ACPN-Oriade charts roadmap to safe medicines for Nigerians

By Adebayo Oladejo



A cross-section of pharmacists from Oriade Zone at the event.

The Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN), Oriade Zone, in Amuwo Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State, has tasked the federal government to empower the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN), to effectively monitor, control and enforce relevant laws on all registered and unregistered drug premises in the country.

Speaking at the event organised to commemorate this year's World Pharmacists Day at the Lagos International Trade Fair Complex, Lagos, the Coordinator, ACPN, Oriade Zone, Pharm. Amos Megbuwe, explained that the celebration was meant honour the contributions of pharmacists to the world, saying community pharmacists were in the area to show the public that pharmacists were at their service always.

According to him, the theme of this year's global event, "Safe and Effective Medicine for All", was chosen to reflect the benefits of medicine when rationally administered by drug experts, as well as the numerous contributions of pharmacists to the healthcare sector.

He enlightened the populace on the selfless services of pharmacists, including medicine information, patient counselling, drug information, medication review, counselling and sensitization.

Also speaking at the event, Pharm. (Mrs) Oby Ikwu, a former zonal coordinator, ACPN, Oriade Zone and current financial secretary, ACPN, Lagos State, stated that safe and effective medicines is vital for all because without safe and effective drug, healthcare is not complete.

"In our day to day practice, we have realised that a lot of people are ignorant of how medicine works and, as a result, series of abuse is ongoing

in the country, to the extent that people now use drugs for different purposes, other than the purpose the drugs are meant to serve. Antibiotics abuse is on the increase, as well as abuse of so many other drugs. Thus, as pharmacists, we have set today, being a very special day globally, aside to attend to people free of charge and meet their needs in the aspect of drug need and pharmaceutical care."

Pharm. (Mrs) Nennaya Charity Nwachukwu, chairman, World Pharmacists Day Planning Committee, emphasised that the reason for choosing the Trade Fair market, which she said was arguably the biggest in Africa, was to reach a large number of people, saying that pharmacists want every patient to get the best out of their medications.

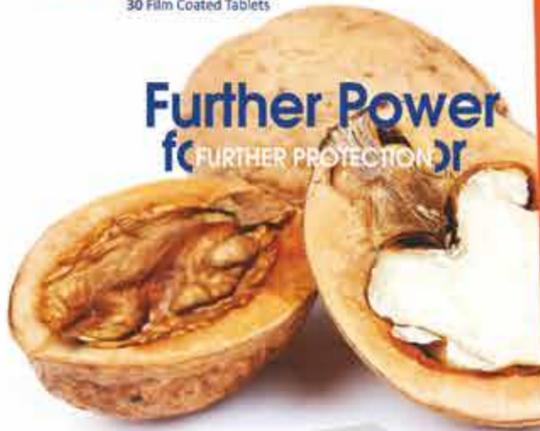
While thanking the pharmacists for bringing the laudable campaign to their domain, one of the important figures in the market, Mrs Rashidat Ajisefini, disclosed that many of them had until then not known the difference between a qualified pharmacist and a mere drug seller, adding that the programme also afforded them the opportunity to know where to get quality medicine.

The pharmacists also offered free counseling and screening on hepatitis, blood sugar, blood pressure, BMI, blood glucose, and hypertension to the people of Satellite Town, Iyana-Oba community and its environs.

September 25 is a day set aside in 2009 by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), and adopted at the World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences the same year to annually highlight the value of the pharmaceutical profession to stakeholders globally.

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## Pharmanews bags PSN Presidential Award for consistency

**P**harmanews, the global health journal, has once again added another feather to its cap by bagging the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) Presidential Award during the recently concluded 2019 Annual National Conference of the Society held in Kaduna, Kaduna State on 8 November.

Presenting the award to Pharmanews Limited during the closing banquet of the historic conference in Kaduna, Pharm. (Mazi) Sam Ohuabunwa, president of the PSN said that the Presidential Award was presented to the publication for being the most consistent and widely read pharmaceutical journal, noting that no other health publication had been as consistent as *Pharmanews*.

The Presidential Award to *Pharmanews*, the PSN president added, was in recognition of the journal's outstanding consistency and reach.



**Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi with the PSN award plaque**

## Poor health indices among older adults: Experts seek stakeholders' intervention

*continued from page 48*

possible so that they can lead a normal life too," he said.

