

THE JOURNEY SO FAR: THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

delivered by:

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ALUMNI DAY

IBADAN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
(ICOMAA) WORLDWIDE,  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## **PREAMBLE**

The Chairman, Vice-Chancellor, Provost, College of Medicine, Deputy-Provost, Deans of Faculties, College Secretary, Heads of Departments, President, Ibadan College of Medicine Alumni Association (ICOMAA) worldwide, great Icomaaites, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great sense of honour and humility that I come before you this morning to present the 15th (ICOMAA) alumni lecture, which derives its special significance as the first of the series to be delivered by an Ibadan trained physiotherapist. My choice of topic comes with a great challenge. This is borne out of the difficulty navigating historical perspective of our college before an august gathering of distinguished and eminent scholars. Discussing university related issues in front of emeritus professors, former vice-chancellors, provosts, faculty deans, and heads of departments is indeed a daunting task. It is my humble attempt to demonstrate how well I grasped and understood your methods and techniques that molded this individual standing before you. I sincerely hope that any error(s) made in the course of this process will not attract the same stringent marking standard applicable during my student days. However, any good that emerges should be credited to the Almighty God and my teachers, as well as professional and academic mentors in this great institution for a job well done.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The word journey has been severally defined. The Oxford dictionary defined it as an act of traveling from one place to another, with considerable amount of time covered for a specific purpose. It is implied that journey could be a trip, tour, expedition or a

pilgrimage depending on the distance and/or purpose. The question that follows this comprehensive definition is to ask an average alumnus/alumnae whether what you took was a journey, trip or tour. There is no doubt in my mind that the completion of M.B.B.S, B.P.T, B.D.S, B.Sc in Biochemistry, Physiology, Human Nutrition, Nursing, Pharmacy, Pharmacology, Community Health and Medicine, and Medical Laboratory Sciences amongst others is indeed a difficult journey. Dropping out of any of these college programs amounts to a trip of short duration that does not exclude one from the distinguished alumni club. However, a tour could be viewed from the concept of a professional student with multiple changes from one discipline to another, marked by several stops with ultimate exit from college gate with a degree eventually. The only time the journey ends catastrophically is when an individual is restricted for any reason of deficient moral conduct that automatically excludes that person from the prestigious club of alumni (ICOMAA) membership. With this clear definition of our journey so far, I congratulate you all and myself for completing this journey with the ultimate membership of this club. I cannot shy away from the traditional Lagos greetings during Adamu-Orisa festival, otherwise described as Eyoo that states as follows: “Mo yo fun e, mo yo fun’rami” which literally translate to “I congratulate you and congratulate myself”. This usually occurs before beating you with "Opanbata" big bamboo stick associated with the festival. Mr. Vice Chancellor, Provost, distinguished alumni and invited guests, may I crave your indulgence to replace Opanbata with fund raising for the college later.

It is important at this juncture to relate our college's journey to that of the alumni. Conventionally, an alumnus is regarded as a former graduate of an institution. However, for this talk, I am using a broader definition of alumnus to include not just a

former student of a specific school, college or university but also a former associate employee or member of that institution. The word *alumnus* is derived from the Latin verb “*alere*”, which means to foster or nourish. Therefore the object of our today's discussion is to highlight the role of the foster children, nourished by the Ibadan College of medicine's traditions, infrastructure, and legacy of intellectual excellence. William Lund (unknown) noted that we study the past to understand the present. We understand the present to guide the future. Rutherford (2008) noted history as the huge succession of events that created us, human beings. I submit that the same will apply to society and institutions. Whereas Cornfield, professor of history at the Royal Holloway University of London asserted that history is inescapable, as it studies the past and the leagues of the past in present. It connects things throughout times and encourages its students to take a long view of such connections. Understanding the linkages between the past and the present is absolutely basic for good understanding of the conditions of human beings, society, colleges or institutions. This understanding allows people to build and also to change upon secure foundations. He posited that history is not only useful but also essential for human or, and institutional development.

