



APHPN NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter of the Association of Public Health Physicians
of Nigeria

FEATURES

From the President
PAGE 1

News in brief
PAGE 2

Public Health Spotlight
PAGE 3

Highlights from the World
Congress on Epidemiology
PAGE 5

Appointments and Promotions
PAGE 6

Highlights from Faculty Day
Lecture
PAGE 7

Public Health Days
PAGE 8

EDITORIAL BOARD

Omosivie Maduka - Editor
Ulunma Mariere
Terkaa Bitto
Victor Ahoma Mbanuzuru
Kunmi Olusanya
Blossom Maduafokwa

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Caroline Momoh

From the President

PROF. ALPHONSUS ISARA

Dear colleagues, it is my pleasure to communicate with you in this third quarter of the year 2024. The public health space in Nigeria has been very eventful in this quarter. The outbreaks of Mpox and cholera diseases has further complicated the already weak healthcare delivery system in Nigeria. The recent hike in the price of fuel has sparked off severe physical, psychological, mental, and socio-economic crisis in the country. Health care especially Public Health practice is now more in danger in Nigeria than ever before. I encourage us to be more resilient and do the best we can in these difficult situations. I commend APHPN members who are directly involved in the management of disease outbreaks in Nigeria. Your labour will definitely not be in vain.

I wholeheartedly express my heartfelt sympathy to the Chairman and members of APHPN Borno State Branch and all the residents of Borno State over the flood disaster which has resulted in the loss of lives, displacement of large number of people, and damage to properties including healthcare facilities. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in these trying moments.

On behalf of the APHPN Board of Trustees and the Executive Council, I congratulate Dr. Akindele Adebiji who officially assumed duties as the substantive President of the International Epidemiological Association (IEA) during the recently concluded world congress of epidemiology held in Cape Town, South Africa.



I also congratulate Prof. Benjamin Uzochukwu and Prof. Adedeji Onayade on their successful election as National Chairman, West African College of Physicians (Nigeria Chapter) and Chairman Faculty of Public Health and Community Medicine, National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria respectively. We wish them a very fruitful and successful tenure. Additionally, I congratulate the Coordinator, APHPN Kogi State Branch, Dr. Mary Onoja-Alexander, on her recent elevation to the rank of Associate Professor in Federal University, Lokoja.

I am particularly grateful to the Chairman and members of APHPN Anambra State Branch for the warm reception they accorded me, and the solidarity and active participation during the funeral of our own Prof. Achunam Nwabueze.

Once again, I encourage APHPN members to contribute to the newsletter. Your feedback to the publicity committee will be highly appreciated.

Update from the Secretariat

DR ALPHONSUS AIGBIREMOLEN

Updates from the National Secretariat for the third quarter of 2024 are highlighted below:

In continuation of the laudable collaboration between AHPN and World Continuing Education Alliance (WCEA), the 12th Capacity Building Webinar titled "Addressing Environmental Injustices and Health Disparities: A Global Imperative" was held in August 2024. The event which had attendees from many countries across the globe was facilitated by Prof. Stephen Abah, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics) of the Federal University of Health Sciences, Otukpo, Benue State.

APHPN Health Management Caucus organized the August 2024 edition of its Lecture Series titled Challenges of Tertiary Health Care in Nigeria: The Way Forward. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Pokop W. Bupwatda, the Chief Medical Director of Jos University Teaching Hospital, Jos, Plateau State.


