Editorial

Public Health

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From the definition of public health, one may understand that public health deals with the health of the populations not individuals like medicine. In brief but precisely, public health may be defined as the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organized efforts and informed choices of society or organization. Alternatively, public health may also be defined as the application of the practice of epidemiology.

John M. Last, 1995 defined epidemiology and I quote as follows "Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health - related events in specified populations and the application of this study to control the health problem." According to this definition, we should note that:

- **Study:** Involves surveillance, observation, hypotheses testing, analytic research and experiments.
- **Distribution:** Refers to an analysis by place, time and classes of persons affected.
- **Determinant:** All physical, biological, cultural, social and behavioral factors that influence health.
- **Health - related events:** Refer to physical fitness, pregnancy, drug abuse, smoking habits, consumption of alcohol, suicide etc.
- **Application to control:** This clearly makes the aim of epidemiology i.e. to promote, protect and restore health.

Other important aspects that need to know about public health are including twelve principles of the ethical practice of public health and the core functions of public health. Having knowledge of such may be an asset to the promotion, protection, and restoration of health in the populations. Some of the principles of the ethical. practice of public health are as follows:

- Public health should address the main causes of disease and requirements for health, so as to prevent adverse health outcomes.
- Public health should achieve community health in respect of the right of individuals in that particular community.
- Public health should seek relevant information to implement effective policies and programs that protect and promote health.

Meanwhile, the core functions of public health include assessment of health needs and problems by using investigation, surveillance, and research, to develop policies that may lead to address the priority health issues, and to implement the programs to achieve the specifically designed health goals and monitor one's progress as well.

Public health laboratory is another significant ingredient that will assist in achieving the health of the population. The public health laboratory provides support by confirming the disease diagnosis and enabling the public health professionals to conduct research and training of personnel as well. Based on this, it's paramount to ensure that the structure of the public health laboratory was established, well equips and functional up to standard, so as to answer its positive name. In my mother tongue, we have a proverb that said: "lafiya uwar jiki" (health is wealth).

At this junction, we want to use this opportunity to kindly draw the attention of government at all levels, especially Africans to redouble their efforts towards this direction by allocating 25% of their countries annual budget to health.

In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health and I quote as follows "Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease and infirmity."

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