



IHAVN NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN VIROLOGY, NIGERIA



My Tears are Wiped Away - Mother of two

By Blessing ukpabi & Anna Angbazo



Jennifer Michael preparing egg rolls and doughnut for sale

I was hopeless and unable to provide basic needs for my two children, said Jennifer Michael, a 36-year-old mother residing in Abuja with no source of income.

Her partner of seven years sent her packing in 2019 to bring in another woman in spite of her health condition. She said, "I am living with HIV and one of my children is also HIV positive."

The situation made Jennifer to seek an alternative shelter in an uncompleted building for herself and the children, "We used to sleep on cartons and during rainy season we got soaked as there was no roof." Life became more complicated as there was no food. According to her, "we picked from the dustbin and begged to feed."

Though feeding was a challenge to the family, the children's right to education was also relegated. Sad as it may sound, she said, "Even before we were sent packing, the children had dropped out from school because we could not pay school fees which made me sad and cry a

lot." She added that, "I never went to school, what I want the most is for my children to get the best education".

However, life began to take a new dimension when she was identified at Gwarinpa General Hospital by Mrs. Blessing Musa Danladi, a Linkage Coordinator working with a Community Based Organization supported by Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN). According to Jennifer, the Linkage Coordinator, made enquiries about her family and sought her consent to visit her home. Afterwards, the mother of two was enrolled as a beneficiary of IHVN Orphans and Vulnerable children (OVC) intervention.

She said, "God used her to wipe my tears." With a sigh of relief, Jennifer narrated how she was enlisted for financial and business management training by the CBO. Thereafter, she was funded to start a business to generate income.

"When I received funding support, I bought a bag of flour, millet and

eggs. I started selling kunu, egg rolls, doughnuts and buns.

She joined a village savings and loan group to have emergency funds for her household and pay her children's school fees, "Every day, I save N200 out of my N1,300 net profit," she stated.

What makes Jennifer happy about the profit she is making is that her children who were out of school for two years are now re-enrolled in primary school. "My son is in Primary One and my daughter in primary One.

Nutrition education and counseling for adherence to HIV medications were also services she received under the IHVN program to empower households of vulnerable children. "People are now saying that I look better, that is because I am eating better and have the transport money to go to the hospital for appointment, my drugs and tests, she added.

According to Blessing, the Linkage Coordinator who has been following up with the household, Jennifer has

From the Chief Executive Officer

PREVENTING COMMUNITY SPREAD OF COVID-19.



The fact that community spread exists is a thing that has been established and by community spread we are talking about people coming down with COVID-19 without being able to point specifically to wherever they got it from.

This means that somehow, somewhere they came in contact with the virus without knowing it and they picked the virus within their everyday lives. It means that we are on a situation that if care is not taken, we will be overwhelmed. Now the measures that are used for prevention of COVID-19, are time tested methods for infectious diseases especially respiratory diseases.

First of all, you don't get the virus just by touching somebody only. It is a droplet infection. By droplet, it means it comes from the respiratory tract either by breathing, coughing or sneezing and then you take it into your own respiratory system or membranes of eyes, ears, nose or mouth, either by touching your face, with hands that has been on a surface or by breathing it in.

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been more consistent in taking her HIV medications as seen in her recent viral load test.

"Her viral load has reduced from 400copies to 110 copies per milliliter of blood. When I first met her she was dejected and emaciated, but now, she takes her drugs correctly and consistently and looks well. With adherence to treatment, it can always get better," Blessing said.

Furthermore, she explained that she counsels Jennifer on HIV prevention to guide against transmission to her HIV negative child. "HIV can be transmitted through sharp objects. For the safety of her daughter, we guide her on measures on take."

The mother of two expressed her gratitude for counseling received, "I can freely share my concerns with her, she advises me and looks out for my welfare," Jennifer stated.

IHVN OVC Program Manager, Mrs. Jummai Musa explained that HIV education is one of the services offered in the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as part of efforts to address children's basic needs and empower households with the right information on HIV.

"The Institute works with supported Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide OVC with services that include; health and nutrition, psychosocial support, education, gender norms, household economic strengthening and child protection. These activities are carried out with funding support from US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

(PEPFAR) through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)."