The August 2024 issue (Vol. 36, No. 2) of the Journal of Community Medicine & Primary Health Care (JCMPHC) has been published. JCMPHC is published by AHPN and is available online at <https://jcmphc.org/>. The journal is also hosted on the AJOL website at <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jcmphc>




Gen (Dr) Bernard Abang graciously receiving his AHPN Golden Jubilee award as a member of AHPN Board of Trustees, from AHPN President Prof. Alphonsus Isara and Chairman, AHPN FCT Branch, Dr. Sabastine Esomonu

CONTACT US:

 <https://aphpn-ng.net/>.

 aphpn.national@gmail.com

 +2347058621544

News In Brief



PROF. SIMEON ACHUNAM NWABUEZE LAID TO REST IN UKPOR

Prof. Nwabueze was on Thursday 29th August 2024, laid to rest in his home town of Ukpor in Nnewi South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The funeral ceremony commenced at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, where the Management and Staff of the hospital bid him farewell before he was taken to his country home in Ukpor for a brief lying in state. Thereafter, a funeral mass was held at Mary Assumed into Heaven Catholic Church, Ukpor, before he was committed to mother earth in his compound at Ohiamam village, Umuohama, Ukpor. The AHPN President, Prof. Alphonsus Isara led members of the Association in a condolence visit to the widow and family of Prof. Nwabueze.

Until his death, Prof. Nwabueze was the Head of Department of Community Medicine, Nnamdi Azikiwe University/Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi. He served as National Auditor II of AHPN from 2017 to 2021, and Internal Auditor of AHPN from 2021 to 2023. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Nkeiruka Constance Nwabueze, and four children.

May the soul of Prof. Simeon Achunam Nwabueze, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



APHPN President Prof. Alphonsus Isara flanked by members of AHPN Anambra State Branch during the funeral of Prof. Nwabueze

Public Health Spotlight

WORSENING FOOD INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS

Prof. Mathilda E. Banwat

Dept of Community Medicine
University of Jos
mathildabanwat@yahoo.com



Prof. Mathilda E. Banwat
Dept of Community Medicine
University of Jos
athildabanwat@yahoo.com

Introduction

Food insecurity is a persistent Public Health challenge in Nigeria; between 2020 and 2022, on average 21.3% of population in Nigeria experienced hunger (FAO, 2023). People in severe food insecurity would go for entire days without food, due to lack of money or other resources in 2024, an estimated 26.5 million Nigerians face high levels of food insecurity. By May 2024, the average cost of a healthy diet had surged by 107% compared to the previous year (Figure 1). As the lean season peaks between June and August 2024, it has been projected that 31.8 million people across Nigeria will face hunger at crisis and emergency levels (WFP, 2024). Defined as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, food insecurity has far-reaching consequences beyond hunger. It has led to an alarming 2.6 million children predicted to face Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and require critical nutrition treatment (WFP, 2024). Other long-term effects of malnutrition include poor cognitive development, increased frequency and severity of infections as well as increased risk of non-communicable diseases, later in adult life.

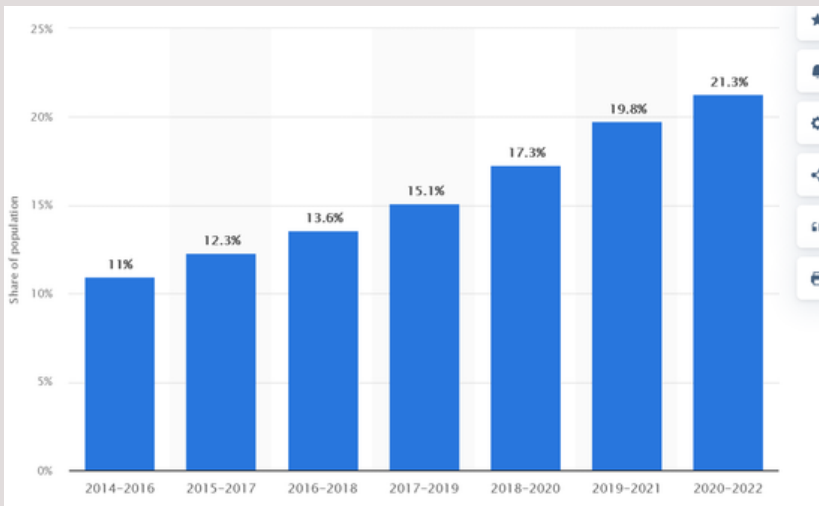


FIGURE 1: PREVALENCE OF SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN NIGERIA FROM 2014 TO 2022 (STATISTA 2024)

Causes

1. Economic instability and poverty are primary drivers of food insecurity in Nigeria. According to the World Bank, over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, making it difficult for them to afford basic necessities, including food (World Bank, 2021). The economic disparity in Nigeria exacerbates the issue, with wealth concentrated among a small percentage of the population. High unemployment rates, income inequality, and lack of economic opportunities, further limited access to food for many households.