Counselling the elderly on health and longevity principles, the health expert remarked: "By getting the right health services, screenings, and treatments, you are taking steps that help your chances for living a longer, healthier life. At your age, health and family history, lifestyle choices, what you eat, how active you are, whether you smoke, and other important factors impact what and how often you need healthcare and how healthy you will be."

While receiving the experts in his palace, the Akarigbo of Remoland, Oba Babatunde Adewale Ajayi appreciated them for bringing the health awareness advocacy to his domain, in order to enlighten his chiefs and offer free

medical screening to them.

Oba Adewale further expressed his delight in the free medical screening conducted for the Akarigbo In Council, adding that the exercise would greatly help to prevent illnesses and promote longer, healthier life.

"It is good when one is aware of his or her health status and I am happy that this is happening in my domain," he said

Speaking further, the monarch promised to work closely with the university community when necessary, adding that traditional institutions were meant to play fatherly roles in the society.

Also speaking, the spokesperson for the Akarigbo In Council, Chief Adeyemi Salami, Lisa of Ofin, Sagamu, said members of the council were delighted that that the experts thought it wise to come to their domain with such a laudable programme, adding that government should do more than it was doing presently to care for the elderly and ageing.

"The elderly and ageing in the country deserve care from both the government and the general public because ageing is not an emergency situation or an accident, but a transitory period of maturation, a process that every human being prays to go through," he said.

Speaking earlier, the duo of Prof. (Mrs) Bolanle Fatuga, dean, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), and Prof. Adewale Sule-Odu, a professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, OOUTH noted that the programme was part of the faculty's community effort at reaching out to the people for the purpose of rendering community service.

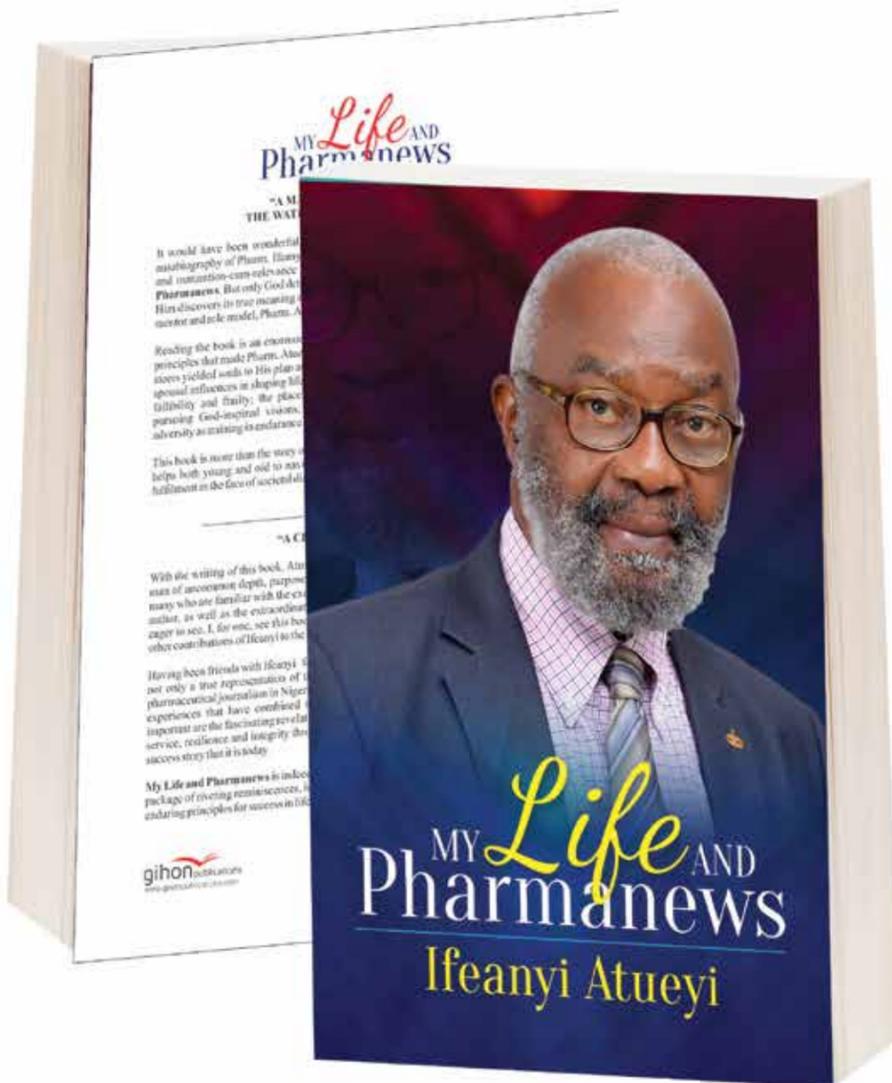
The scholars added that the medical outreach was part of the programmes lined up to mark this year's Faculty Week, adding that their roles in the university comprises both teaching, consulting and community service – with the latter being the main reason for the health outreach.