Based on this submission permit me to stratify our historical journey into three phases where each phase is a unit of three decades (30 years). The choice of 30 years is based on my American experience of 30-year mortgage which usually presumes that even with crawling and slow walking in repayments, a mortgage loan should be liquidated in that period. What then follows is the concept of return on investment (ROI). Will the individual continue to live free post retirement or use the accrued equity for investment purposes? Mr. Vice Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen we are going to

examine, explore and possibly answer the question as to whether the "foster" children of Ibadan college of medicine are worthy or will be worthy of showing good returns on Ibadan's investment. Thus the past, present and future is categorized as follows:

### **THE PAST (1948-1978) Early Generation**

The first thirty years since inception in 1948 witnessed the graduation of students both from the University College Ibadan, University of London (UCI) and University of Ibadan Nigeria (UI). There is an endless list of achievements by our forbearers represented in this era. There successes are evident in the transformation of our nation from the immediate post-independence era till date. The productive results of this early generation started manifesting towards the tail end of the era. We should ask for their forgiveness due to some radical steps we took against when they were at the helm of affairs, either within the university or government. Some of us were involved in the demonstration of "Ali must go", without realizing that Colonel Amadu Ali, the then Federal Commissioner for Education, is an alumnus. The 1977 and 78 sets of physiotherapy students at Alexander Brown Hall (ABH) wrote a strong petition to the first alumni vice-chancellor Professor Tekena Tamuno regarding Professor Vincent Aimakhu's preferential allocation of rooms at ABH to medical students at the expense of physiotherapy students. The Association of Undergraduate Physiotherapy Students (AUP) eight-man committee that included the speaker today got excited when Professor Aimakhu (of blessed memory) got transferred from Hall Warden to Hall Master. The choice of 1978 as the end of the early is a coincidence of history. It has nothing to do with my year of graduation. Nevertheless, I am proud to be associated with the 1978 set

that has so far produced three provosts for this august college. This set is a good example of the good work of the early generation. In recent times, the same generation produced Professor Arinola Sanya (1976 graduate) as Deputy Vice Chancellor (administration) from our department of Physiotherapy. In the same period, Dr. Mrs. Bridget Birabi, a 1977 physiotherapy graduate, got appointed into the World Confederation of Physiotherapy (WCPT) award committee. Colonel Pascal Mogbo, a 1978 Physiotherapy graduate recently retired as the Director, Professions Allied to Medicine, Nigeria Army Medical Corps and currently the Chairman of the Medical Rehabilitation Board (MRTB). The choice and selection of Ibadan College of Medicine alumni for national and international assignments by government functionaries around the world is predicated on the legacy of this early generation. This is evident in the report of SAMSS on the capacity accomplishment of the college. This visitation report noted that 50% of all Nigerian medical schools' faculty is CMUI alumni. 40% of all medical school provosts and deans of faculties of Nigerian medical schools originate from Ibadan. Our alumni have won Eleven out of thirteen Nigerian National Order of Merit awards in medicine since the inception of this program in 1979. Five out of the six professors of physiotherapy in Nigerian universities up to date are from this college. This early generation constitutes the league of distinguished emeritus professors, academic and clinical mentors for the next generation. The early generation mentored with a touch of class marked by academic excellence, clinical opulence, and display of unsurpassed moral rectitude. Sober reflection involved during the research for this presentation revealed certain personality traits of the early generation that probably accounted for their success in the academic and administration arena. This generation is epitomized by the

seven qualities of a visionary leader enumerated by Corinne McLaughlin (2001) viz: commitment to core spiritual values, sense of personal integrity, clear inspirational vision, respectful, empowering relationship, innovative and courageous action. This is further corroborated by Thom-Otuya (2012) who indicated that the quality and ingenuity of a country's leadership can make or mar a country's development or growth. Achebe (1983) in Nguebe (2010) noted that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership, due to the leadership's inability to rise to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership. The early generation led with personal examples that are too numerous to mention. Thom-Otuya (2012) also highlighted the role of mutual activities between leadership and followership as a great influence on national development. The ability of the next generation to exert future great influence on our college development and growth is arguably borne out of the qualities imbibed in them by the early graduates of CMUI. Permit me to use few of my personal experiences to illustrate the greatness of this institution both at home and abroad. While working on a contract as a home care physical therapist at Washington DC, USA, an assignment to a case made me proud of my Ibadan background. At the completion of the initial assessment, the patient commented as follows "What a fantastic clinical examination. Where did you train?" My cynical answer was "You wouldn't know the school as it is located in a town called Ibadan on the west coast of Africa". His immediate response was "you trained at the Harvard of Africa!" I was pleasantly surprised. The old man then asked me to pick up a photo album with the first page showing his photograph with late Professor Olatunde Odeku at Howard University, Washington DC. This was after their residency training in Canada. The second episode of note was in 1977 when the Nigerian

Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) advertised medical cadetship position for MBBS and BDS students. I told my best friend, late Ganiyu Olaseni Olateju, a penultimate year medical student at ABH, that I would follow them to Lagos to challenge the authorities on why Physiotherapy was not included in medical cadetship. Olaseni indicated that my Zikite craziness may lead me to the guardroom. However, he further noted that Ibadan teaches us to be brave. On getting to Lagos, I requested to see the director of AFMS, Brigadier Ekong, indicating personal reason for my visit. Brigadier Ekong asked “Young man, what can I do for you?” I responded by saying “Sir, how can the army exclude Physiotherapy from the cadetship recruitment?” Despite his stern military disposition, he asked for my university. He then noted I must have been a Zikite before going to ABH for me to ask an army general that sort of question. The rest was history, as I got invited for interview and subsequently selected to join the army as officer cadet. I later refused enlistment due to my love for my then fiancée, Miss Sherifat Adebisi Biobaku (now Mrs. Sanni for 34 years) and my late mother Mrs. Amudalat Sanni. The two most important women in my life did not want to have anything to do with the military. To all our professors and teachers, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart on behalf of the alumni for the concept of courage imbibed in us. For lack of time, this issue about leadership is enough a topic for another alumni lecture.

### **THE PRESENT (1978-2008) Baby Boomers**

Fast forward to the present, this second generation has shown tremendous success. Therefore, the relevance of this Yoruba idiom cannot be overemphasized: “Omo ti ekun ba bi, ekun ni yo jo” which can conceptually be translated as “the apple does not fall far



from the three”. I am happy to report to this august audience that the efforts of the previous generation continue to yield great and commendable return on investment. For example, the provosts of this college since its inception in 1980 are all products of this university. These include Professors E. O Akande, A. O. K. Johnson, A. O. Falase, B. O., Osotimehin, A. O. Ojengbede, M. T. Shokunbi, I. F. Adewole, A. O. Omigbodun, O. O. Akinyinka and last but not the list B. L. Salako.

The accomplishments of the early generation continue to manifest itself in the second trimester generation within and outside the country. Permit me to concentrate on the diaspora, with particular emphasis on the United States of America, where I have been resident in the last twenty years. I will also crave your indulgence for my bias towards US based alumni in academia. Mr. Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the qualities associated with our college training yielded great dividends at the University of Chicago (U of C). Our loss at Ibadan is a gain to U of C wherein Professor Olufunmilayo Falusi-Olopade is recognized as “the face of breast cancer” due to her tremendous research in this area. In 2005, she received the John D. & Catherine T. MacAuthur foundation distinguished scholar award of US\$500,000, usually given to people who show exceptional promise in making a difference in the world. She was also nominated by President Barack Obama to serve on the white house US national cancer advisory board in recognition of her landmark achievements. It is also noteworthy that Professor Falusi-Olopade engaged, motivated, and mentored another alumnus, Dr. Muinat Olatoyosi Sobulo-Odenike. This mentorship was crowned in 2003 with a Conquer Cancer Foundation of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) career development award for Dr. Sobulo-Odenike. This ongoing award is meant to pursue a

research project on Histone Deacetylase Inhibition as therapeutic target for Acute Myeloid Leukemia.

In the area of Physiotherapy, Ibadan has produced worthwhile and distinguished representatives in academia in the United States and elsewhere. These include Professor Chukuka Enwenmeka – Provost and Senior Vice President of San Diego State University, San Diego, California, Professor Joseph A. Balogun – former Dean College of Health Sciences, Chicago State University, Chicago, Illinois, Professor Akiniran Oladehin – Chairman, Department of Physical Therapy, Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri, Professor Dele Amosun – Director, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape-Town, South Africa.

The examples given so far are not meant to be exhaustive as there are many other great alumni from other faculties and departments of the college that neither space nor time will permit me to mention. However, their achievements and successes are also recognized and celebrated.

