6TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

(Organized by the LivingScience Foundation, Ile-Ife CAC/IT/91834)

Venue: Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria + Online[1],[2]

Date: Wednesday, October 6 - Thursday, October 7, 2021

COMMUNIQUE

Harnessing the Potentials of Health Information and Environmental Big Data for Management of Public Health in Nigeria



[1] DAY 1
https://zoom.us/rec/share/1IvYtmHZzO8HPq9JTqhsTNDj25r9A1L2PGZwwW4XdSESGjhizEhZuAdljwD8fGvb.-0yo5O0GrGsW4aUz Passcode: 1xzcoA&+

[2] DAY 2
https://zoom.us/rec/share/2A0Qsv-f3iLNxnUXG8-FpsNSBVY348HK1RygCUtPAYL9lM4quhu1-R4PUYEnqISu.XQkY4DL6XzzmF7Py Passcode: BR*29drW

Preamble

The sixth National Conference on Environment and Health was held on Wednesday 6th and Thursday, October 7 2021, at the Redeemer's University, Ede. There was also a provision for online participation through Zoom. The Conference was convened by the LivingScience Foundation Ile-Ife, in conjunction with a number of strategic partners, including the Redeemer's University, Ede, the Osun Health Insurance Agency, Osogbo, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, SW Zone, the Environmental Health Officers Association of Nigeria, Osun State Chapter, Health Records Officers' Registration Board of Nigeria, and the EnvironLab, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

The Conference featured three Keynote Speakers, seven invited Lead Speakers, and several other Speaker-Delegates who contributed to the Conference theme: Harnessing the Potentials of Health Information and Environmental Big Data for Management of Public Health in Nigeria. There were 104 registered participants in physical attendance while some 30 others joined virtually through Zoom. About 40 Institutions/Departments were represented at the Conference.

The keynote speakers were: Prof David Alao of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, United Arab Emirate University, Al Ain, UAE; Mr Babagana Mustapha, Registrar/CEO, Health Records Officers' Registration Board of Nigeria, Abuja (represented by Mallam Wada Aliyu of the same Board), and Prof J.K. Olabanji, Chief Medical Director at the Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti. Greetings were received from Pastor Ezekiel Odeyemi (FRSA, ACIS), Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the LivingScience Foundation, who also is the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Redeemer's University (RUN). Other eminent personalities who presented goodwill messages included Pastor Elijah Udofia, the Director, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), SW Zone, Ibadan and his retired predecessor, Mr Ismail Adeleke Ajani. The Opening Ceremony was chaired by Prof Ladi Osasona, Dean College of Engineering, RUN; and had Prof Adeleke Osho, Dean of Natural Sciences at RUN representing the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Anthony Akinlo. Chairpersons/Co-Chairpersons at other sessions included Prof Adeleke Osho/Dr

Oyenike Oguntunde, Prof. Bamidele Salau/Prof O.G. Sokunbi, and Prof O.G. Adeyemi/Mr Adeleke Ajani. The technical business was conducted in five sessions over the two days.

Other key non-technical events featured at the Conference included the kick-off of the annual Secondary Schools Innovation Challenge, where seventeen schools will create robust Health Records Software Applications for their Institutions. At the Undergraduate level, an Essay on the Conference theme submitted by Seyi Fodlulah Abifarin, a second-year student of Chemistry at the Obafemi Awolowo University, was adjudged the winner. The apex of the annual awards, the AF Oluwole Prize, was awarded to Prof Oladele Osibanjo. Representing Prof A.F. Oluwole at the ceremony was Prof Titilayo Ayotunde (head, Department of Demography and Social Statistics at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, while Prof Oladele Osibanjo was represented by Dr Gilbert Adie from the Department of Chemistry, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Observations

The Conference noted the pitiable state of data generation, management, transformation, and use in Nigeria at the present time; but took solace in the fact that a private-driven initiative had been able to bring together various delegates from key sectors to passionately discuss the subject matter, as seen at the 6th National Conference on Environment and Health. Having understood that a determined people cannot be stopped, the Conference expressed commitment to turning the current ugly situation around for the good of our great country. The Conference carefully noted the following:

1. An enormous amount of premium data is continuously being generated in several sectors of national life in Nigeria. If properly structured, appropriately transformed into information, and diligently harnessed, these data could potentially enhance public health in Nigeria and revolutionize our environmental policies for optimal results in our quest for sustainable development.

2. The specialized tools and technology, generally known as Big Data analytics, required to transform and interrogate the data to yield invaluable critical information are already available. However, whereas

these are routinely deployed in several fields, including Economics, Social Statistics, Games and Entertainment in the country, there are yet no such activities in the very critical Environment- Public Health sector.

