



Nigeria: Country Hosts Workshop on Stem Cell Transplantation

Nigeria, Sept 12 - As part of her efforts towards becoming a leader in the race to develop stem cell transplantation as a solution to many of today's incurable diseases including the dreaded Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Nigeria is to host an international workshop on the new treatment system between October 5 and 6 this year.

The workshop which will hold in Abuja is being organized by the Stem Cell Transplantation Project for Africa in partnership with the Bio-Cellular Research Organization of the United States of America and the National Biotechnology Development Agency.

Briefing newsmen in Enugu on the workshop, the Chairman and chief executive of the Stem Cell Transplantation Project for Africa, Dr Perry Iloegbunam, said the world's foremost expert; on the therapy, Professor E.M Molnar, President of Bio-Cellular Organisation (BCRO), USA will be leading two other experts Professor Daniel Elias of Slovakia and Dr Salvador Varga Zepede of Mexico to address medical professionals and scientists from all over the world especially Africa at the event.

He stated that the workshop which will be free for participants was primarily intended to mark the formal take off of Stem Cell Transplantation Project for Africa with Nigeria

as the pioneer outlet to service the rest of African countries as well as to formally inaugurate the African Chapter of the International Association of Stem Cell Transplantation as the internationally recognized body that regulates the activities pertaining to the new therapy to maintain approved standards.

Dr Iloegbunam said the workshop would enable governments of African nations and their agencies and the general public to acquire a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the new stem cell transplantation dubbed 'the medicine of the 21st century' so as to better situate health care policies for optimal benefit of the therapeutic advantages.

It will also according to him help dispel the widely held medical belief that certain diseases like AIDS, Genetic and Chromosomal diseases and other disorders such as Down's Syndrome, Parkinson's disease, cancer, Hepatitis, Kidney, liver, lungs and heart diseases were incurable.

Iloegbunam said, "We must also use this opportunity to inform the world that we are in agony of conscience that since about 130 years ago when the first patient was treated with stem cell therapy in West Europe, the treatment is yet to fully take off in any part of Africa. We started this project about three years ahead of Asia, but to-

day, the biggest manufacturing stem cell plant in the world is being set in Malaysia with full approval and backing of Malaysian government. Like the issue of palm kernel, we sold the idea of stem cell to out Malaysian business partners. Today, they have overtaken us".

Meanwhile, Catholic cleric, Rev Father Ejike Mbaka has endorsed stem cell therapy as a "medical wonder ordained by the Almighty God" to provide cure to hitherto incurable diseases and prolong the life span of the people.

Mbaka who stated while receiving a delegation from the Stem Cell Transplantation Project for Africa at the Adoration grounds in Enugu, said the therapy was acceptable to Christians as it derives its materials from animal sources as opposed to the controversial embryonic stem cell which are derived from human embryos.

"Professor Molner's stem cell therapy is a divine answer to many hitherto untreatable and incurable diseases plaguing mankind", said Mbaka who admitted that he had sent a patient for treatment and obtained positive results.