Despite the reported successes, some of the challenges confronted by the previous generation are still ongoing and have become even more compounded due to lack of easy access to advances in technology, increased levels of corruption, political instability and cronyism, avarice, greed and socio-economic insecurity amongst others. For the college to remain the flagship of medical education in West Africa, this generation and the next would have to aggressively and sincerely address these challenges. I am not naïve; it is not going to be easy. However, this can be achieved with a 3D plan – dedication, determination and devotion to service. The history of our university is replete with examples of brave alumni who stood up to the system in spite of the risk to their lives and

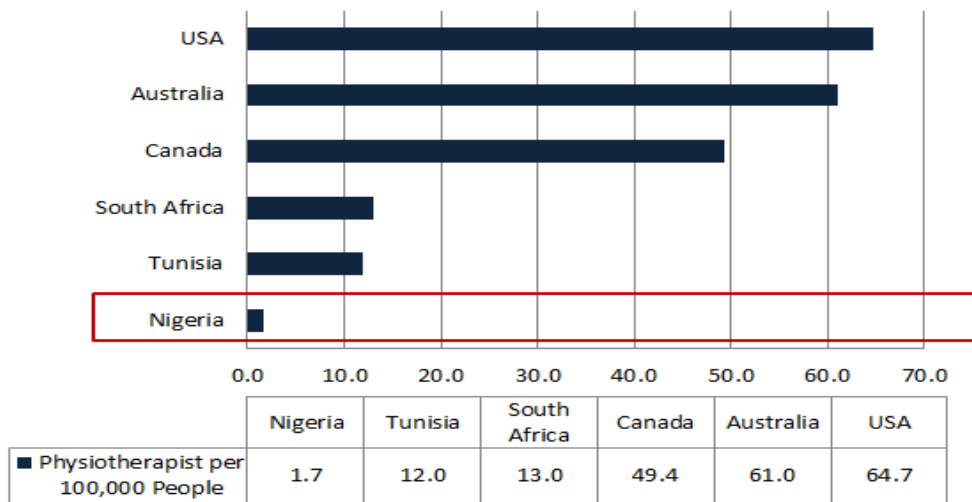
livelihood. Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka went to jail for what he believed in. Professor Tunji Bello resigned as Ogun State commissioner for finance under the now deceased Navy Captain Mohammed Lawal's administration in protest against corruption.

### **THE FUTURE (2008 and up) Millennials or Generation Y**

1. Following the footsteps of the early and baby-boomer generations, the millennials are bound by providence to confront the challenges discussed earlier and proffer solutions to new ones. It is pertinent at this juncture to backtrack to Thom-Otuya's 2012 analysis of Nigerian government failure to provide portable drinking water, electricity, good roads, effective service delivery, employment housing scheme, quality health care, quality education and last but not the list credible electoral system. All the issues enumerated above impact negatively on what we do as healthcare providers and medical scientists. Permit me to use my area of expertise, physiotherapy, to illustrate this dilemma. For example, Ibadan CMUI has produced 740 physiotherapists since the inception of physiotherapy in 1966. I will digress a little to take this opportunity to recognize the founding father and pioneer head of department, Dr. Thompson Abayomi Oshin, who is 88 years young and still waxing stronger. Getting back to the issue at hand, one of the stark measures that will illustrate the impact of the challenges we are facing is easily demonstrated by the number of physiotherapists per 100,000 population as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure: 1**

### Comparative Workforce Density of Physiotherapist



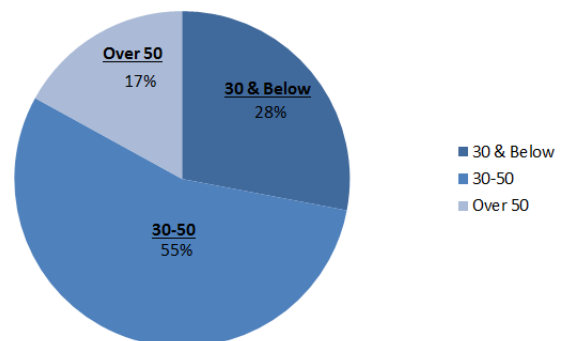
\*Sources: Global Atlas of the Health Workforce & US Department of Labor Statistics

The data used in Figure 1 and subsequent figures was obtained from a survey report titled Health Workforce Country Profile for Nigeria (2013) and Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook 2014-15 Edition Physical Therapist. As Figure 1 shows, Nigeria has 1.7 physiotherapists per 100,000 compared to 12 for Tunisia, 13 for South Africa, 49.4 for Canada, 61.4 for Australia, 64.7 for U.S.A.

