

# THE NATURE'S GREEN PHARMACY CHALLENGE

Most Nigerians believe that we don't have the best health — care system, at least that's what all the doctors and government health — experts keep trying to tell us. But anyone who has gotten the run — around from a doctor or had to deal with a difficult health problem knows that if what we have is not the best then the best still leaves a lot to be desired.

Most Nigerian assume that the - pharmaceuticals their doctor prescribed are unquestionably better than the herbal medicines that few doctors and relatively few Nigerians knows about. It delights me to no end that this picture is changing rapidly. As early as my childhood, I've been interested in Medicinal plants because it runs in my Family and now as a Naturopathic physician, I have personally seen medicinal herbs successfully treat conditions that high-tech pharmaceuticals could not touch.

The reason herbs are more popular is that the drug company can't patent them. The drug companies make their money by pulling out the medicinally active molecules out of the herbs and then tinkering with them a little until they're chemically unique. The companies can then patent their new molecules, give them brand names and sell them back to us for a lot more than their original herbal sources cost.

Of course, the drug companies always say that their unique molecules are better, strong, more targeted and safer than herbs. I'll readily agree that they are stronger. Infact, they're often too strong and have bad side effects that their herbal precursors might not have.

As for Pharmaceuticals being better, that's sometimes hard to say. In some studies, herbal products clearly perform better. Ginger, for example has been shown to be superior to Pharmaceutical dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) as a preventive therapy for motion sickness. A substance in carrot helps open arteries to the heart; the Catharantus Rouses is use to fight leukemia, this same plant (Catharantus Rouses) is known to have over 70 different Indole alkaloids, with also a powerful antidiabetic properties; for hormones, we have Dioscoria deltoides; Rauwolfia serpentine which contains ,reserpine is used for cardio vascular disease and its relative, Rauwolfia vomitoria is also used as an antihypertensive therapeutic drug, for Opthamological preparation; we have Physostigma Venenosum and Duboisia Myoporoides; the German scientist have developed a general anesthetic from clove.

With the backing of controlled clinical studies and hard plain experimental data, well research- Phytotherapy should be 'able to provide answers to conditions not treated well with orthodox therapy.. -

I'm not saying that Pharmaceuticals are bad. I am saying that we need more research that test herbs against Pharmaceutical drugs. - Until that happens, we simply won't know which is better. That leads me to the rather shocking conclusion that Nigerians are not necessarily getting the best medicine. The Natures green Pharmacy with its herbal therapies may, in many cases, prove to be more economical, more effective and safer, all with fewer side effects than the Pharmaceuticals.

Our challenge is to transcend the assumptions that are made by some people. Our challenge *is* to think GREEN - not the mercenary, monetary green of the Pharmaceutical firms but the cleansing, empowering green of chlorophyll, the green the feeds, fuels, oxygenates and medicates our planets. Economics drive the Pharmaceutical companies, but what drives the Nature's green Pharmacy and the green life-style in general is ecology the idea that we're connected to everything else on the planet and that we all thrive or fall together. Our challenge is to come together as a team and work together. I encourage- the Pharmaceutical companies, the Federal Government, and State Government to invest generously on our own medical system that is orthodox to

us. Our own medicine must be seen as the best for us. I would want to see our Pharmaceutical companies work together with our Natural Medicine Physicians.

I understand that someone must teach new things, someone must take the abuse, someone must be Ostracize, someone must be called a fraud and a quack. Then out of all of it comes the new understanding and truth to become a part of us in redefining natural herbal medicine. Thus we receive new facts to make up our proud possession of knowledge.

It is vitally important really to unite with Doctors of Natural Medicine, improve on their skills, encourage them to work well, and help in bringing Traditional Nigerian medicine into focus, only then can we be able to shoulder the tremendous task of looking after the health of several millions of Nigerian people as we are moving all together in this millennium, especially when so many chronic illnesses remain incurable in the present state of medical science, and today's doctors fees, in Nigeria at least, are beyond the reach of so many, not to talk of other parts of the world.

Let us boldly take our place in the world to help mankind out of its health dilemma, let us stand firm in our profession as Naturopaths and pharmacognosists, unshakable, let us hold tight to the gift of nature's green pharmacy. Alternative medicine is now the triumph of the new paradigm of wellness, preventive medicine and holistic care over the old model of illness, drugs, surgery and treating symptoms rather than the whole person.

Undoubtedly, many of us agreed that they were born by traditional doctors, but they would not say anything good about herbal natural medicines as being very good or excellent in treating some ailments, rather they describe it as unscientific. And I ask,) what is scientific or what is science? Or what is unscientific? Who is a better scientist than our nature's green pharmacy?

There is often an arrogant reluctance of the medical profession to accept - or even to consider - healing methods which haven't been confirmed by scientific studies.

Man has been trying for ages to unravel the mysteries within a single leaf or seed to understand the energy or radiation surrounding us with less success. Our body has a series of energy conduits. This energy flows along systematic meridians, which do not coincide with any known physiologic structures known to modern medical school. Our scientist were not able to understand why and how of it's synergistic blend. It remains superior and hidden to their unscientific mind. And we will keep searching, won't we? Man is closely in harmony with Nature's green. We breathe in what they breathe out. No wonder we were admonished not to destroy them for the tree of the field is man's life.

By the way, is there any other body on health more important than the World Health Organization (WHO)?

World Health Organization (WHO) has accepted and recommended that herbal medicine will go a long way to achieve health for all in this millennium, therefore Government should create an enabling for the development of safe herbal medicines to encourage collaboration among Natural medicine doctors, pharmaceutical industries, scientists and government agencies.

The potency of our Natural medicine and its patronage are facts that cannot be contested in many circles. This is evident in the global findings that many people of the world do patronize Natural medicine than orthodox medicine. With the trend of things presently people around the world especially in Europe, American, India, Germany and China have embarked on Natural remedies as alternative, Compliment or Supplement to orthodox medicine. This trend is very likely to continue further in this millennium to bring health for all.

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