"Health outreach is important because Nigeria is undergoing epidemiological disease transition and we found out that a lot of people are coming down with chronic disease conditions and health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes and other silent killer disease, so this awareness is very important and we are happy we have done it," Fatuga said.

Also speaking, Head, Sales and Marketing, Seagreen Pharmaceutical Limited, Mr Adelodun Adeniyi Wasiu, disclosed that as part of the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), Seagreen was committed to enhancing the health and wellness status of the Nigerian society, adding that the company longed to see a Nigeria where everyone had access to basic essential medicines regardless of their socio-economic status.

Speaking on the rationale behind the partnership with OOUTH, he said the company decided to organise the medical outreach and free screening exercise to give back to the community and to promote healthy living among Nigerians.

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# Why germs are becoming resistant to antibiotics - Oduyebo

*continued from back page*

must begin to strictly follow the principles of antibiotic therapy and ensure that the drugs are used to treat what they are meant to treat and not being abused.

One of the principles, according to her, would be for caregivers to watch out for evidence of infection, determine whether or not such infection would respond to antibiotic treatment, request laboratory analysis before treatment and taking decision on the appropriate drug to be used.

Oduyebo presented reports from different studies showing that virtually all antibiotics currently in use worldwide had suffered some form of resistance from organisms.

She said: "Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microorganisms change in their response to antimicrobials, such that infections can no longer be treated with the antimicrobials to which the microbes were once sensitive.

"As a result, the antibiotics become ineffective and infections persist in the body, increasing the risk of spread to others. This leads to higher medical costs, longer duration of treatment, prolonged hospital stays and increased mortality."

She called on hospitals to adopt antibiotic policy as part of their formulary to ensure rational use of antibiotics.

An antibiotic policy, she said, will improve patient care by promoting the best practices in antibiotic prophylaxis and therapy.

"It will ensure better use of resources by using cheaper drugs where possible and also retard the emergence and spread of multiple antibiotic resistant bacteria. An antibiotic policy will also improve education of younger doctors by providing guidelines for appropriate therapy. It will eliminate the use of unnecessary or ineffective antibiotics and restrict the use of expensive or active 'powerful' ones," she said.

Oduyebo also noted that it would take concerted efforts by everyone – individuals, healthcare workers, and policy makers - to effectively address the current spate of antibiotic resistance.

She called on individuals to use antibiotics only when prescribed by a certified health professional; to never demand antibiotics if the doctor says they are not needed and to also strictly follow a doctor's prescription when using antibiotics.

"Never share or use leftover antibiotics. You can prevent infections by regularly washing your hands, preparing food hygienically, avoiding contact with sick people, practising safer sex and keeping vaccinations up to date," she advised.

Oduyebo also urged health workers to prevent infections by ensuring their hands, instruments and environment are clean, adding that they should prescribe and dispense antibiotics only when they are needed, according to current guidelines, as well as report



**L-R: Managing Director, Bydow Pharmacy, Pharm. (Mrs) Nike Adenuga; Chairman, Association of Lady Pharmacists, Pharm. (Mrs) Modupe Alli; Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer, St Racheal's Pharmaceutical Nigeria Limited, Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun; and Guest Speaker, Department of Medical Microbiology & Parasitology, College of Medicine, Idi-Araba, Prof. Oyin Oduyebo, during the media forum organised by St Racheal's Pharma to commemorate the 2019 World Antibiotic Awareness Week in Lagos, recently.**

antibiotic-resistant infections to surveillance teams.

She further advised health workers to always enlighten their patients on proper handling of antibiotics, antibiotics resistance and the dangers of antibiotics misuse.

Speaking earlier at the media parley, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of St. Rachel's Pharma, Pharm. Akinjide Adeosun, said the company, also known as "House of Antibiotics", fully aligns with WHO's efforts towards raising awareness on the global menace of irrational use of antibiotics.

The company, Adeosun said, decided to organise the WAAD media sensitisation forum to increase global awareness on antibiotic resistance and also to raise awareness about the fatality of preventable and treatable respiratory tract infections.