2. Political and Social Factors: The Boko Haram insurgency, along with farmer-herder clashes, has led to the death of young agile farmers and destruction of farmlands, reducing food production and availability. Nigeria's northern states which were once surplus food production areas, now grapple with poverty, recurring conflicts and the internal displacement of over 2.3 million people in the north-east in addition to 1.09 million people in the north-west and north-central states (WFP, 2024). Disruption of traditional agricultural livelihoods and surging cost of food, fuel, and other essential items exacerbate the situation. Additionally, social factors such as rapid urbanization and rural-urban migration contribute to increased demand for food in urban areas, straining already fragile food systems.

3. Climate Change: Climate change has negatively impacted agriculture in Nigeria. Irregular rainfall patterns, desertification, droughts, and flooding have reduced crop yields, affect livestock production and the availability of arable land (IPCC, 2022).

4. Poor Food-chain Infrastructure: Inadequate infrastructure to maintain the food supply chain, such as roads, storage facilities, and market access, hampers the distribution of food items from areas of production to where consumers can access it. The hike in prices of premium motor spirit (PMS) as well as Diesel have resulted many farmers inability to transport their produce to markets efficiently, leading to food wastage and reduced income (IFPRI, 2020).

5. Population Growth: Nigeria's rapidly growing population, projected to reach 400 million by 2050, puts immense pressure on already dwindling food resources; the increasing demand for food outpaces the growth in food production, leading to shortages and higher food prices (UN DESA, 2019).

6. Agricultural Challenges: Despite being agriculturally rich, Nigeria faces significant agricultural challenges such as persistence of subsistent farming and outdated farming practices, poor mechanization of agriculture, poor access to and unacceptance to hybrid seeds/seedlings as well as limited access to credit facilities and markets by farmers. The high cost of farming consumables like fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides also make subsistence farming unprofitable for the average Nigerian.

Public Health Effects

1. Malnutrition: Food insecurity is directly linked to malnutrition, especially among children under five years of age. According to UNICEF, about 37% of Nigerian children suffer from chronic malnutrition or stunting, affecting their physical and cognitive development (UNICEF 2020). Micronutrient deficiencies, such as Vitamin A deficiency, Iron deficiency anaemia, and Iodine deficiency, are also prevalent, leading to weakened immune systems and increased susceptibility to diseases among them. Chronic under-nutrition affects cognitive development in children, leading to long-term consequences for educational attainment and productivity. Studies have shown that malnourished children have lower IQs and poorer school performance, limiting their future opportunities (WHO, 2018).

2. Increased Morbidity and Mortality Rates: The lack of adequate nutrition contributes to higher mortality rates, particularly among infants and young children. Food insecurity is also linked to increased incidence of infectious diseases, compromised immune systems, and higher mortality rates, particularly among vulnerable populations. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension are also exacerbated by poor diet quality associated with food insecurity (De-Sanctis et al, 2021).

3. Maternal Health Issues: Food insecurity also impacts maternal health, as pregnant and lactating women require increased nutritional intake. Malnutrition during pregnancy can lead to complications such as low birth weight, preterm birth, and maternal mortality (Black et al 2013).

4. Social and Economic Impact: Beyond health outcomes, food insecurity undermines economic productivity and social stability. It reinforces and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality by limiting educational attainment, reducing workforce productivity, and increasing social unrest in affected communities; widening socioeconomic disparities. (De-Sanctis et al, 2021) A population suffering from food insecurity is less productive economically, undermining national development efforts.

