ENDONEWS
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NEWSLETTER - MAIDEN EDITION
Creating awareness and disseminating knowledge of endocrinology

April – June 2023
Q: Welcome ma and congratulations on your election as the President of EMSON. Can you please introduce yourself? Some EMSON members will like to know you more.

Professor Aihanuwa Eregie: Thank you very much. I am Professor Aihanuwa Eregie, a Professor of Medicine and Endocrinology at the University of Benin and a Consultant Physician and Endocrinologist at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital, with the following qualifications: MBBS, MD, FMCP, FACE, FEMSON, and FRCP (Lond.).

I have served as an External Examiner to the University of Ilorin, Ilorin and the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and have been an Examiner in the Faculty of Internal Medicine (FIM) of the National Postgraduate Medical College (NPMCN) since 2002. I am a Faculty Board Member in the FIM of the NPMCN.

I am privileged to serve on the Boards of Trustees of the Association of Clinical Endocrinologists of Nigeria and the Diabetic Foot Nigeria initiative. I served as the Honorable Commissioner for Health in Edo State from 2013 to 2016. I have held various positions in EMSON: Assistant Secretary- General, Coordinator/ Chair of South-South Zone, and Vice President before I became the President in 2022.

Q: You have been an Endocrinologist for many years. We will want to tap from your experience.

Can you please tell us your experience as an Endocrinologist in Nigeria?

Professor Aihanuwa Eregie: I have been a Consultant Endocrinologist since 1996. I find Endocrinology to be both mentally and intellectually stimulating and challenging as a sub specialty and for me this has been very fulfilling especially when I get the expected results of my intervention in a patient's clinical course. It has been very interesting because there is a broad range of possible cases that I get to see. I know the most common endocrine disorder is diabetes mellitus but this comes with so many other possible comorbidities and of course there are other endocrine disorders which present from time to time. I've been involved in teaching, research, clinical practice and also in the training/supervision and examination of resident doctors in Endocrinology. It has been a very fulfilling time for me so far and I believe it can only get better as time goes on.

Q: You mentioned initially that there are challenges associated with the practice of Endocrinology in Nigeria. Can you please list some of these challenges and the ways we can overcome them?

Professor Aihanuwa Eregie: First of all, we do not have enough specialists in this field in Nigeria so the workload becomes heavy in the few centres with Endocrinologists. We have
over the years trained and certified many doctors but as a result of the unfortunate development of the 'brain drain phenomenon', we have lost a lot of younger doctors who could have stayed in the field to practice, as a result of movement to greener pastures. Other challenges include the lack of support for the service of Endocrinology. For instance, the lack of the full laboratory support including hormone assays and dynamic tests required to ensure optimal care of patients, lack imaging facilities such as CT Scans and MRI, facilities for biopsies, isotopic scans etc. There are also challenges associated with treatment options. As Endocrinologists, we know what we ought to be doing but do not have everything available and then the tricky one is the fact that we have to contend with the people I call 'pretenders' in the field because everybody thinks they can do what we do. It is a spectrum of possibilities: some are medical doctors; others are para medical healthcare professionals and traditional medicine practitioners. These 'pretenders' cause problems and patients end up with complications and late presentation to the Endocrinologist at the end of the day.

I think the way forward is to look at each of these challenges one at a time. What is making us have this massive brain drain? I won't go into that at this moment but if we can look at the factors and try to solve them that will help. Ensuring that we have good support so that we give our best to our patients will have to depend on the various hospitals that have been set up to render Endocrinology services. The relevant authorities should ensure that radio-diagnostics services and all other services to support optimal endocrine service are in place. Setting up or designating some Centres of Excellence where most of these services are available is another way forward, so that even if the needed support is lacking in a particular centre, there is a functional centre to which patients can be referred. On the issue of 'pretenders' to be specialists, I think there should be better regulation of their services and their practice and also better regulation of health information dissemination in various media. As orthodox medical practitioners, we cannot start talking or advertising or laying claims to cures or advertising our area of expertise, but these other persons go ahead and make unsubstantiated claims and there is no effective regulation. I think if there are tougher regulations on their practice and their ability to deliver information, some of these problems can be solved.

**Q:** Among the challenges that you mentioned is the laboratory backup. I am wondering whether the management of various hospitals have a role to ameliorate the problems that endocrinologists face.

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** Definitely. There are minimum standards expected in hospitals and different levels of healthcare delivery. By the time we are discussing Endocrinology service in a health facility, the minimum level will be a secondary health facility i.e., a General or a Specialist hospital with an Endocrinologist on ground. Once government/other permitted authorities have set up that particular facility, they are expected ideally to support that service with all that the Endocrinologist needs to practice properly and effectively.