Out of the 2,818 physiotherapists registered with the Medical Rehabilitation Board (MRTB), Ibadan accounts for 740, that is about 28% (Personal Communication with the Physiotherapy Head of Department,

**Figure: 2**

### Age Distribution of Nigerian Physiotherapist



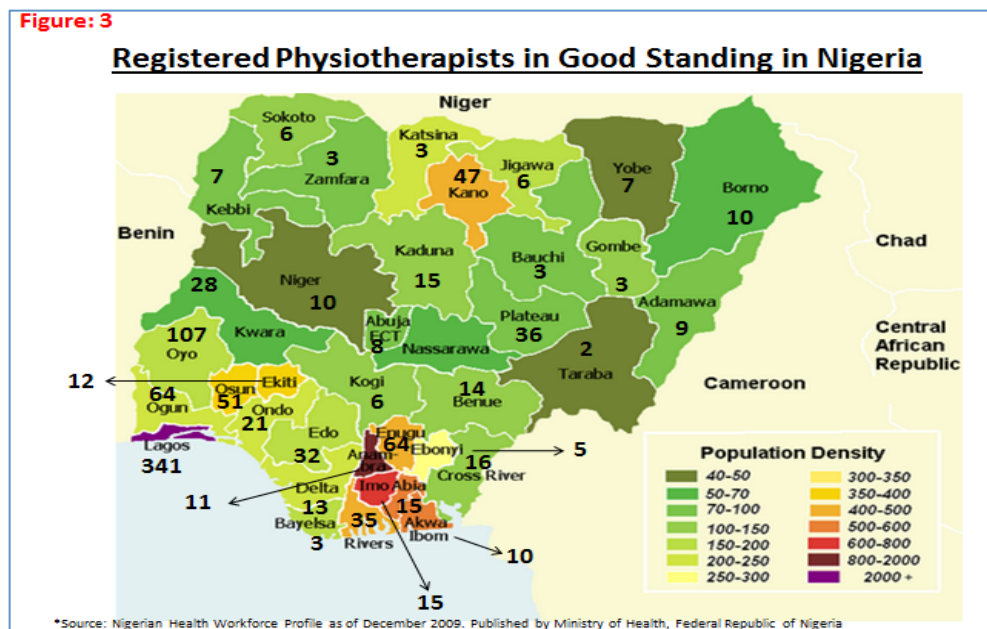
2014). The rest is distributed among the other five institutions that have physiotherapy program. Although Ibadan has produced more than its fair share, and Figure 4 shows annual progressive increase in the number of registered physiotherapists, as a nation, we all need to do more. The same data for age distribution shows 28% of physiotherapists in their 30s. 55% are within 30 to 50 years of age. 17% are over 50 and close to retirement. To add insult to our nation's injury, the distribution pattern in terms of healthcare facilities shows 66% working in public health (secondary and tertiary institutions), 8% in private practice and 14% unemployed. This striking and sobering statistics present very serious national security and civil rights implications. This is in accord with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s observation that "of all forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane."

Thus the data above have the following implications:

- Inadequate workforce density of 1.7 per 100,000 may suggest poor access and affordability of physiotherapy services to the masses, which amounts to injustice. For a profession that started in Nigeria after the second world war with a view to caring for injured soldiers, the center definitely can not hold if there is any war today, hence the security implication. Considering this low density coupled with the fact that some of us are close to retirement as shown in Figure 2, it is very important to increase the intake of physiotherapy students. I must say though that increasing intake should be predicated upon expanding training facilities for all programs in Nigeria.
- The poor percentage distribution as shown in Figure 3 combined with total lack of physiotherapy services at the primary care level is very disheartening. One of the

