



## **EDITORIAL**

### **A Wonderful Year Indeed!**

Compliments of the season. May 2021 be filled with joy, peace and progress for all our readers and authors.

The year 2020 can only be described as a wonderful year. There is a popular saying that when something is beyond your power, you have no choice but to respect it and give it its due. This is why I choose to term this year a wonderful year.

It has been a year of great turmoil globally and locally. A year when things we could never imagine happening happened. Starting from the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic with its attendant fallouts, lockdowns, and quarantines; International travels cancelled and postponed indefinitely; Schools shut down mid-session with even external examinations needing to take a backseat, either postponed or outrightly cancelled; businesses both local and global closed down. This year has been a year of many shocking deaths, many of them due to COVID-19. I have been really saddened by some of the names that have been taken out of the picture by COVID-19 one of them a very well-respected senior colleague and journalist, named Sam-Ndah Isaiah. I have respected Pharm. Sam-Ndah Isaiah from afar for so long that I cannot imagine that I eventually did not get a chance to meet him up close and personal. As the publisher of the well circulated Leadership newspaper and a one-time presidential aspirant, Pharm. Isaiah has contributed meaningfully to the landscape of the profession and the nation. I bid him good night!

Another reason I consider this year as wonderful is that it has been a year for one of the longest strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) resulting in public, federal universities being shut for about nine months. This means that students have lost a whole academic session without having failed a class. I remember the ASUU strike which took place while I was in my final year in the Faculty of Pharmacy in the University of Lagos. My class, and I came to later realize, that most classes across the College of Medicine refused to agree that our graduation had been moved from 1993 to 1994, so we began to refer to ourselves as Class of '93+1 rather than Class of '94. We somehow failed to realize what matters is the date on the certificate. The paradox I found, and I found with many academics around me was that even though there was a strike action on, we were oh so very busy. There were a thousand and one things needing attention and becoming urgent and important, seemingly overnight. That was truly perplexing.

Another wonderful thing that I continue to bless God for is that Africa did not record pandemic values expected of her. I truly do not know how it happened, but we continue to be grateful to God that that is what it is. I cannot imagine how we would have coped with our fragile healthcare delivery system and chaotic drug supply. I was initially afraid that because we were not testing as many people that could be tested, the numbers will eventually catch up with the rest of the world but that has not happened. We experienced a drop in values when the whole world experienced it and we are also in the second wave as most places globally are. However, what we cannot escape is that with the COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions to medicine supply chains, there was (and there still is) a real concern about growing medicines access inequities in Nigeria and much of Africa. These concerns are especially high for Northern Nigeria where research has already indicated a large pharmaceutical workforce deficit, reported low access to essential medicines and growing pools of substandard and falsified medicines. It is important to continue to document and identify contributors to the medicines access inequity faced by Nigerians, especially the underserved and key populations. These efforts will inform policy direction and influence future interventions to right the inequities for all.

While people seemed to have convinced themselves that COVID-19 is gone and they became careless and complacent, there is a slow realization that we are not yet out of the woods and people are beginning to re-embrace the non-pharmaceutical interventions that helped greatly in the early phase of the pandemic – using a face mask correctly, practising correct hand and respiratory hygiene by coughing into ones' elbow, washing hands regularly with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers and of course maintaining appropriate physical distancing when you must go out – and this is good to note. Let me repeat here that face masks are to protect the nose and mouth, and not for the chins or the hands. Let us make proper mask wearing a culture.

I will not cease to remind you to visit our website regularly to find useful articles for your research work as well as share your blogs or respond to blogs written by others. We can confirm that more and more people are getting to know our journal. We enjoin you to direct others to the site to also send in their own articles. We are still on course with our plan to seek COPE membership.

Other issues that cropped up this year include the Black lives matter movement in the US, the ENDSARS saga in Nigeria, the COVID-19 vaccines produced at *pandemic speed* and of course the 2020 US Presidential election. These are wonderful things indeed. Who could have imagined a US Presidential candidate and incumbent president behaving like an African president through and through? From his utterances before the election, his stance during the election and his

posturing after the elections, the President of the United States usually referred to as POTUS has shown the world that democracy is only as good as the people running it.

Looking at all these global issues, you need to agree with me that 2020 is a wonderful year indeed. The last thing I will say on this is that through the wonderfulness of the various happenings in 2020, research was done, manuscripts were written, and articles published. If you did not publish any article in 2020, you have only yourself to blame.

Let me use this opportunity to inform you that JBSPR is processing another face in its development as we are set to apply for membership of Crossref. This will enable us assign digital object identifier (DOI) to articles published and to ensure that authors consistently provide DOIs to those articles that have it in their reference list. This will however, mean a slight increase in our article processing charges but the real benefits and value accruable to those articles will no doubt offset the increase. We are determined to continue in our stepwise plan to position JBSPR at the highest levels of publication standards available and we enjoin you to come along with us on this journey. As I have vowed to do, I am calling out colleagues in patient-facing practice areas, community and hospital, to make time out to publish practice-oriented articles that will provide us with useful and useable data for future planning, forecasting and interventions. The pandemic is still before us and has given us several research areas in addition to the usual issues we had before. Medical personnel in patient-facing areas and especially those working in the isolation centres can collaborate with each other and with those in academia to produce relevant, homegrown data on screening, prevention practices, management options, etc for use by policy makers. As you know, your article is the next one we are expecting so it is time to get to work. We look forward to receiving your manuscripts for consideration.

Thank you and have a great day.

## **SIGNED**

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