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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

### Healthcare Delivery in West Africa: Threats and Opportunities

It is my pleasure to present the last edition of the journal for the year 2023. At this juncture of the year, there is a collective inclination among individuals and organizations to engage in reflection, reviewing the past, and envisioning the future. The WAJM is no exception. Throughout the year, despite different challenges, we successfully maintained a steady stream of our monthly issues with the publication of about 200 articles covering the different medical and surgical specialties.

Furthermore, we were able to compile and publish the books of Abstracts from two scientific conferences that were held during the year. I would like to extend sincere appreciation to all our stakeholders: college leaders, editorial members, authors, reviewers, institutions, readers, and other contributors for your resilient support and partnership throughout the year. Your dedication has been invaluable in our collective efforts.

Once again, this edition encompasses a rich array of articles that delve into pertinent issues across the multifaceted landscape of medical and surgical disciplines. Within its pages, readers will find interesting research and insights that are capable of contributing to shaping the ever-evolving field of healthcare.

As we envision the future of healthcare delivery in our sub-

region, it remains imperative for us to consistently highlight the emerging threats and challenges that our nations are grappling with. Our purpose is not only to highlight these issues but also to foster a heightened awareness and inspire collective action by relevant stakeholders

The pervasive phenomenon marked by the ongoing migration of skilled healthcare professionals is one of the most formidable threats to the future of healthcare delivery in our region. This trend not only depletes our pool of experienced medical personnel but also erodes the foundation of a robust and sustainable healthcare infrastructure. It impacts negatively on the quantity and quality of healthcare providers and services available locally. It has emerged as a critical challenge that demands urgent attention and strategic intervention. The gravest concern lies in the apparent absence of specific, proactive, and comprehensive strategies to effectively address the syndrome. It is imperative for leaders at various levels within the nation and the healthcare profession to collectively tackle this challenge with a sense of urgency.

One key solution lies in the formulation of a multifaceted strategy that acknowledges and addresses the factors propelling the migration of healthcare professionals. Retaining and attracting skilled professionals necessitate the creation of an

environment that fosters professional growth. There is a need to devise and implement competitive incentives. Leaders should consider revising policies to ensure attractive remuneration packages, improved working conditions, and benefits that acknowledge the dedication and expertise of healthcare workers.

Simultaneously, several systemic issues such as the overarching security situation need to be tackled. Multiple incidents have occurred where healthcare workers have been victims of different criminal activities, including kidnapping. These distressing occurrences which reflect the broader trend of insecurity have been a major 'push' factor for emigration.

I also want to draw attention again to another emerging threat to the healthcare ecosystem in the sub-region which is the gradual exodus of multinational health organizations and companies, particularly pharmaceutical firms. It is a pressing issue that compounds the challenges faced by healthcare delivery in our region. This trend poses a significant threat to the accessibility and quality of healthcare services, demanding immediate and effective solutions. Urgent solutions are required. Leaders and stakeholders must identify and address the reasons behind this exodus and tackle them frontally. This requires the implementation of streamlined regulations and economic stability

to improve the operating environment. Collaborative efforts between governments and the private sector are vital. There is a need for massive investment in the local pharmaceutical industry to create a self-sufficient healthcare ecosystem, ensuring the continued availability of essential resources.

These and other threats to healthcare service and delivery indeed create, I dare say, a war-like state of emergency. All stakeholders must appreciate the gravity of the challenges, which must be treated as a state of emergency. Urgent measures are required, and declaring a formal state of emergency may be imperative to mobilize resources, expedite coordinated actions, and safeguard the well-being of our

nation where healthcare is concerned.

As we approach the new year 2024, there's a hopeful anticipation that collective efforts will be mobilized to implement measures and policies addressing and mitigating the challenges at hand.

On our part, we are committed to sustaining the significant milestones we have attained, and concurrently, we are dedicated to pursuing continuous improvement in both the quality of our services and the output we deliver. We eagerly anticipate the collective commitment of all our stakeholders and partners as we pursue the shared mission of advancing the frontier of knowledge, even amidst prevailing obstacles. Your support and

dedication are pivotal in this ongoing journey, and we are confident that, united, we can navigate challenges and continue to deliver on our mission and objectives. Compliments of the season and a happy new year to you all. May the coming year bring joy, success, and fulfilment.

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