According to the Manager, in 2019, more than 2,500 households in the FCT benefitted from financial empowerment for Income Generating Activities (IGA). "Jennifer's story points to the importance of household economic strengthening in increasing the ability of families to access finances, invest in the education, nutrition and health of their children"

Mrs. Jummai added that "strengthening households help to keep children healthy, stable, safe and schooled thereby achieving resilience and supporting the children to achieve their full potentials"

Acting Head of the FCT HIV/AIDS Social Development Secretariat, Dr. Okoro N. Okoro stressed that the basic needs of children are better met with family-centered interventions. "Many people in the communities are benefitting. Thank God for IHVN and other partners."

Dr. Okoro urged vulnerable families to speak up. "People should not die in silence when there is help available. The Social Development Secretariat can guide you on what to do, link you to necessary structured support."

There are an estimated 17.5 million children in Nigeria considered vulnerable to adversities and at risk of not fulfilling their full potential to live a safe and productive life according to the 2014 National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable Children in Nigeria.



Biographies of our key staff continue with the Finance Director.

Mr. Olufemi Alabi
Finance Director



Mr. Olufemi Alabi ensures proper management of the Institute's finance functions as Director of Finance. He supervises expenditure, financial reporting, budget preparation and execution of several projects implemented by the Institute. Mr. Alabi also monitors budget appropriation and actual expenditure to ensure compliance with donor requirements.

Harmonizing financial processes and procedures for smooth running of the Institute's activities in all its supported facilities also falls under his purview as the Head of the Finance Department.

Mr. Alabi is a Chartered Accountant with expertise in financial management systems, budget preparation and reviews, assurance, financial analysis, risk management, compliance and operational internal controls. He has over 17 years of experience serving local and multinational corporations

Prior to joining IHVN, he worked in PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) as the Team Lead of the Local Fund Agent (LFA) to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. He was also manager on several audits of donor

(USAID, UNOPS, UNICEF) funded projects. He also managed audits of several non-governmental organizations and private organizations. He had a thirteen-year work experience at PwC rising through the ranks from Associate to Senior Manager with expertise in Public Financial Management. In these positions, he handled audit, risk assessment and review of the internal control environment.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Accounting from Oxford Brookes University, UK and a Higher National Diploma in Accounting & Finance from Yaba College of Technology. He is a Fellow of Association Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN).

WATCH OUT ...For other Key Staff in the next edition.

IRCE Trains Researchers on Project Management by Luret Dakum

The International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE) has trained cancer researchers drawn from Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana, Senegal and South Africa on project management

At the training, which held in Abuja, IRCE Coordinator Dr. Elima Jedy-Agba, urged researchers to utilize project management skills for successful implementation of research projects in sub-Saharan Africa. "Being trained on project management is key for all researchers working in the field of cancer. If you are assembling a team together for a project, trainings such as this will help them develop skills to deliver projects more successfully.

There are a lot of online templates

that we shared with participants at this four-day training. For researchers who are unable to participate in face-to-face trainings like this, there are a lot of resources online that they can benefit from. Using such resources will guide them on how to properly schedule their time, develop a data management plan, communication plan, risk management plan and a budget," she said.

She added that project management skills are vital because "many research funders in sub Saharan Africa want to be sure that funded projects are implemented in a timely manner, and are effectively and efficiently done, improving the



Caroline Andrews from Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, USA facilitating a virtual interactive session on project management.

likelihood of obtaining valid results."

Dr. Jedy-Agba, noted that with well executed cancer research projects in the country, funders will be more likely to fund other research projects which will improve

sustainability. "Cancer is now an important public health issue in sub-Saharan Africa. The incidence of cancer in the region over the past decade has almost doubled looking at data from our cancer registries.

The training was done in collaboration with the Men of Africa Decent and carcinoma of the prostate (MADCAP) consortium at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, USA, and the University of Ibadan, Oyo State with funding from CRDF Global awarded to Dr. jedy-Agba.

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Laboratory Scientists Train on Quality

By Blessing Ukpabi

To strengthen the country's capacity to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks, the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) in collaboration with the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) has trained laboratory specialists on Laboratory Quality Management Systems in Abuja.

