

Futa



YOUR HEALTH E-NEWSLETTER FROM MEDGAMBIA.COM

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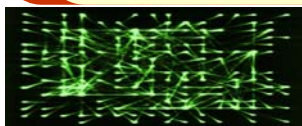
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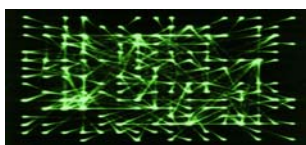
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MODERNISING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN THE GAMBIA

The art and science of curing diseases using medicine started with herbalists. Modern medicine emerged from this concept by identifying the active ingredients within these herbs and formulating them into pills and capsules. Somehow, a misunderstanding arose between traditional practitioners and modern medical doctors despite their common origin. This rift is most regrettable.

The issue of the use of traditional medicine in the Gambia is a straightforward one to many... it is a potent alternative to modern medicine. A considerable number of Gambians prefer traditional medicine; others are drawn to it because it is relatively cheaper than modern medicine.

The health authorities in the Gambia, through the National Traditional Medicine Programme, are making laudable efforts to ensure the safety of

traditional medicine and to incorporate it into the national



healthcare system. This is a logical step, given the fact that it is preferred by some in Gambian society for various reasons.

SAFETY ISSUES

Traditional medicine needs to be made safe. This is linked to the fact that herbs used as traditional medicines might contain toxins which can cause serious damage to the liver and kidneys. Such herbs need to be detoxified prior to use. The strengthening of the concept of a Food and Drugs Board in the Gambia will certainly help in this area.

VERIFICATION

Herbalists need to work hand in hand with scientists to allow for the testing of the herbs used. This will help in the determination of the efficacy of the herb in question and also to ascertain the dose to be administered to cure a certain ailment. This process is in the

best interest of the public.

There are many areas in which traditional practitioners and modern medics can work together, and there are other areas in which modern medicine cannot afford to uphold the opinions of traditional practitioners such as the following:

CURING CHRONIC DISEASES

Many a traditional healer claims to have a "cure" for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma. Such opinions must not be tolerated since these conditions are usually life long and need to be managed. A claim by a herbalist to be able to cure hypertension might lead a hypertensive individual to stop his usual medications after being "cured", this can result in a stroke and death.

CURING SURGICAL CONDITIONS

Claims by herbalists that they can cure surgical conditions must also be discouraged. Hernias for example need to be repaired by a trained surgeon to avoid complications.

The legal system in the Gambia must be strengthened to allow for the safe practice of traditional medicine without endangering the population.

Healthcare systems in Africa are at a crossroads. The continent is still plagued with infections no doubt. But owing to improved diagnostic capabilities and emerging trends chronic conditions have become a threat as well. The Gambia has its fair share of infectious diseases and chronic conditions. Another major challenge is specialized surgical care. Not a month goes by without an article in the local dailies regarding an individual who needs help to fund a surgical procedure overseas. It is very costly to train specialists in various surgical disciplines, but it would be a worthwhile investment in the long run. This task is not only for the government but would require the involvement of the private sector and interested individuals. The Gambia has to start looking after its own.



DANNY WHYTE

GONE BUT NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

Most Gambians would not know Mr. Danny Whyte, and they're probably wondering what his tribute is doing on a website concerned with Gambian health.

Well, Danny was a leukemia patient who, unfortunately, passed away on the 22nd of May 2007.

He was a successful IT professional in Ghana and would have achieved great things if his life wasn't cut short by leukemia.

It all started off with repeated attacks of what seemed like malaria, he was treated several times for malaria (health professionals in Africa need to pay particular attention to this fact) but to no avail.

He finally sought a second opinion and a diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) was finally made. He eventually moved to the UK for further medical attention, and had several sessions of chemotherapy. He needed a bone marrow transplant as a permanent solution to the problem but there was a problem.

Danny was of African Descent, and most of the marrow registers were made up of Caucasians. This meant

that it would be very difficult for him to find a genetic match.



