



CATHOLIC DOCTORS ALERT ON CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG ADDICTION IN THE COUNTRY

Sep 06, 2019

LAGOS, NIGERIA -

Drug addiction has taken a new and alarming dimension in the Nigerian health sector and has been attributed as a major factor for the high rate of suicide being committed presently in the country. This assertion was made by the members of the Catholic Health Practitioners of Nigeria, in a communique issued at the end of the association's 14th Annual Scientific Conference, held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos in July; had: *Effects of Drug Addiction on Integral Human Development* as its theme.

The communique, signed by Dr. Emmanuel Okechukwu National President of the association and Dr. Patrick Ijewere, the Archdiocesan Chairman of the Lagos Chapter; outlined the challenges of the medical challenge on the country and the family and offered ways on how it could be addressed to minimize and eradicate this dangerous societal malady.

According to the Catholic doctors, drug addiction has multi-dimensional effects on the family and the society adding

that it has become an epidemic ravaging Nigerians of all ages, including pupils and students of primary and secondary schools as well as those of higher institutions. They therefore called for a collaboration among all stakeholder groups in the country to put an end to this endemic situation. They advised all Nigerians, especially medical practitioners and parents to step up the fight against drug abuse through targeted education and close relationship with their children and wards.

Pointing out that the upsurge in suicide among Nigerians is among other things, fueled by drug addiction and substance abuse; the doctors noted that the impact addiction can have on integral human development is that life can become meaningless with suicide becoming an attractive option for the victims. They noted that drug abusers need compassion and humane care adding that stigmatization and discrimination “are not Christian attitudes towards them”; as these could worsen their situation.

While admonishing medical practitioners and other health personnel to look at healthcare services from a wellness perspective, the doctors called on Catholic health care delivery providers to be firmly grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church on matters of “medical bioethics in face of technological progress which may promote practices that are contrary to moral law. In the same vein, they urged them to be educated on the pro-life culture and family planning methods in the concept of the Catholic Church teaching.

The body also appealed to the government on vital areas that need the crucial attention of the government on the provision of good healthcare delivery services for all classes of Nigerians as well as ensuring that government

agencies responsible for control and services in all health matters live up to expectation in the performance of their official duties; especially in drug abuse and addiction related matters.