

A BOOST FOR TROUBLED BLOOD

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ARTICLE

Once in a while, she wonders in a whispering soliloque, “could this be true of me?” Indeed, many months after Bolanle Adeyemo, 16, a sickle-cell patient got a reprieve from the pains and punishment of this deadly disease, she is still in a daze. Everybody around this junior secondary student, including her father, Tunji Adeyemo, remembers her ordeals. But all the bitter details, her troubles and trauma are fully stored in her teenage memory. She lived with convulsive bouts, resulting from agony in her joints and bones. She was like a walking corpse, a shadow of a living being. “I felt odd among my brothers and sisters, even among my friends,” she said, adding that her parents always kept vigil over her. Hospital, for her, was home. “I could describe the hospital more than I could describe my house, because I stayed more in the hospital,” she told TELL. Like all captives of the sickle cell disorder, Bola’s crisis was her doctors’ nightmare. Her story has a familiar ring of abiku, a Yoruba mythical sick child who makes mess of a native healer’s prowess. The more relief she savours, the more relapse she suffers.

Yet, the financial cost of a short-lived relief is not a child’s play. Drugs are generally expensive but sickle cell patients pay more, because they consume much to buy a little lease of life. Only last year, a couple in Lagos allegedly murdered their sick son because they could no longer cope with the medical cost of keeping him alive. The embattled couple Adekunle and Margaret Ogunsuyi, of 52 Okunowa Street, Ajegunle, Lagos, allegedly pushed 13-year old Omoniyi into the canal beneath the Coconut Bridge around Ajeromi Ifelodun local government area of Lagos. When the Ogunsuyis were later arrested by security operatives, Police Corporal Sunday Abiodun quoted the father as saying “the boy is my son and he has sickle cell, that is why I had to do away with him.” But for Bola’s father, a successful business man, the cost of purchasing a respite for his daughter

was nothing, at least, compared to the reproach and stigma of fathering convicts of fate which sickle cell patients have become. The inability, over the years, of both orthodox and traditional medicines to provide a rescue has sentenced them into a lifetime imprisonment with anguish. Yet, about 25 million Nigerians are languishing in this jail house of health. They all bear their Cross with equanimity, since death appears to be the only freedom from the captivity of the disease. Thus, Bukola was merely waiting for the worst and hoping for the better. It was in the midst of such contradiction that her father heard of the incredible tales of some carriers walking out of bondage after taking some dosages of a local herbal preparation called Jubi. Of a special interest was the story of John, a known patient whose crisis came to an end barely three days after drinking from the herbal concoction. There were other testimonies. But it all sounded like a fairy tale to Adeyemo, a man who has watched his daughter gasping for breath for 16 years. Besides, he himself has been clutching at straws in search of a lasting relief. Thus, he chose to sieve out facts from the whirlwind of weird claims. He got in touch with Olajuwon Okubena, chartered accountant, who had earlier administered the herbal drug on sundry carriers of sickle cells. He bought some packs of Jubi which had already been capsulated then. Three days after Bola started using the drug, her countenance changed. She was no longer the dizzy, fatigued and feverish girl. Seven days later, her crisis seemed to have ceased. Indeed, for the first time since her childhood, she was free from the daily consumption of folic acid, anti-biotic, anti-malaria and anti-rheumatic drugs. She also bade farewell to blood transfusion, all western medicine’s recipe for relief.

Okubena began to beam scientific searchlight on the sources of Jubi’s strength. It started with clinical tests carried out at the Golden Heart Hospital, 410 Ikorodu Road, Ojota, Lagos. Charles Obinwanor, the hospital’s

medical director, was initially skeptical. But the skepticism was swept aside by the astounding revelations produced by his tests. Jubi contains essentially blood normalising properties. The medical director tried it on himself. His documented testimony:

“Quite often in the past, fatigue was my problem, but after using the herbal blood tonic, I discovered I’m now invigorated, bouncing with vitality. Also, I have found it to be a diuretic, that is, it promotes the excretion of urine as well as being sedative.” The orthodox physician has healed himself with traditional medicine! More anaemic patients were sought for a blood count test. Jubi was administered on them on a thrice daily dosage of three table spoonfuls. A week later, they were taken to the laboratory for re-examination. Results showed that Jubi restores blood-level rapidly and, as such, can substitute as blood transfusion for blood sapped patients. The tests further showed that patients’ packed cell volume (PCV) went up by 15 per cent within 24 hours of using the drug.