Way Forward

1. Improving Agricultural Productivity: Enhancing agricultural productivity is crucial for addressing food insecurity. This can be achieved through the adoption of modern farming techniques, improved seed varieties, and sustainable agricultural practices at family, community and National levels. Government support in the form of subsidies, training, and access to credit for farmers can significantly boost food production. Government needs to improve investment in agricultural research on drought-resistant crops, soil health, and sustainable farming practices. There is a need also to invest in modernizing irrigation systems and promoting efficient water use (FAO 2021).

2. Strengthening Food Distribution Systems: Developing efficient food distribution systems is essential to ensure that food reaches all regions of the country. Investing in infrastructure, such as roads, storage facilities, and market access, will reduce post-harvest losses and improve the availability of food (WFP, 2021). Strengthening food supply chains will also help stabilize food prices and reduce seasonal fluctuations.

3. Addressing Conflict and Insecurity: Resolving conflicts and improving security in affected regions is vital for restoring agricultural activities and ensuring food security. Promoting peace building initiatives and supporting displaced populations can help rebuild livelihoods and restore food production. (International Crisis Group, 2018).

4. Implementing Social Safety Nets: Establishment of robust social safety nets, such as food assistance programs, school feeding programs and conditional cash transfers, can provide immediate relief to vulnerable populations, if effectively implemented and monitored. These programs should be targeted at the most affected regions and demographics, including children, pregnant women, and the elderly (World Bank, 2020).

5. Promoting Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices is essential to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production. Techniques such as agroforestry, crop diversification, and water conservation farming can help farmers adapt to changing environmental conditions (UNEP, 2020). Government policies should support climate-smart agriculture and provide farmers with the resources (climate-resilient seeds and livestock breeds) and knowledge needed to implement these practices.

6. Policy and Governance: The Government can prioritize smallholder farmers' access to resources. For instance, targeted subsidies and price stabilization can be provided for smallholder farmers, especially for inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and machinery. Government can also implement mechanisms to stabilize food prices, ensuring affordability for vulnerable populations by strengthening the mopping up of grains into silos during harvest and providing to the general public at subsidized prices in the months of food scarcity (April to July). Partnerships to improve food security will include fostering collaborations between government agencies, NGOs, private sector, and international organizations to leverage resources and expertise in addressing food insecurity.

Conclusion

Food insecurity in Nigeria is a multifaceted issue driven by poverty, conflict, climate change, poor infrastructure, and population growth. The health effects are severe, leading to malnutrition, increased mortality, and impaired cognitive development. To address this crisis, collaborative efforts from the government, private sector, and international organizations are essential.

References

- Black RE, Victora CG, Walker SP, Bhutta ZA, Christian P, de Onis M, Ezzati M, Grantham-McGregor S, Katz J, Martorell R, Uauy R; Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group. Maternal and child under-nutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. *Lancet*. 2013; 382(9890):427-51.
- De Sanctis V, Soliman A, Alaaraj N, Ahmed S, Alyafei F, Hamed N. Early and Long-term Consequences of Nutritional Stunting: From Childhood to Adulthood. *Acta Biomed*. 2021 Feb 16;92(1):e2021168. doi: 10.23750/abm.v92i1.11346. PMID: 33682846; PMCID: PMC7975963.
- FAO. (2019). Nigeria Situation Report. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- FAO. (2021). The State of Food and Agriculture 2021. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- IFPRI. (2020). Food Security and Nutrition in Nigeria: Drivers and Impacts. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- International Crisis Group. (2018). Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence. Brussels: International Crisis Group.
- IPCC. (2022). Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UN DESA. (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- UNEP. (2020). Climate Resilience in Africa: A Case Study of Nigeria. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.
- UNICEF. (2020). Malnutrition in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions. Abuja: UNICEF Nigeria.
- WHO. (2018). Maternal and Child Nutrition: Global Strategy. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- WFP. (2021). Nigeria: Country Brief. Rome: World Food Programme.
- World Bank. (2020). Safety Nets in Africa: Effective Mechanisms to Reach the Most Vulnerable. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2021). Poverty & Equity Brief: Nigeria. Washington, DC: World Bank.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WORLD CONGRESS OF EPIDEMIOLOGY (WCE) 2024