The four-day capacity building for the Yellow Fever Network of Laboratories across the country featured modules in management and technical requirements of ISO 15189:2012 certification amongst other areas.

According to IHVN Program Manager Laboratory, Mrs. Bimpe

Hospital, University of Benin Teaching Hospital, Benin, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu and Yusuf Dan Tsoho Specialist Hospital, Kaduna.

Mrs. Ogbazi Josephine, Head of Quality Management from Central Public Health Laboratory, Lagos said that so far, the training "has improved our understanding of quality management. If quality management practices are followed, then we are definitely having accurate and timely results and for planning, so our people would be safe." Chukwubike Chinedu from the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, another participant



IHVN Program Manager Laboratory, Mrs. Oye bimpe Balogun facilitating a session at the training

Balogun, this will "improve the laboratory system ensuring that results are reliable, accurate and reproducible. Hopefully, they can get national or international accreditation and that way their results would be comparable to any laboratory in the world," she said.

She added that with adequate skills and knowledge laboratory scientists can avoid wrong diagnosis to prevent disease outbreaks.

"Infected clients can be easily identified and quick intervention made to avoid the spread of infection to more people." NCDC Laboratory Network Advisor, Mrs. Celestina Obiekea, enjoined participants to "Listen and make use of the opportunity so that you can put to practice what you learn." Participants were drawn from National Reference Laboratory, Gaduwa, Central Public Health Laboratory, Lagos, Maitama District

said, "The training is coming at the right time for us, being a new laboratory for yellow fever diagnosis in the country.

We need to see what others are doing and also to be able to produce quality result that would be integrated into the network." The training is part of activities of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the RESOLVE to Save Lives (RTSL) an initiative of Vital strategies working with governments in Low and Middle Income Countries to improve capacity and preparedness and help the world prevent epidemics. IHVN is implementing the RESOLVE sub-grant, spearheaded by Principal Investigator and Executive Director Laboratory Services, Prof. Alash'le Abimiku, to facilitate capacity reinforcement activities that will strengthen and expand existing national and regional laboratory systems and network.

Preventing Community Spread of COVID-19

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So, what do you do? We institute mechanisms for putting a barrier between the virus and human beings. How do we do that in the context of the community? large gatherings portend danger because close contact is high.

It means then that every every community must be wary about large gatherings. In Nigeria, markets, religious and social gatherings, festivals and parties are main sources for community transmission of COVID-19.

Next is that you have to come in contact with people so what do you do? The issue of wearing a face mask is something that we have talked about. Apparently, people are yet to get the fact that using of face mask is extremely important as far as prevention is concerned. So, we must figure out a way by involving community gatekeepers for them to accept the use of face masks.

They need to understand why they should wear a mask. The people that will enable them understand are the people they hold in high esteem in the community.

At IHVN, we have worked with community gate keepers in various programs, either with

our Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program, or our HIV program, or our malaria program, we have done a lot of identification on who these traditional, religious, trade unions are.

Let the leaders catch the vision, let the leaders agree to put on this face mask in a correct way and then the followers will follow.

What will be our role? Our role as an Institute will be promoting these in the communities that we are working with, the other thing of course is work places.

Offices must have a protocol. Our protocol at the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria is that as you arrive, whether you are the CEO, COO/MD, Executive Director, you wash your hands with soap and water before entering.

Protocols must be developed and protocols must be followed and the role of institutes like ours is providing that technical support for the development of protocols.

Community transmission is here and what the government by relaxing this lock down is telling you and I, is that your life is in your hand, protect it or



Yours truly,
Dr. Patrick Dakum
Chief Executive Officer,
Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria

JAN - JUN 2020

Photo Gallery



Our Executive Director, Clinical Laboratory Services, Prof. Alash'le Abimiku discussing with laboratory scientists at the IHVN supported multiplex laboratory at the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), National Reference Laboratory in Gaduwa, Abuja.



Staff of IHVN participate in a social media campaign themed, "Each for Equal", to mark International Women's Day.



IHVN CEO, Dr. Patrick Dakum, addresses staff in an orientation meeting for new employees.