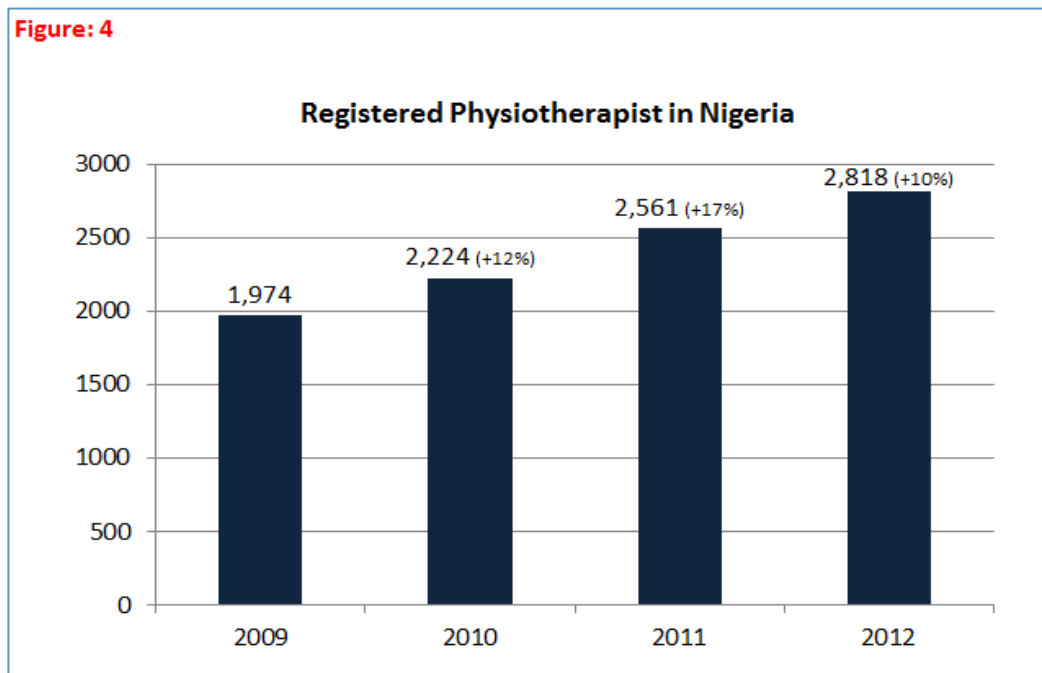
founding fathers and the pioneer of this profession in Nigeria, late Mr. Christopher Agboola Ajao, former Chief physiotherapist of the Western Region and later Oyo State Ministry of Health would definitely be turning in his grave. He singlehandedly initiated Community Physiotherapy Service (CPS) in the then Oyo State where treatment was made available to healthcare facilities in the rural areas. I was privileged to supervise and operate the Eruwa/Igbo-Ora CPS program in 1979 from Adeoyo State Hospital, Ibadan. Later in 1982/83, I was the Oshun zonal coordinator, based in Osogbo with weekly visits to Ede, Ilobu, Ifon, Ikire, Iragbiji, Inisha, and Iree. I, among others, including my esteemed colleague Dr. Babatunde Adegoke who is here with us today, worked on CPS activities in collaboration with the Canadian University Services Organization (CUSO). The essence of providing this detailed information is to activate and motivate the millennials to reexamine and possibly explore similar non-governmental organizations (NGO) programs to supplement governmental effort. Moreover, to redistribute the currently available human resources to areas of critical need in the

country, it is imperative to improve the current security situation. I therefore implore our political leaders and stakeholders in all areas of national security to put their best effort on this extremely important factor. Another factor that is worth mentioning is the loss of Nigeria trained physiotherapists through brain drain to other countries. Oyeyemi et al. (2012) in their study of job satisfaction comparison of Nigerian-based and Nigerian US-base physiotherapists concluded



that the US-based group had no better job satisfaction than their Nigerian counterparts. However the desire for emigration from Nigeria had to do with the search for greener pasture arising from poor pay and harsh economic conditions.

**Figure: 4**



## **MATTERS ARISING AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In accord with the Yoruba adage “A ji se bi oyo laari oyo ki ise bi baba eni kookan”, CMUI as the first and best should remain a model for all other medical schools in the nation. Hence all other institutions should look up to us for correct leadership, guidance and direction. I will therefore enjoin the millennial generation to respond as follows:

### **GENERAL**

- Adopt and follow Akinkugbe’s (2012) advice in his paper on “Saving the African University from Itself”, he asserted that African higher education conferences are long on discourse but short on effective implementation. He also recommended focusing on original ideas that will be relevant to our need.
- Increase participation in politics at the local, state and national levels. As part of your ROI to the baby boomers, I will love to see CMUI graduates in all political arenas. After all, election into various college positions like faculty deans and college provosts entails politicking. We have demonstrated unparalleled and



smooth transition in change of baton at the college and university levels without going to election tribunals. That model needs to be exported and injected into our nation's political terrain.

- To display courage. Whenever appointed into political office, a CMUI alumnus should always display our code of honour. We should be courageous to expose corrupt practices and even resign whenever we cannot make positive changes. In our professional engagement, we should not hesitate to expose or report colleagues with inadequate professional conduct and poor ethics. Financial mismanagement, among other things, in office amounts to professional and ethical misconduct. It is important to note the Nigerian Boards of Medical and Dental Council, Nursing and Midwifery, Medical Rehabilitation, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Science and others cannot function nor survive without our alumni. Conceptually, boards are meant to protect public safety. To what extent have we lived up to this obligation? I commend the positive role of some of our alumni on these boards but there is room for improvement. I will also plead for greater assertiveness and sincerity in ensuring the goal of public safety.

