Dear PATS Members and Family,

Welcome to the 3rd edition of the Pan African Thoracic Society newsletter!

As we embark on this New Year, we are thrilled to showcase the remarkable work and achievements of our very own PATS Lung health Initiative (PALI) Grant winner, Dr. Bankole Peter Kuti, whose impactful initiative unfolded on World Lung Day last year. Themed Access To Prevention And Treatment For All: Leave No One Behind. Peter’s dedication and success serve as a testament to the spirit of improvement and progress within our society and we are incredibly proud of his accomplishments in taking the opportunity to highlight lung health issues in his country of Nigeria.

In line with our commitment to promoting lung health, we are excited to introduce the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Working Group led by Dr. Jibril Mohammed. This group represents the collaborative and new efforts that continue to drive advancements in respiratory care across Africa and particularly to find low cost solutions that can improve lives of people living with chronic respiratory diseases.

Furthermore, on our Who’s Who section, we are pleased to introduce you to two new PATS Executive Committee members, Prof Joy Eze and Dr. Sandra Kwarteng-Owusu. Their expertise and passion for advocating and promoting paediatric lung health will undoubtedly enrich our society. Our efforts to improve outcomes especially in children will have huge implications to overall lung health on the continent, and their contribution will only enrich our societies impact.

Finally we would like to remind everyone to renew their membership. We encourage all existing members to renew their memberships and continue to enjoy benefits of being part of PATS and extend a warm invitation to new members who wish to join our dynamic community. The PATS MECOR course registration will open early in March. This program will take place in Kenya, Brackenhurst 16–20 September, and we welcome our members who are interested to submit their applications.

As we look ahead to another year, we are eager to build upon our past achievements and set new milestones. Together, we aim to promote the standard of care and promote knowledge exchange and research throughout Africa.

We extend our warmest wishes for a successful and fulfilling year ahead.

Warm wishes,

Refiloe Masekela
President of Pan African Thoracic Society
PAN AFRICAN THORACIC SOCIETY LUNG HEALTH INITIATIVE (PILI) MAKES STRIDES IN ASTHMA AWARENESS AMONG NIGERIAN SCHOOL POPULATION ON WORLD LUNG HEALTH DAY 2023

In commemoration of World Lung Health Day 2023, the Pan African Thoracic Society Lung Health Initiative (PILI) sponsored a groundbreaking program at the Wesley Guild Hospital in Ilesa, Nigeria. Under the theme “Access to Prevention and Treatment for All: Leave No One Behind,” the focus of the initiative was on improving asthma treatment and prevention among the school population.

The program, titled “Use of Educational Programme - Inter-school Competition and Role-playing,” took place on the 25th of September, 2023, at the Multi-Clinic Hall of Wesley Guild Hospital. Attended by a total of 102 participants, the diverse audience included children with asthma, their parents, school children, teachers, medical students, and healthcare professionals.

The first session, conducted by Dr. Bankole Kuti, focused on “Asthma Recognition, Treatment, and Prevention in Schools and at Home.” Emphasizing the importance of asthma-friendly environments, he addressed triggers and co-morbidities in school children.

The second session featured a demonstration on the use of inhalation devices by Dr. Bankole Kuti and clinical Pharmacist Mr. Gbenga Ajayi. The third session showcased an inter-school quiz competition where students demonstrated impressive knowledge about asthma symptoms, treatment, and prevention.

Awards and certificates of participation were presented to all schools, including essential medical equipment for their first aid boxes. The participants pledged to disseminate their newly acquired knowledge to their communities, ensuring that no one is left behind in understanding and addressing asthma and lung health. The program concluded with a vote of thanks, distribution of certificates and group photographs.

In summary, PILI’s sponsored initiative on World Lung Day 2023 proved to be a transformative event, equipping participants with knowledge and tools to champion asthma awareness in Nigerian schools. The program’s success underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in promoting lung health.
I have the honour to report on the early activities of the Pan African Thoracic Society Pulmonary Rehabilitation Working Group (PATS-PRWG). The PATS-PRWG has achieved noteworthy progress since its inception following the PATS-RESOK Conference in Mombasa, Kenya, in June 2023. The group's establishment was prompted by Prof. Refiloe Masekela, the newly elected President of PATS, who recognized the imperative to create a robust platform for advancing pulmonary rehabilitation in Africa.

One of the initial challenges faced by the PATS-PRWG was the identification of members engaged in pulmonary rehabilitation practice or research across diverse African countries. Within the first three months, the group successfully recruited foundational members, aiming for a maximum representation of two individuals per country. This strategic decision was made to enhance the group’s efficiency, while maintaining a comprehensive pan-African perspective.