Staff of the International Research Center of Excellence train on database design, data capture, management and reporting.



Chief of Party of IHVN USAID TB Local Organizations Network (LON) project, Dr. Aderonke Agbaje, speaks at the 2020 pre-World TB Day Press Conference.



IHVN Staff, Mr. Yaro Oyinloye carrying out HIV testing in Mabushi, Abuja during a community COVID-19 testing outreach.

News in Brief

IHVN Conducts COVID-19 Infection Prevention Training

More than 190 doctors, pharmacists, nurses, laboratory scientists and other health care workers have participated in a virtual training on COVID-19

infection prevention control. The training covered areas like, use of personal protective equipment, standard precautions and transmission of infections.

According to IHVN FCT Regional Manager, Dr. Fadimatu Yunusa, "Due to COVID-19 pandemic, health care workers are at high risk of getting

infected.

This training focused on protection for both health care workers and their patients in a hospital setting."

Former IHVN Assistant Director PCT Gets NSAC Appointment



Pharm. Yohanna Avong

Former Assistant Director Prevention, Care and Treatment at Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN), Pharm. Yohanna Avong, has received an appointment as a member of the National Drug Safety Advisory Committee (NDSAC) for two years.

The appointment was conveyed in a letter from the Director-General of the National Agency for Food, Drug

Administration and Control, NAFDAC, Prof. Christiana Mojisola Adeyeye. Prof. Adeyeye stated that the appointment was as a result of Yohanna Avong's contribution to drug safety monitoring and adverse drug reporting.

In the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN), Mr. Avong had implemented the structured Pharmacovigilance and Training Initiative

(SPHARTI), which is the first Pharmacovigilance training model in Nigeria, for the systematic rapid training of healthcare workers on prompt and accurate reporting of Adverse Drug reactions (ADRs) to the National Agency for Drug and Food Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

IHVN Implements USAID TB LON Project

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has begun the implementation of a five-year U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) project to rapidly

find and treat people infected with tuberculosis. As one of the "Local Organizations Network" participating in this project, IHVN is to improve access

to high quality and person - centered treatment for tuberculosis in Lagos, Oyo, Ogun and Osun states. The Institute is also to strengthen systems and

structures for tuberculosis detection, treatment and notification.

Tribute to Dr. Stephen B. Dapiap

– Strategic Information Department

Dr. Stephen Boerwhoen Dapiap (Phd) was a valued member of the Department of Strategic Information. He was dedicated, driven to achieve and went about his duties in an uncomplicated, quiet, unobtrusive but friendly and welcoming manner while working within the structures and processes of the organization, and in collaboration with colleagues.

He was a major factor in the success of the Surveillance and Recency programmes of the Institute and was instrumental in mainstreaming these

programmes and building capacity within and without the organization. He often interfaced with funders, government and regulatory agencies and partner implementing public health programs in the country.

In all assignments and tasks, his brilliance stood out. He gave clear – sighted and forensic analysis of issues – an obvious indication of his mathematics and numerate background.

Dr. Dapiap was dogged, determined and doughty – reflected in the high quality data for which IHVN has become

rightly reputed. He was a significant and positive presence in the department. He will be sorely missed by us all but especially by the Surveillance and Implementation Science Unit, which he led with competence and those with whom he shared physical office space and interacted daily. We mourn a diligent colleague, a helpful superior and an astute gentleman; we extend our sympathies to his family – nuclear and extended – in these difficult times we pray that God's comforting presence, reassuring

providence and restoring peace be their portion.



Late. Dr. Stephen. B. Dapiap
Adieu Stephen.

COVID-19 lock- down: Partnership ensures smooth drug-refills for PLHIV

By Lawrence Wakdet



A Community Pharmacist in Rivers State giving drug refills to a client, an intervention to ensure that clients receive HIV medications during the pandemic.

To address the challenge of access to HIV medications by People Living with HIV (PLHIV) during the COVID-19 lockdown, and movement restrictions with inter-state travel ban, Institute of Human Virology (IHVN) have Partnered to enhance

smooth drug pick-ups and refills for clients stuck in states outside their hospital location.