Danny did not give up, instead he had begun to realize the problem he and other (past, present and future) Africans with a similar condition had. Danny took the bold step of starting a leukemia trust together with Mr. Ivor Burford (a former leukemia patient). The Danny Whyte and Ivor Burford (DWIB) Leukemia Trust was thus formed.

Danny was at the forefront of the activities aimed at setting up the first bone marrow register in sub-Saharan Africa, based in Ghana. DWIB has also begun to raise awareness about leukemia in Africa. Danny had been very healthy for a while, but due to the unpredictability of the disease he relapsed, and things didn't improve.

Danny is gone, but he has left a very noble cause in the hands of all Africans. YOU can make a difference, and YOU can save a life. Leukemia can affect any of us, save a life today...for it may be yours tomorrow. May his soul rest in perfect peace...

Recently, Yvette Gate, a girl of Gambian origin living in Bristol in the UK was diagnosed as having Aplastic Anaemia (a condition in which the bone marrow becomes dysfunctional and produces very little amounts of blood cells). Young Yvette is also in need of a bone marrow transplant, and she needs a match as well.

Help young Yvette today, so she can help you tomorrow. Her young life is in the hands of potential donors like you.

If you are of Afro-Caribbean origin, and living in the UK, then you can get in touch via her website www.yvettegate.co.uk or the Afro-Caribbean Leukemia Trust (www.aclt.org).

VISIT [THE MEDGAMBIA WEBSITE](http://www.medgambia.com) FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF INFORMATION ON HEALTH ISSUES CONCERNING THE GAMBIA AND BEYOND...

www.medgambia.com

AVOCADO & HEALTH

Avocado (scientific name *Persea Americana*) is counted as a favorite amongst Gambians. The fruit is native to Central and South America, but avocado trees can be counted as a valuable asset in many Gambian homes.



- The avocado pear is unique in many of its dietary characteristics.

- For starters, it has the highest fibre content of any fruit.
- Avocado has a very high fat content, even though most of it is unsaturated (the good kind).
- It also has a very high potassium content.
- Rich in B vitamins.
- Contains significant amounts of vitamin E and K.

Health Benefits

Dietary fibre

The high fibre content is obviously of great benefit. It prevents constipation and can reduce the incidence of common diseases such as appendicitis. The high fibre content can also reduce the incidence of large bowel cancer.

Unsaturated fat

Unsaturated fats reduce the

incidence of cardiovascular diseases.

Health Risks

Saturated fat

Saturated fat makes up about 15% of the total fat content of avocado fruits. Long term consumption of large amounts is therefore a risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease.

Monounsaturated fat and Diabetes

These make up 71% of the total fat content of avocado. Some monounsaturated fats have been said to cause insulin resistance. Insulin resistance is a key factor in the development of adult-onset diabetes mellitus. Some studies have found no connection between monounsaturated fats and diabetes.

High Potassium Content

The high potassium content of the fruit is no threat to the average individual. People with kidney failure, on the other hand, have problems with potassium excretion and should avoid the fruit if possible.

The Avocado fruit has the highest fibre content of amongst fruits.



Avocado has a very high fat content, even though most of it is unsaturated (the good kind).



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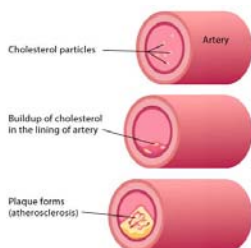


TOURISM AND HEALTH



A TRIBUTE TO GAMBIAN NURSES

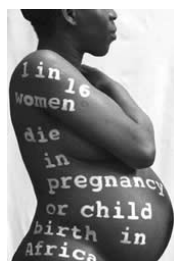
A note of acknowledgement to the backbone of the Gambian healthcare system



FIGHTING CHOLESTEROL



Find out what causes high blood cholesterol and possible solutions



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Click Good Health!

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This website is dedicated to the health and well-being of Gambians and people living in The Gambia.

Our goal is to create a more health-conscious Gambian population that will stay healthy, live longer and thus contribute more effectively to national and international development. medGambia will provide information about common health problems in the simplest of terms.



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