## COLLABORATION

The complexities involved in medical research and practice necessitate multi-disciplinary approaches. Advances in knowledge have further expanded specialties. As a result, effective and evidence-based research to obtain sound clinical outcome demands collaboration across multiple disciplines. For example, medical rehabilitation research can involve physiotherapists, occupational therapists, neurology and orthopedic physicians as well as physicists and biomedical engineers. There is value in harnessing

our resources in the diaspora and collaborate with them in our research endeavors. Another example of collaborative effort is in the area of book publishing. I have been informed of the Ibadan College of Medicine book series. We need to commend the department of nursing for being the first in this direction. I therefore implore others to follow suit.

#### INNOVATION IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The new trend in medical education is to separate and not divorce allied health professions from medical schools. I am delighted by the news that Bayero and Nnamdi Azikwe universities now have faculty of health sciences. But then, what happened to our being the first and the best? Mr. Vice Chancellor and the provost, I wish to strongly propose that faculty of health sciences be commenced as soon as possible to include nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, prosthetics and orthotics, medical laboratory sciences, and radiography.

All trainees in our medical school should be exposed to community service outside medically related areas with a view to exposing them to other aspects of human interactions. This can be designed into our high school curriculum such that it can be made one of the conditions for admission. Community service is a means of inculcating selflessness in our college graduate that can eventually engender the same spirit for the whole nation. Why can't ICOMAA members, for example, initiate a program similar to "Doctors without borders" to address issues of medical crisis across the whole of Africa. I am of the opinion that starting a similar programme with our own funds will definitely attract marching grants from international funding agencies and wealthy donors. The current Ebola crisis and other national disasters that require immediate massive medical

response will benefit from such a program.

In addition to the statutory one year internship required for graduates of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and physiotherapy to be licensed, there is need to encourage overseas internship for greater exposure for students who can afford it. Similarly, industrial training fund scheme (ITF) can be used in collaboration with governmental agencies and the private sector for the same purpose in our local environment.

#### ALUMNI CONTRIBUTIONS

My previous life at Ibadan allowed me to serve as the national secretary of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association (UIAA) under Dr. Felix Ohiwerei as president. During that period, we were privileged to observe distinguished alumni contribute their time, wealth and leverage their positions to enrich the university. I challenge you to do the same for our college. I want to seize this opportunity to express our profound appreciation to Dr. Ohiwerei whose unparalleled love for physiotherapy translated into N25million donation for the building of physiotherapy department. I encourage all of us to follow his footsteps. This can be accomplished as follows:

- Automatic monthly deduction from the bank accounts of individual alumnus to ICOMAA's bank account.
- Annual professional group reunion similar to the Ibadan medical specialist group (IMSG) based in the U.K. This group makes significant contributions to the college on annual basis. The IMSG is currently engaged with building pre-clinical library building on the main campus. I am made to understand that Nursing started their reunion last year.
- Leveraging our influence and connection with corporate entities and private

wealthy individuals to sponsor infrastructural development projects for the college. The alumni in diaspora can be a veritable source for procuring equipment as part of this exercise.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Chairman, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and all protocols observed; UI is known as the first and the best in West Africa for obvious reasons. As far as I am concerned, it is the best in the world, more so, being a graduate of the first and best college within that outfit. I implore you all to learn from the past, live in the present and plan for the future. After all, there is no future without the past. I thank you immensely for this special opportunity to address this august audience. The final take-home for all of us is that death is imminent. The journey of life is like a moving train; each one of us will disembark at our station when the time is right. The questions are; what will you be remembered for? What will be your legacy? Please make that your food for thought today. College of Medicine made us who we are today, and “to whom much is given much is expected.” In adapting the words of former American President, J.F. Kennedy, I say to you, my fellow alumni, think of what you can do for Ibadan College of Medicine, and not what CMUI can do for you.

Nigeria is a multi-religious nation with all faiths advocating and preaching charity. Today, I wish to seize this opportunity to engage us all, as people from different faiths, in a short fundraising exercise towards the upliftment of our college.

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