**Q:** Recently some centres had problems with accreditation for EDM subspecialty. What can the postgraduate training colleges-the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria and the West African College of Physicians do to help reduce these challenges with

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**accreditation?**

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** First of all, I want to commend both the Postgraduate Colleges for insisting on high standards for training in Endocrinology. They want the best so that such trained personnel are able to render the best. Unfortunately, accreditation guidelines or requirements differ for both Colleges. I suppose that has to do with the specifics of the particular college and what the colleges want to do. I think the way forward is to explore further the possibility of collaborations between training centres. If a particular training centre lacks certain facilities required for training but the next one or another facility not too far away has such facilities, then if there is a possibility of allowing for collaboration between these centres, maybe accreditation could be given. Usually, accreditation is deemed to be partial or full so if a centre is lacking in something and there is an MOU with a centre not too far away, then the College could consider awarding that centre a partial accreditation. Maybe the final way out is to work towards the harmonization of the Training Curricula and Accreditation requirements for both colleges bearing in mind that we are training the same set of persons in the same locale (Nigeria). There needs to be a meeting at the level of the Colleges- since they have been able to do some harmonization of the training curriculum in terms of the postings that need to be done and the duration for each posting.

**Q: We know that globally, diabetes mellitus is the commonest endocrine disorder. Is there something EMSON can do to improve the awareness of other endocrine disorders in Nigeria?**

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** Yes, definitely. I commend all the EMSON zones and all Endocrinologists in Nigeria. Over the years we have been particularly diligent in celebrating the World Diabetes Day and this has grown from a few centres to being celebrated in many centres across the length and breadth of Nigeria. So, when this Executive Committee (Exco) came on board, we decided that there is the need to do more because there's more to Endocrinology than diabetes. So, one of the first things we looked at and decided to implement was to strengthen and encourage the zones to let the activities at the zonal levels be more frequent in terms of utilising webinars and scientific collaborations. It is salutary to know that the South-South and Lagos zones have picked up the gauntlet and have run away with it. The South-South and Lagos zones have had two sessions each to date. I know there's another South-South zonal activity coming up this weekend so what we want them to do is what they're doing already i.e., concentrating on other endocrine disorders apart from diabetes. When zonal scientific sessions are set up, they should not be restricted to that zone but other EMSON members across the nation should be invited so that we all benefit. We have plans in this Exco to encourage people to collaborate beyond the World Diabetes Day. For instance, the World Obesity Day was celebrated by the South-South and Lagos zones, and also the World Thyroid Day is also worth noting. We also like to encourage research into non-DM topics. Members should consider other topics in Endocrinology and conduct research either within their centres or collaborate with other researchers across the nation. We also have plans to establish a Biannual Virtual Masterclass on other burning issues in Endocrinology and also plan to improve other aspects of EDM by establishing a National Case Report Day which will involve virtual presentations of outstanding...
cases in Endocrinology. Once we’re able to get all these on board then the other aspects of Endocrinology will be opened to our members.

**Q: Recently, there have been talks about the need for the development of guidelines for the different endocrine disorders. How do you think EMSON can encourage joint studies or joint study groups across the country to actualize this goal?**

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** I mentioned that members should participate in activities outside of their own zone of practice. If a zone where you are not a resident or practicing in has something going on, ensure you take part in it; that way you are strengthening the possibility for collaboration. We can also have joint sessions between the various zones or between states. For example, in the South-South zone some of the presentations are by persons in two different states: this is collaboration. I also want to encourage networking and dialogue during our annual scientific meetings. Beyond listening to the oral presentations, members should also endeavour to go round and look at the poster presentations, listen to people and talk with them and these may lead to collaboration subsequently. The issue of guidelines is not going to come from one place but when we have collaborative studies from across the nation then the guidelines can come up based on our findings rather than relying on one or two persons who have expertise in particular fields.

**Q: We would like to know your vision for EMSON.**

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** I would like to promote an assembly of specialists with a passion for excellence in teaching, research and clinical practice of Endocrinology in Nigeria. I wish EMSON to be a powerful advisory group, not just meeting once a year with all of us coming together. Let EMSON be a powerful advocacy and advisory group for Endocrinology practice in Nigeria and be involved in policy formulation and the formulation of guidelines for Endocrine disorders in Nigeria and then also to take us to the next higher level. We are already affiliated with the International Society of Endocrinology but we can be affiliated with other International Associations of Endocrinology for purposes of exchange of ideas and collaborative research.

**Q: What is your advice to EMSON members?**

**Professor Aihanuwa Eregie:** In spite of the challenges in our practice, I want to urge all members of EMSON to maintain the utmost standards in all aspects of Endocrinology. Whether in clinical practice, teaching or research, members should maintain the optimal standards and where possible (or as often as possible), push for improved support for our subspecialty practice in our various centres. When I say improved support, I’m talking in terms of more staff not just doctors but trained diabetes educators, diabetes nurses and support staff like Podiatrists/ Chiropodists and more diagnostic and treatment facilities. I also hope that people can explore all the possible opportunities to meet and network for collaborative research. Lastly, I will advise all members of EMSON to remain up to date in all aspects of Endocrinology. It is very important to be up to date in every aspect of our subspecialty—know the latest thinking, the latest in terms of treatment and prognosis of various disorders. Be up to date on issues concerning this subspecialty.

