



Jobelyn: at last, recognition by orthodox doctors

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TODAY, I am, as they say, in high spirits, vindicated by no fewer than 3,000 orthodox medical doctors that my pursuit of Jobelyn has not been a wild goose chase. Last Saturday, the 3,000 or so strong Association of General and Private Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (AGPMNPN) in Lagos State invited to Sheraton Hotel Mr. Olajuwon Moses Okubena, who produces Jobelyn, to honour him for "*your research that brought about a powerful worldwide accepted natural anti-oxidant (JOBELYN) ...*"

The AGPMNPN Merit Award for Mr. Okubena was the first the association would confer on any non-medical doctor in its history. Last month, he earned a similar recognition for Jobelyn from the Federal College of Complimentary and Alternative Medicine. The "research" for which Lagos doctors honoured him are multi-faceted, starting with that which sought to position this herbal product as a remedy for anaemia. That pioneering work was carried out by the pharmacy department of the University of Lagos College of Medicine, Idi-Araba. Mr. Okubena's initial focus was sickle cell anaemia. From there, he targeted anaemia in pregnancy, tuberculosis, cancer and that produced by the stress of everyday. Soon, some users found it relieved their diabetes or arthritic pain. In some cases, it restored the menstrual cycle in amenorrhic women. Newer investigations at Idi-Araba and at the University of Benin confirmed Jobelyn cuts blood sugar in diabetic conditions, while a high potassium content explained its diuretic value in hypertension and anti-inflammatory potential in arthritis. The latest researches in Germany and the United States show Jobelyn actually works better and safer than Ibuprofen, currently the doctor's first choice pharmaceutical agent in inflammation and pain control.

Mr. Okubena had wanted to storm the mountains and, from there, proclaim Jobelyn as a **daily – need** nutritional supplement to the Nigerian orthodox medical establishment. I told him he must be crazy, but could go ahead if he did not mind being literally "beheaded" by the medical establishment. It isn't that these doctors are plain wicked. We must understand that their long, tedious training teaches them to carefully evaluate the safety of the medicines they prescribe. So, for them, patient safety is paramount. But there are some who cannot understand that greatness resides in simplicity and that the world God created is a simple world in which medicine, too, must be simple. The brutality of medical academics which woos up medicine in incomprehensible language, except to the adroit gray matter, invites them to preserve their species as high priests in the temple of medicine by discouraging any attempt to simplify medicine and its language. A doctor cast in this mould is not different from the traditional medicine cult physician who woos up hydrated okra powder as a possible ulcer cure with, say, a concoction of the tongues of seven hens and toe nails of five frogs! In his practice, the orthodox medic would tell you the wearing of the neck bones which causes you pain is **cervical spondylosis** and when you hear of **ankylosing spondylitis**, you may suffer temporary urinary incontinence!. I reminded Mr. Okubena of the Law of Gradualism in Nature. The mills of Nature grind slowly but surely and finely. In Europe and in the United States, natural or whole plant medicine regained its high pedestal through patient testimonials. Patients who didn't get better on pharmaceutical drugs their doctors were giving them turned to Nature, got better often, and returned to the hospitals to tell their stories. Their doctors then had no option but to board the coach.

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first knew of Jobelyn in 1990 through Dr Ogunaike of the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos. He had some interest in herbs and we often spoke about them. Once day, he said a herb had been helping anaemia cases at the hospital. Apparently, Mr. Okubena had taken Jobelyn there. Back in the office at The Guardian newspaper, I called Tutu Folashade – koyi, the natural health reporter, to investigate it. But she already had samples and was knocking out a copy. I shared them among some of my friends whose children were sicklers. Their faces brightened and their parents asked for more. And there began my interest in Jobelyn. Many top management people in *The Guardian*, especially the Christian fundamentalists, belittled the herbal formula. I got samples from Mr Okubena for some members of the management Board and no fewer than four of them, like Oliver Twists, asked for more, telling me it improved their virility. Now, I can explain that, once blood volume and quality improve and the heart can pump well, and there are no blockages in the blood vessel system, virility is a given! But I was to be in for more challenges on Jobelyn that even threatened my job, from the least expected quarters that should be **knowing** in these matters.

At *The Guardian*, as elsewhere, I was accused of pushing the paper towards a "war" with medical doctors. Their supposed evidence for this was the letter from a LUTH consultant which claimed our editorial work was misleading a gullible public. The birth of Viagra provided me an opportunity to open their eyes wider. Hadn't our people natural virility herbs? I got Declan Okpalaeke, a microbiology graduate from Lagos State University (LASU) to run a kitchen experiment which I supervised. We gave **Ogbolo** to about 30 men and sent them for sperm count checks periodically.

They recorded phenomenal sperm count increases, except for two volunteers who were found to have urinary tract infections (UTIs). I presented our findings to the 70

thyearly conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria and published the results, amidst litigation threats by the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), which later backed down upon seeing the methodology. Declan presented his report for the African Journalist of the Year Award sponsored by the CNN and won a first prize purse of N1.5 million, a lot of money in the 1990s.