3. The Conference noted that this unfortunate situation would not be redressed until local stakeholders in the Environment-Health sector come together and consciously take matters into their own hands. No help can be expected from foreigners in this matter as there are very few commercial incentives involved.

4. Apart from sundry technical issues such as interoperability and accessibility, a major cog in the wheel of developing a robust functional EH database is the issue of governance and ownership. Due to a combination of lack of enthusiasm, transparency, and mutual trust, critical stakeholders had often failed to cooperate either in sharing their data in a common database or even patronizing such databases when strenuous efforts were made to initiate them.

5. The task is best spearheaded by a company of non-governmental enthusiasts, who would vigorously reach out to both government and private entities as necessary. Sacrificial efforts from such highly motivated and passionate individuals and groups are essential to harness the potentials of health and environmental big data for sustainable development in our nation. The 6th NCEH is already a huge step in the right direction and should be leveraged for more positive outcomes.

6. Health Records and Information Management Professionals (HRIMPs) are key elements in this affair. Unfortunately, they are currently not accorded due recognition for the important work they are trained to perform. Often, their space is assigned, on a part-time basis, to other professionals or even barely-trained casual staff. This turn of events has significantly hampered quality data generation, processing and proper utilization. It has also left many HRIMPs discouraged on their job.

7. In many cases, health data and information are generated and managed in silos within disparate entities (such as independently-funded Cancer registries), even within the same health facility. This has further created friction and sometimes tension in the management of health records and precluded the creation of needed health information.

Resolutions and Recommendations

The Conference, therefore, recommended as follows:

1. As required by accrediting bodies, every data-generating unit within the Health Information Management Department and the hospital at large should be staffed by well-trained and well-motivated Health Records Officers. Health information and medical records should be integrated within the same health facility and efforts should be made to digitize them, as far as funds will permit.

2. There is an urgent need for the establishment of National Health Information Management Policy that will detail the procedures for release of patients' health information for treatment, research and planning.

3. Stakeholders across various sectors must collaborate actively. Postgraduate students from academia (Universities, Research Institutes and other tertiary institutions) should be encouraged to tackle real-life problems in active collaboration with professionals in the industry and government MDAs. Where practicable, such collaborators outside the formal academic institutions could be co-supervisors for such theses, thus providing incentives for mutual collaboration and stemming fear of loss of ownership/control over critical data.

4. As a corollary to the above, practitioners and professionals from industries and government MDAs are encouraged to apply for postgraduate studies (certificates, diplomas or degrees) under the supervision of their collaborators in academia. Thus, formidable custom-designed and direly needed research could be built around their current routine schedules at work, thus motivating them in their data-gathering and data-transforming processes.

5. As much as possible, collaborations should be formalized in the forms of appropriately crafted Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to ensure that none of the parties involved is short-changed. Full credits, including authorship in scholarly publications and official reports, should be accorded to each participant as due. This goes beyond the traditional "acknowledgements".

6. Efforts made to establish the National Trauma Centre Trauma Registry, Abuja, as reported at this Conference, are commended. The experience garnered is recommended as a model for building a Nigerian Trauma Registry and other required Registries in various specialities.

7. To keep the initiatives and issues discussed at this Conference on the front burner, a Data for Environment-Health Applications in Nigeria [DEHAN] Group should be created on appropriate social media platform(s). Participants at the 6th National Conference on Environment and Health should be invited to form the nucleus, while other interested stakeholders should join the platform as time goes on. [To join the BigData4EHinNigeria WhatsApp Group, click: https://chat.whatsapp.com/H87eNnwEMXT54GoFoLbtwX]

8. Every individual and operating Unit should endeavour to invest in developing themselves in data analysis within their sphere of operation. Such should examine how they can transform data into information and help transform society. Under the umbrella of the DEHAN Group, well-designed small-scale, low-budget research activities executed by individual members/operating Units could be networked into formidable Projects with grand impact at regional and national levels.

9. DEHAN should consider arranging, from time to time, specialized workshops on the subject of data transformation, including possibly Big Data analytics. The modest funding required for such activities could be raised from private and government agencies participating in the Group.

10. The conferences' talks and presentations should be appropriately restructured into a scholarly format for peer review and publication as a special edition in the Nigerian Journal of Environment and Health. This will further extend the fruits of this Conference deeper into the various sectors of the EH Community in Nigeria and the diaspora. Efforts should be accelerated on this, and a Guest Editor appointed for the special edition with a target publishing date of 8 weeks from this Conference, i.e. by mid-December, 2021.