Thank you so much ma’am for your time.
EMSON ELECTED EXECUTIVES ARE:

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08023265843

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Dr. A. R. Isiavwe - VP 2
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THE EMSON PRESIDENT’S VISIONS AND PROGRAMMES

The newly elected President has highlighted her visions and goals, this includes more vibrant zones which should include endocrine activities amongst other things such as World Obesity and Thyroid Days. Other suggested programs include:

- Biannual virtual masterclass on burning topics in Endocrinology. This will create opportunities to engage senior colleagues in the Society.
- A National Case reports or case series day. This will involve all 7 EMSON zones presenting outstanding Endocrine cases that can be published in the African Journal of Endocrine and Metabolism (AJEM).
- Formation of EMSON guidelines Steering Committee on Diabetes, Thyroid disorders etc. This can serve as documents for National policies, research references and educative materials for health professionals.

The modalities for the implementation of the programs are to be worked out.

NAMES OF ALL THE EMSON ZONAL CHAIRMEN AND CHAIRPERSON
EMSON has inaugurated all the EMSON Zonal chairmen and chairpersons. The inauguration was done by the president, Prof. A. Eregie. The names and zones are:

- North East zone - Dr. S. Bathnna
- North Central zone - Dr. M. Reng
- North West zone - Dr. K. Sada
- Lagos zone - Dr. A. Akinlade
- South East zone - Dr. O. Anyim
- South-South zone - Dr. S. Onung
- South West zone - Dr. Adesina

The President encouraged the zonal chairmen to be proactive and engage members to enhance growth and development. All the Zonal leaders were encouraged to open a Telegram or WhatsApp platform to enhance communication.

EMSON AGM SC 2023
The EMSON AGM SC 2023 tagged Port Harcourt (Garden City) 2023 is around the corner. The LOC Co-Chairs Prof. Sunday Chinenyew, & Prof. Unachukwu Chioma has promised a befitting
conference which the Society Members will find worthy. The theme for the Conference is Diabetic Foot Syndrome with Sub Themes on
1. Diabetes: Transition from paediatrics to adult care
2. Endocrinopathies in infancy
3. Adrenal Disorders
4. Hyperglycaemia in pregnancies
5. Dyslipidaemia

19th – 22nd of September 2023 promises to be an amazing time and we urge you all to look forward.

Calls for submission of abstracts have been posted on the various EMSON WhatsApp groups with a deadline slated for the 31st of July.

EMSON ZONAL MEETINGS FOR 2023
EMSON zonal meetings are back after the disruptions of the covid 19 pandemic, with EMSON South-South zone taking the lead when they had their first Zonal meeting for the year on the 26th of February 2023 on Zoom titled “Subclinical Hypothyroidism: A Clinical Appraisal”. More zonal meetings are expected to follow with the Lagos zonal meeting set to be held on the 24th of March at the BON Hotel in Lagos.

EMSON SOUTH SOUTH also held a Webinar titled: Exploring the role of oral antidiabetics in pregnancy.

The University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital also had a webinar on the Management of Diabetic Emergencies on the 8th of June 2023 via Zoom.

EMSON LAGOS held its first quarterly virtual CME series titled: Practical Approach to Managing Difficult to Treat Pituitary Macroadenoma on the 11th of June 2023 virtually. Other zonal meetings date will be passed on at a later date.

EMSON SOUTH SOUTH had another Webinar slated for the 25th of June 2023, Topic: “Glycated Haemoglobin as a biomarker for Glycaemic Control; A case for Standardization and More” to be hosted by UCTH

EMSON AME ITALY COLLABORATION
EMSON is happy to announce a first-of-its-kind collaboration between EMSON and AME Italy as scheduled in the academic meeting billed to hold on the 29th of June 2023, Time is 7 pm. the link to register and participate actively will be posted on the society’s WhatsApp and various media channels. This begins a series of academic/research collaborations with our Italian colleagues.

‘We have worked tirelessly to make this happen as part of the vision of the EMSON President to expand the frontiers of our dear society’. V.P Prof. Uloko

SOME INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES FOR 2023
Notable upcoming International Conferences to be held in 2023.
• American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) AGMSC – 4th – 6th May 2023, Seattle Washington, U.S.A.
• Endocrine Society (ENDO 2023) 105th AGMSC – 15th – 18th June 2023, Chicago Illinois, U.S.A.
• American Diabetes Association (ADA 2023) 83rd AGMSC – 23rd – 26th June 2023, San Diego, U.S.A.
• Endocrine and Metabolism Society of Nigeria (EMSON 2023) – 19th – 22nd September 2023, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
• European Association for Study of Diabetes (EASD 2023) 59th AGMSC – 2nd – 6th October 2023 Hamburg, Germany.
• Society for Endocrinology (British Endocrine Society) BES 2023 – 13th – 15th November 2023, Glasgow, Scotland.

BEREAVEMENT
We regret to announce the demise of Prof. Augustine Efedaye Ohwoviriole, one of our founding fathers, a great teacher, trainer, and mentor. He passed on the 19th of June, 2023. Further information on the funeral rites will be announced by the family.

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