The scientific investigative odyssey is scintillating. And it continues. A pharmaceutical product analysis was done at LUTH. Again, Jubi was discovered to be rich in carbohydrates, proteins, iron, tannins, saponins and alkaloid. This was succeeded by a rather robust experiment undertaken by a team of experts, which comprises V. A. Okochi, C.I. Igwilllo, U. Arukwe and A. Dare, all of the department of Bio-Chemistry, College of Medicine, LUTH. They examined safety and efficacy of this tropical plant processed into herbal compound. The first round of tests were done on rats, which were infected with parasitic fluid to induce anaemia in them. They were treated with Jubi. Two weeks later, the white cells were regularised, while the anaemia was put into check. These initial findings were later confirmed when anaemic rats had their haemoglobin and packed cells volumes restored restored within four days after treating them with Jubi. With the established ▶

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potency of this native medicine, its manufacturers advertised it on the internet, offering free trials of Jubi on all kinds of diseases - sickle cell, hypertension, impaired bone marrow and all types of cancer. By then, the powdery form of Jubi had been capsulated. Elsie R. Vergara, an associate professor, College of Health and Rehabilitation Service at Boston University, Massachusetts, USA, saw the promo on the web. She placed an order. Her husband was admitted for Acute Myeloid Leukemia at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Boston. After some months in this infirmary, Elsie's husband was discharged to go and wait for death at home. He was given only two days to live. But when the professor got hold of Jubi, her husband's life span was prolonged for one month. Though the man died eventually, Elsie testified to the ability of this tropical plant thus: "The Jubi formula definitely stabilised his haematocrit for as long as he took it and it may have prolonged his life for a few weeks. Having been able to keep him alive for a month after they thought he was going to die was worth it."

The fact that Iyabo Oye, a Lagos businesswoman, now lives a healthy life is worth much more. For many years, she had borne the cross of arthritis, an affliction that inflicts pain and swelling in her knee joints. Three days after taking Jubi, jubilation replaced her cycles of misery. The story

of her life is evocative of a painful past which Rotimi Ajanaku still remembers - a past full of pain and fatigue. Now, Ajanaku, an artist, is, at present, bereft of general weakness in his body- TELL learnt of many Nigerians with already diagnosed cases of high blood pressure, infertility and diabetes cured by this cocktail of herbs. Is Jubi then a cure-all compound? So it seems. At least, studies have shown that it works against any ailment that has to do with the blood. It is indeed, a veritable boost for the troubled blood. Obinwanor explained that the native drug works at "molecular and cellular levels." On his part, Femi Dawodu, a pharmacist said, "What Jubi does is to help maintain and improve the immune system. "If, for instance, the white blood cell is low, then one's immunity diminishes. The blood helps all parts of the body to understand each other and co-ordinates functions." He explained that Jubi does not fight the diseases directly, but builds up the strength of the white blood cells to checkmate foreign agents. Does Jubi have any side-effects? "None has been discovered," Obinwanor noted. "Generally, said Dawodu, director, Novelle Pharmaceutical Limited, Lagos, side effects of herbal medicines are low, if there is any at all, because they are natural herbs." The only minus of local herbs therapy, the pharmacist said, is the volume and frequency of use. But that has already been taken care

of because Jubi is capsulated.

With the proven potency of this local herb to heal immune maladies, experts hope it may assist AIDS patients as well. Already, Okubena said it has been tried on some HIV cases. But nothing categorical has been achieved in this area yet. Notwithstanding, Oloidi equates Jubi with a divine provision to relieve man from some afflictions and sicknesses which have for long defied cure.

No doubt, this herbal solution works fast: it is also a fact that permanent cure does not come after a few dosages of it. Mokeme testified that few capsules of the drug earned him terminal freedom from a stroke, the magazine established that a patient's condition can deteriorate if he discontinues with the formula too early. For example, when Enoch kept away from Jubi for some months, her cancer festered rapidly until she later returned to this nature's own remedy. Both Obinwanor and Okubena agreed that some cases like sickle cell would require prolonged use, ranging from two to three months to attain a crisis-free status. And this is true of Bola and other ex-mates of ill-health. ■