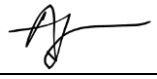
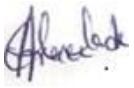
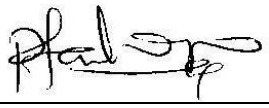
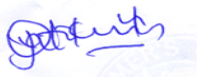
Conclusion

The Conference commends the LivingScience Foundation for the vision of forging inter-sectoral collaborations to tackle the most relevant environment-health challenges in the country using home-grown solutions. The Conference acknowledges the considerable sacrifices this entails, especially in a period of prevailing socio-economic turmoils, and thanks the Organization and her various Partners for their efforts. The LivingScience Foundation is urged to continue to drive the initiative until the desired results are obtained.

Ede, October 7, 2021

Signatures

Signed by key sectoral stakeholders at the Conference

Ismail Adeleke AJANI Retired Director NESREA Southwest Zone Ibadan Oyo state	
Grace O. AKINLADE (Ph.D) Coordinator, EnvironLab, Department of Physics and Engineering Physics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	
Sanitarian Temitope AKINWUNMI, *fwapceh* (Ph.D) President Environmental Health Officers Association of Nigeria (EHOAN Osun State), Osogbo	
Mallam Wada ALIYU Member, Health Records Officers' Registration Board of Nigeria; National Secretary, Association of Health Records and Information Management Practitioners of Nigeria (AHRIMPN)	
Ropo DAIRO. (Ph.D) Department of Physical Sciences, Redeemer's University, Ede.	
Adeniyi OGINNI (MB.BCh, MPH, Ph.D) Executive Secretary, Osun Health Insurance Agency, Osogbo	
Oyenike OGUNTUNDE (Ph.D) Sub-Dean Faculty of Natural Sciences, Redeemer's University, Ede.	
Joshua O. OJO (Ph.D) Professor of Health Physics and Environment, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and President, LivingScience Foundation, Ile-Ife	
Wole OLAOMI Chief Consultant Surgeon and Chief of Trauma National Trauma Centre, National Hospital Abuja Nigeria.	
Jacob OPELE (Ph.D) Senior Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, Federal University Oye-Ekiti	

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Please download the Book of Abstracts and other resources from the Conference Website: http://conferences.lsfnigeria.org

SOME INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED AT THE 6TH NCEH

1. Department of Basic Sciences, Adeleke University, Ede, Nigeria
2. Department of Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation, Abeokuta North Local Government, Akomoje, Abeokuta
3. Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti
4. College of Health, Foreign Links Campus, Moro, Ile-Ife
5. Department of Information Resources Management Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State
6. College of Health Technology, Ezzamgbo, Ebonyi State
7. College of Medicine and Health Sciences, United Arab Emirate University, Al Ain, UAE
8. Department of Library and Information Science, Federal University Oye-Ekiti
9. Department of Physics, Federal University Oye-Ekiti
10. Department of Pure and Applied Physics, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria
11. Department of Science Laboratory Technology, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria
12. Department of Chemistry, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
13. Department of Demography and Social Statistics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife
14. Department of Physics and Engineering Physics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife
15, Environmental Health Department, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex, Ile-Ife
16. Department of Physical Sciences, Precious Cornerstone University, Ibadan, Nigeria
17. Department of Physics, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
18. Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, School of Public Health, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo
19. Department of Water and Environmental Sanitation, Olorunda LG, Igbona- Osogbo
20. National Trauma Centre, National Hospital Abuja Nigeria
21. Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology (AFRIGIST), Ile-Ife, Nigeria
22. Osun State Health Insurance Agency, Osogbo
23. Department of Computer Science, Redeemer's University, Ede
24. Department of Tourism Studies, Redeemer's University, Ede
25. Faculty of Natural Sciences, Redeemer's University, Ede
26. Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Redeemer's University, Ede
27. Faculty of Law, Redeemer's University, Ede
28. College of Engineering, Redeemer's University, Ede
29. Registry, Redeemer's University, Ede
30. Department of Physiotherapy, Redeemer's University, Ede
31. Department of Chemical Sciences, Redeemer's University, Ede
32. National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, Osun Field Office, Osogbo
33. National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, South West Zone, Ibadan
34. SEEMS (Nig) Ltd, Ikeja
35. Jawura Environmental Services Limited, Lagos
36. Waste Management Society of Nigeria (WAMASON).
37. LivingScience Foundation, Ile-Ife

Plus 17 secondary schools:

Total Number of Registered (On-site) Participants = 104

Participants from 3 countries (Nigeria, UAE, and Brazil)