UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA


The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), Professor Duro Oni,
The Registrar and Secretary to Council, Dr. (Mrs.) Taiwo F. Ipaye, FNIM,
The Bursar, Dr. Lateef Odekunle,
The University Librarian, Dr. (Mrs.) Olukemi A. Fadehan,
The Provost, College of Medicine, Professor Folasade T. Ogunsola,
Deans of other Faculties,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Gentlemen of the Press.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Eighteenth Inaugural Lecture of the 2014/2015 Academic Session entitled: “The Quest for the Smart Child: Its Role in Nation Building.” The lecture will be delivered by Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi of the Department of Physiology, who also is the current Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Sciences.

Professor Lesi was born on the 20th January 1961 and had his primary education at the Corona School, Yaba between 1966 and 1971. In 1972 he was admitted into the Lagos Anglican Boys Grammar School which eventually reverted to its original name, CMS Grammar School and passed out in 1976. He then proceeded to St. Columba’s College, Dublin, Ireland between 1976 and 1979 where he obtained the Irish Higher Leaving Certificate. In 1979 he gained admission into the College of Medicine, University of Lagos as the first set of the New Curriculum of the College and he graduated MBBS in 1984. He did his one year internship at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital and his National Service at the 44 Army Reference Hospital in Kaduna between 1985 and 1986.

Between 1986 and 1987 he was employed as a Medical Officer at the St. John’s Hospital for Sick Children, Lawanson, Surulere and in 1987, Professor Adenike Grange gave him an opportunity to work as a Research Medical Officer in the Dietary
Management of Diarrhoea Unit, Department of Paediatrics of the College of Medicine and in 1988 he was admitted into the residency training programme at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. He obtained the Fellowship of the Faculty of Paediatrics of the West African College of Physicians (FWACP [Paed.]) in 1994 and proceeded in 1996 to the Institute of Child Health London, an affiliated unit of the University College London. Here, he obtained the Masters (MSc) in Mother and Child Health with distinction in 1997 and in 2011, he was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of London (FRCP).

His working experience in the University commenced on 25th September 1995, when he was employed as Lecturer 1 in the Department of Paediatrics. He was promoted Senior Lecturer in October 2002, Associate Professor in 2007 and Professor in 2011. His areas of interest are Malaria, Paediatric Neurology (CNS Infections, Seizures and Disability) and Child Development.

Professor Lesi has served his profession variedly. Between 1998 and 2001 he was the National Secretary of the Paediatric Association of Nigeria. Between 2005 and 2010 he served the West African College of Physicians, first as Assistant Secretary General and later as the Secretary-General. In addition, he played and still plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of the 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 Strategic Plans for the College and contributed to the fostering of linkages with internationally recognised sister Colleges. He was Chairman of the LUTH Chapter of the Medical and Dental Consultants Association between 2006 and 2008. He was later appointed Deputy Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, LUTH between 2008 and 2012.

He has served the College of Medicine and the University in many capacities including membership of many committees such as the College Internet Committee, Medical Board Committee and Admissions Committee. He was Acting Head of Department, Paediatrics between 2010 and 2011 and Dean, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, CMUL since 1st August 2012.

Professor Lesi was a member of the President Obasanjo’s Presidential Stakeholders Forum on Child Nutrition, in 2007. He is currently an external examiner in Paediatrics to various universities and colleges such as the University of Benin, Olabisi Onabanjo University, University of Ibadan, the West African College of Physicians and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Professor Lesi has over 45 publications in national and foreign peer-reviewed journals. He has attended and presented papers on many local and international conferences and workshops on Paediatrics, Nutrition and Medical Education including the internationally recognised Doctors as Educators delivered on behalf of the Royal College of Physicians and the West African College of Physicians.

Professor Lesi is a member of many professional associations including the Nigerian Medical Association, the Paediatric Association of Nigeria, the Medical and Dental
Consultants Association of Nigeria. He is also an international member of the American Academy of Paediatrics and the International Society for Autism Research. He and members of his research groups have been the recipients of a number of research grants.

Professor Lesi belongs to the Breadfruit Ark Fellowship and the Young Men's Christian Association of his Church, St. Paul's Church, Breadfruit, Lagos. He is also the Chairman of the Church Medical Society of his Church and a member of the Parish Church Council.

Professor Lesi is happily married to Dr. Olufunmilayo Lesi (nee Mabogunje), an Associate Professor and Consultant Gastroenterologist in the University of Lagos and the Lagos University Teaching Hospital and they are blessed with children.

Professor Rahamon A. Bello, FAEng
Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos
Wednesday, December 9, 2015.
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA


The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), Professor Duro Oni, The Registrar and Secretary to Council, Dr. (Mrs.) Taiwo F. Ipaye, FNIM, The Bursar, Dr. Lateef Odekunle, The University Librarian, Dr. (Mrs.) Olukemi A. Fadehan, The Provost, College of Medicine, Professor Folasade T. Ogunsola, Deans of other Faculties, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Gentlemen of the Press.

Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi has just presented the inaugural lecture titled: Quest for the Smart Child: Its Role in Nation Building.

The lecture is a narrative about the lot of Nigerian Children who have survived the trials, tribulations and calamities of pregnancy and early childhood. It set out to describe the challenges they face after surviving the unacceptably high Infant and Under Five mortality, and how this impacts on the development of our dear country, Nigeria. It also highlighted the devastation of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency on the growing brain. Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi postulated that if we are to achieve our greatest potential as a nation we must pay attention to the diseases that our children are exposed to, what they eat, how they play and interact.

Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi’s contributions to knowledge in the various areas of his research include his novel documentation in Nigeria of the link between severe malnutrition and mental development and also HIV/AIDS and cognitive function (intelligence). His work in clinical audit and evidence-based medicine has improved practice of the specialty in the hospital with the production of evidence-based manual of emergency care. His current work relates to genetics, biomarkers and autism which has not yet been documented widely in Nigeria.
Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi concluded that attention to what mothers and children eat at all stages of their life, how they interact and play and early childhood education in the indigenous language will go a long way in stimulating optimal brain development.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you all will agree with me that Professor Foluso Ebun Afolabi Lesi has fulfilled his toga as Professor of the University of Lagos by paying his academic debt. He is therefore discharged and acquitted. I urge you all to buy copies of the lecture for proper digest and for your libraries.

I thank you all for listening and hereby declare this inaugural lecture close.

Professor Rahamon A. Bello, FAEng
Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos,
Wednesday, December 9, 2015.