The Nigerian delegation to WCE 2024



From L to R: Dr Akindele Adebisi, Prof. Olumuyiwa Odunsanya and Prof. Alphonsus Isara



APHPN President Prof. Alphonsus Isara in panel discussion during the WCE 2024



IEA President Dr. Akindele Adebisi and other members of the IEA Council



APHPN President Prof. Alphonsus Isara with IEA President Dr. Akindele Adebisi



IEA President Dr. Akindele Adebisi addressing IEA Congress during the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Appointments and Promotions



APHPN congratulates Prof Akin Osibogun, the Immediate Past President of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria on the Distinguished Fellow Award which he received at the Convocation Ceremony of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria which held in Port Harcourt on Thursday 19th September 2024 at the Obi-Wali International Conference Centre



APHPN warmly Congratulates Prof. B. S. C. Uzochukwu, the Immediate Past President of APHPN who was elected National Chairman of the West African College of Physicians (Nigeria Chapter) at the WACP- Nigeria Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference which held in August 2024 at the Obi-Wali International Conference Centre in Port Harcourt



APHPN warmly congratulate Dr. Mary Onoja-Alexandar who has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of Community Medicine at the Federal University, Lokoja. Dr Mary Onoja-Alexander is also the current Coordinator of APHPN Kogi State Branch.



APHPN warmly congratulate Prof. Adedeji Onayade, Past APHPN Editor-in-Chief who has been Elected Chairman, Faculty of Public Health and Community Medicine, National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, during the ASCAF in Port Harcourt.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2024 FACULTY DAY LECTURE OF THE FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE



Fellows of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, Faculty of Public Health and Community Medicine processing into the hall



Faculty Chairman Prof Chikaiké Ogbonna giving his welcome speech



Keynote speaker Dr. Modupe Onadoko giving her presentation



Group photograph with the Faculty Day Lecturer



Chairman of the occasion Dr. Claribel Abam giving her remarks at the Faculty Day Lecture



Members of the local organising committee flanking the keynote speaker as she cuts her 80th birthday cake

Notable Public Health Days October - December 2024

OCTOBER 2024

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Eye Injury Prevention Month
- National Dental Hygiene Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct. 3–9)
- Malnutrition Awareness Week (Oct. 4–8)
- World Mental Health Day (Oct. 10)
- International Day of the Girl Child (Oct. 11)
- World Sight Day (Oct. 14)
- Global Handwashing Day (Oct. 15)
- International Infection Prevention Week (Oct. 17–23)
- World Food Day (Oct. 16)

NOVEMBER 2024

- World Pneumonia Day (Nov. 12)
- World Prematurity Day (Nov. 17)
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (Nov. 20)
- World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (Nov 18-24)

DECEMBER 2024

- World AIDS Day (Dec. 1)
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3)



 A poster for the 41st Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Association of Public Health Physicians of Nigeria (APHPN) in Abeokuta, 2025. The background shows a large rock formation. The text includes:

- ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH PHYSICIANS OF NIGERIA (APHPN)
- 41ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
- ABEOKUTA 2025
- Main Theme: Primary Health Care Delivery in the Face of Multidimensional Challenges
- Sub Theme: Prevention and Control of Substance Use among Young Persons
- Prioritizing Mental Health in Primary Health Care Delivery in Nigeria
- Strengthening Disease Surveillance and Response in Nigeria
 - One Health and Public Health Practice in Nigeria
- Optimizing the Practice of Occupational Health and Safety in Nigeria
- Sunday, 9th March to Friday, 14th March
- Venue: June 12 Cultural Centre, Kuto, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- Mon. - Fri. 8:00AM Daily