I could now walk taller, with Jobelyn. And when the matter again erupted at the Board outside The Guardian, I could easily dismiss claims that medical doctors were averse to herbs. There were not only letters from many of them making enquiries about herbs, or some of them who even practised urine therapy, I was a member of a Lagos eye foundation, for example, whose members included the well respected Dr Akinsete, one of Nigeria's earliest ophthalmologists as the chairman, Dr Leke Pitan, at that time Lagos State Health Commissioner, Dr (Mrs.) Bukunola Adefuye - Oshitelu, a LUTH ophthalmic surgeon who makes extracts of bitter kola for eye drops in glaucoma therapy! There is Dr V.I. Umoh, medical director of Ajaokuta Clinic I had known in his days at Duro Soleye Hospitals in Lagos. I had told him about Jobelyn. But he wasn't so sure it would click. Then he had a Jehovah Witness at his Ajaokuta clinic dying from ectopic pregnancy complications. Neither she nor her husband agreed to blood transfusion. Now, Dr Umoh remembered Jobelyn. He called me. I asked him to send someone to Mr. Okubena. He gave her Jobelyn. And she came round miraculously. Today, Dr Umoh not only prescribes Jobelyn, he sells it!

We must give Mr. Okubena all the credit for making Jobelyn cross the rubicon of the great medical divide last Saturday through his untiring efforts to sponsor expensive researches on the product. The researches, which impressed the doctors had been well explained to them by Dr Abia Okon. It began with anaemia studies, as earlier stated, and progressed through toxicological investigations, and some of the beneficial effects of Jobelyn in HIV management carried out by pathologist Col G.I. Ayuba of the Military Hospital, Ikoyi, Lagos. The findings of this study, which reported significant improvements in the well-being of HIV - AIDS challenged persons, were presented at the 2004 conference of military hospitals worldwide in Bethesda, United States. Mrs. Yetunde Ekpo, medical doctor wife of a former commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General of Cross River State, buoyed Jobelyn's reputation when, in Press interviews, she said the plant remedy stabilised the health of her sickle cell daughter who now tops her class in examinations. This encouraged her to give Jobelyn to an HIV - Positive son she adopted. He was abandoned by the natural mother at birth. After two years of Jobelyn therapy, blood tests showed he had negative. The latest of these researches compares Jobelyn's antioxidant potentials with those of well-known antioxidant plants in Europe and America and shows Jobelyn dwarfing them all. Another study in Germany rates Jobelyn against well known anti-inflammatory pharmaceutical drugs, including Ibuprofen, the best of the pack, which is no match for it in terms of effectiveness and safety. There are two levels of inflammation in the human body. The marker for the first is COX - 1. That for the other is COX - 2. The COX - 1 pathway is a normal process. COX - 2 emerges from abnormalities such as in traumas, free radical damage or when pro-inflammatory substances such as arachidonic acid or prostaglylandin - 2 series abound plentifully. Medicine has been searching for drugs which will eliminate COX - 2 substances and not tamper with the beneficial COX-1. So far, this has been a wild goose chase. Some of its premier anti-inflammatory and anti-pain drugs cause heart attacks and even strokes and, so, have been withdrawn from the market. In the ranking for safety and effectiveness, the higher the value the worse the remedy. The best are products with values less than one.

Eight products rated ranked against Jobelyn as follows: **Tenicap** 122; **Diclofenac** 2.2, **Piroxicam** 3.3; **Tenoxicam** 1.5; **Aspirin** 167; **Indomethacin** 30; **Jobelyn** 0.496 and **Ibuprofen** 18.91

Mr. Okubera's citation at last Saturday's AGPMNPN Merit Award says: "In the last 10 years, he has been working on providing more scientific evidence to support the efficiency and safety of Jobelyn, resulting in publications in some peer-reviewed journals and other unpublished works in Nigeria and other countries like USA, Germany and the United Kingdom.

"Jobelyn is the only Nigerian medical product that has qualified to be marketed in the USA despite the stringent regulatory controls in operation in that country. Currently, Health Forever has applied to the US FDA to register Jobelyn as a botanical drug, and if this application is successful, it will establish a world record of being the second botanical drug to be so registered since the programme was established about 50 years ago. Jobelyn has been featuring in many of the public programmes of the AGPMPN within the last five years. During this period scientific presentations on the efficiency and safety of the product had been regularly made and, gradually, the product has come to be accepted for prescription by many doctors. This has now laid a solid foundation for the eventual integration of natural medicine with orthodox medicine, a trend in countries like the UK and the US."

AS APGMPN constitutes more than half of the Nigerian orthodox medical doctor population, this must be a hilarious

moment for Mr. Okubena who would rather make Jobelyn a doctor - prescribed plant medicine rather than place it in multi-level marketing machineries that would have rebound it nationwide many times over and brought immense financial harvests. And, for me? It's a spirit-lifting vindication, against so many odds, of far-sighted vision and a wonderful privilege to be counted among many people who are working to return mankind to Mother Nature. Many countries have national products by which nations know them. Who know's if Jobelyn will be one of Nigeria's?