The partnership, which has benefitted more than 100 PLHIV, was initiated in April and involved pharmacists working across 23 states. They responded to calls from clients, and linked them to

nearby facilities already informed about the drug refill needed. According to IHVN Pharmacy Lead, Rivers Surge Project, Pharm. Lawrence Wakdet, the pharmacists utilized a WhatsApp platform for prompt information dissemination.

"Documentation was done and shared with the respective Implementing Partners concerned, and with Funders; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID)." Mr. Wakdet also noted that representatives from Centre for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP), Family Health International FHI/SIDHAS, Howard University Global Initiative Nigeria HUGIN/SIDHAS, Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNI), AIDS Prevention Initiative Nigeria (APIN), and Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria

through Pro-Health International, participated in the collaborative activity.

One of the beneficiaries Mrs. Grace Johnson, (not her real name), said that though she was stuck in Lagos and anxious about her drug pick-up, through this arrangement, she was able to get a refill. 'I really don't like missing my medications so I was really confused about how to travel and get my refill. Luckily, when I complained to one of the ART Clinic Staff, he made some phone contacts and I received a call from one of the Pharmacists here in Lagos. I was advised to go to a government hospital close to me where I got my drug refill for three months. There was no waste of time.

I am so happy,' she said.

IHVN Supports NEQAL International Accreditation

by: Blessing Ukpa

Recently, the National Quality Assessment Laboratory (NEQAL) Saye-Zaria, a Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN) facility was supported by IHVN to achieve the ISO 17043 International accreditation, the first of its kind in West Africa. By this achievement NEQAL's proficiency testing panels can compare to any other in the world for the same discipline.

IHVN Executive Director Laboratory Services, Prof. Alash'le Abimiku, led the IHVN team to the presentation of the Certificate of Accreditation and the commissioning of the National Laboratory Equipment Calibration Center, which IHVN provides technical support for Prof. Abimiku speaks on the significance of the NEQAL accreditation in this brief interview,

What has been the journey so far in supporting MLSCN to achieve this accreditation?

IHVN started working with NEQAL in Zaria a long time ago and MLSCN for several years now and one of the things that we have done with funding from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is to be able to set up this quality assurance laboratory.

We are working with MLSCN to ensure that laboratories that are licensed to practice are doing quality work and are not hurting people, but are conducting tests that are dependable and that are accurate for management of patients.

How have we ensured this quality?

One of the ways to do that is that occasionally, all of these laboratories that are licensed get panels and these panels are usually tests.

They don't know what is in it. They run the tests and return the tests results to MLSCN, and by going through the results, the council can establish whether these laboratories are doing the right thing or not. If they are not, what we usually do is that they are trained further.

So far, for the technical aspect of it, IHVN has dedicated three staff working 100% of their time with MLSCN because part of our mandate at the beginning was actually preparing panels and testing the sites that we are responsible for, under the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

IHVN has already built this capability and the staffing so when this expanded to a national program beyond IHVN

laboratories, our staff that have proficiency in it were moved over to support the council and work with council staff, they are to make sure that the staff becomes proficient. Even after that, our staff have continued to support this activity because MLSCN needed the additional resources to run this.

How has IHVN supported this program?

CDC very proactively have funded IHVN to continue to support the Government of Nigeria to do that. What we do as IHVN, as an NGO is bring on board the technical expertise but then the Government of Nigeria, like MLSCN provides the policies and the guidelines, and has a way of controlling what happens within the country so that they are able also to check the quality of all the laboratories that are under their care.

I think this is a partnership that is really the way to go in terms of having the government lead the way. The government is happy to bring on board organizations like IHVN that are very strong in the laboratory arm to provide the

technical support.



(L-R) Hon. Minister of State for Health, Sen. Olurunmibe Mamora, Chairman, Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN) Governing Board, Prof. Mohammed Gwarzo and MLSCN Registrar, Dr. Tosan Erhabor pose for a photograph with the NEQAL accreditation certificate.



(L-R) IHVN Program Manager Laboratory, Mrs. Oyeibimpe Balogun, IHVN Executive Director Laboratory Services, Prof. Alash'le Abimiku and IHVN Program Manager Laboratory, Mr. Ado Abubakar, at the event