He cited a recent report by UNICEF which revealed that pneumonia (a killer lower respiratory bacteria disease) claimed the lives of more than 800,000 children under the age of five globally in 2018, which equalled one child every 39 seconds, noting that Nigeria had the highest burden of the

condition with an estimated 162,000 deaths or 443 deaths per day (approximately 18 deaths every hour).

He urged the federal, state and local governments in the country to strengthen their pneumonia control strategies to reduce child pneumonia mortality.

Adeosun also advocated the establishment of a healthcare bank, like the bank of Industry and the Agricultural Development Bank. This, he said would cater for the strategic needs of the nation's health sector.

## Poor health indices among older adults: Experts seek stakeholders' intervention

*continued from back page*

Sciences Week, Jeminusi, in his lecture, titled "The Care of the Elderly" stated that aside from the establishment of old people's homes and recreation centres to care for their needs, social and economic policies should equally be put in place to support the wellbeing and autonomy of older persons.

Noting that Nigeria's ageing population of 65 years and above was gradually decreasing, Jeminusi added that there were about six million people in the age group in the country, which represented three per cent of the total population.

"According to the latest World Health Organisation (WHO)'s data, around 54.5 years of age is the average life expectancy of Nigerians" which is quite worrisome, he said.

Speaking further, the university don listed issues such as lack of affordable healthcare, lack of household help, physical



**A cross-section of dignitaries during the visit to the palace of the Akarigbo of Remoland, Oba Babatunde Adewale Ajayi, recently**

weakness, arthritis, failing vision, hearing problem, low libido, challenges with bone density, memory loss and wrinkles as some of the difficulties associated with ageing.

Stressing that healthcare is the greatest physical need of the elderly, Jeminusi explained that

when they are healthy, they would need far less basic support.

"Aside from healthcare need, what we could do for the elderly is to treat them with respect and shower them with lots of love and affection and support in every way

*continued on page 46*

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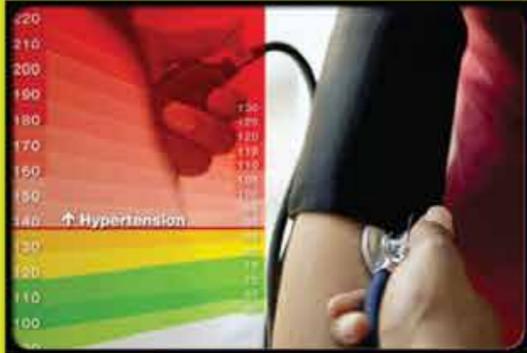
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## Why germs are becoming resistant to antibiotics - Oduyebo

By Yusuff Moshood

Distinguished clinical microbiologist of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Prof. Oyinkan Oduyebo has urged individuals, health workers and policy makers to handle antibiotics with care, noting that this class of drugs is fast becoming less effective because germs are becoming resistant to them.

Speaking during the 2019 World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW) media sensitisation forum, recently organised by St. Racheal's Pharma in Lagos, Oduyebo who is also the chairman, Lagos University Teaching Hospital's Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee and coordinator, National Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee said there's need to protect the antibiotics currently in use, warning that new ones are not being produced to replace them.

Oduyebo stated that both the prescribers and the users



L-R: Dr Kingsley Amibor, national chairman, NAHAP; Pharm. (Sir) Ifeanyi Atueyi, managing director, Pharmanews Limited and Pharm. Ahmed Yakasai, former president, PSN, during the PSN-YPG 5th Annual Business Meeting, held during the 92nd PSN conference in Kaduna, last November.

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## Poor health indices among older adults: Experts seek stakeholders' intervention

- As Seagreen partners OOUTH to offer free screening

By Adebayo Oladejo

Worried by the dismal health conditions of many elderly and ageing persons in Nigeria, some university dons and medical experts have called for immediate intervention from the federal government and other concerned stakeholders, so as to prevent the older adults from being condemned to poverty, ill-health, loneliness and despair.

The experts included Prof. Bolanle Fatuga, dean, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Olabisi

Onabanjo University (OOU); Prof. Adewale Sule-Odu, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH); Dr Olubukola Jeminusi and a lecturer in the Department of Community Medicine.

Speaking at a community health outreach held at the Palace of the Akarigbo of Remoland, Oba Babatunde Adewale Ajayi, to kick off this year's Faculty of Clinical

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