Communication and collaboration within the PATS-PRWG primarily take place through a WhatsApp platform. This medium facilitates the exchange of ideas, sharing relevant articles, and discussing clinical practice guidelines. Notably, the group responded to a published article that inadequately captured the African context. Subsequently, members collaborated to author a response, addressing the underrepresentation of low- and middle-income countries in core outcome sets for pulmonary rehabilitation. The response was published in Thorax, providing a critical perspective from the African context for more details see: thorax bmj journals

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive ‘Statement on Pulmonary Rehabilitation in Africa,’ the PATS-PRWG is actively working on a manuscript. This statement, scheduled for submission to the Journal of PATS in the second quarter of 2024, aims to provide a foundational framework for the implementation of relevant pulmonary rehabilitation programs across the African continent. The document will consider the unique African context and present recommendations for stakeholders looking to establish pulmonary rehabilitation services in their respective centers. Beyond these crucial initiatives, the PATS-PRWG is also laying the groundwork to become a sub-regional resource in pulmonary rehabilitation training.

Plans include identifying funding sources for a South-South mobility program, allowing members to gain hands-on experience by traveling from centers with limited pulmonary rehabilitation services to those with established expertise, patients and equipment. Additionally, the group intends to organize webinars featuring both local and international resource persons, with esteemed individuals such as Prof. Sally Singh (UK) and Prof. Martijn Spruit (The Netherlands) already serving as advisers and potential collaborators.

Members of the PATS-PRWG are encouraged to register with PATS and pursue clinical fellowships and research grants to further enhance their capacity in pulmonary rehabilitation.

Lastly, on behalf of the PATS-PRWG, I wish to sincerely thank the President and Executive Committee PATS for the approval granted to have this working group in the first place. The last 6 months since the inauguration of our working group has been spent on getting to know each other and planning activities. This year promises to be our year of action and visible outputs. I wish our members and the entire PATS family a fruitful 2024!

Dr. Jibril Mohammed, PT, PhD
Lead, PATS-PRWG
I am a professor of paediatrics/paediatric pulmonologist at the Department of Paediatrics, College of Medicine, University of Nigeria/University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu, Nigeria. My training in Paediatric Pulmonology at the University of Cape Town/Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital (RCWMCH), Cape Town, South Africa under the African Paediatric Fellowship Programme (APFP) was a great mile stone in my professional career.

I had returned to Nigeria to provide the much needed respiratory care for Nigerian children, and to contribute to improving lung health in Africa and the globe through advocacy, capacity development, training, and research. My research bordered on air pollution and lung health; lung function measurements, Asthma; and more recently primary ciliary dyskinesia (PCD) having facilitated the PCD diagnostics for South African population at the RCWMCH.

I serve in various committees of the Paediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN), and American Thoracic Society (ATS). The ATS ‘International Health Committee (IHC)’ implements the roadmap for ATS MECOR through which PATS continues to nurture its MECOR programmes. As a PATS MECOR faculty I mentor individuals and groups in research, guiding them through the process of research with the use of appropriate methodological approaches. I am the current director of clinical services and training in my hospital.

As a member of the current PATS EXCO representing Nigeria I shall advocate for, and influence policies related to lung health in Nigeria, Africa and the globe; and partner with relevant organizations to institute a sustainable platform for capacity building for young professional. Most African countries lack an organized institutional ability to foster respiratory care. Having contributed to curriculum development in other fora, I will contribute to PATS vision of enabling early career professionals to have a clear career path, and enthrone best practices in respiratory care especially in Nigeria, and parts of Africa where respiratory practice is still rudimentary. I shall help to organize group trainings on relevant procedures in respiratory practice during PATS Congresses. I hope to rejuvenate the PATS mentorship programme and nurture younger colleagues in the path to leadership and professionalism, enabling them to become leaders and drivers of change in their various domains.

I am Sandra Kwarteng Owusu a Senior Lecturer and a Paediatric Pulmonologist. I hold an MPhil in Paediatric Pulmonology. I am a Fellow of the West African College of Physicians(Paed) and a Fellow of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons. I trained as the first Paediatric Pulmonologist in Ghana at the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital and the University of Cape Town. I subsequently established the first paediatric pulmonology service at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital.

My research work is focused on improving outcomes of lung health conditions that occur in early childhood such as; asthma, pneumonia tuberculosis, HIV, and sickle cell disease. I also work in the area of air pollution and its impact on lung health.

As an ordinary executive member of the Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS) for the 2023 to 2025 period, I hope to work closely with the PATS President and the executives. I will support the President in carrying out her vision to improve lung health outcomes across Africa. Further, I will work diligently with the team in their quest to improve access to diagnostic facilities and medications for respiratory diseases that are prevalent in Africa.

My vision is to support the leadership of PATS to continue to advocate for and develop capacity-building initiatives that will help address challenges in respiratory disease management across the spectrum of care in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, together with leadership, I will work towards generating interest and promoting knowledge among all cadres of health professionals in respiratory health especially in Ghana.

I will also support the executive team in the running of existing short courses organized by the society. I will provide support to the team to explore further opportunities for respiratory disease skills training programs in Africa which will contribute to the expansion of the frontiers and visibility of PATS in Africa.

Lastly, I am willing to dedicate time and effort to support the executive committee in any way I would be called upon to promote the Pan African Thoracic Society’s activities globally.