

EMPOWERING PHARMACISTS, APPLYING KNOWLEDGE, PROTECTING LIVES

To mark World Pharmacists Day — 25 September 2026

Prof. Lere Baale

Country Director to Chief Executive, Business School Netherlands, 8 Adekunle Fajuyi Way, Ikeja GRA, Lagos. Nigeria

***Corresponding Author:**

Tel: NIG + 234 803 402 0294; USA +1 813 474 5725

Email: lere.baale@bsn-mba.net, lere.baale@gmail.com

ORCID iD: 0009-0001-1365-9256

Every medicine carries a promise of healing. Fulfilling that promise requires knowledge, sound judgement, careful systems and compassionate care.

Behind every prescription is a person whose life matters: a child awaiting relief, a mother managing an illness, an older person taking several medicines, or a family placing its trust in our professional competence.

Today, as we celebrate World Pharmacists Day under the theme **“Empowering pharmacists for healthier futures,”** we must reflect on the responsibility that accompanies our knowledge. Empowerment should become visible in safer treatment, better decisions and healthier communities.

On behalf of the Fellows of the Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy, I salute pharmacists across community and hospital practice, industry, academia, research, regulation and public service. I also invite us to make this celebration a moment of rededication: to deepen our knowledge, apply what we learn and prevent avoidable medication harm every day.

Our professional achievements find their greatest meaning in the lives we protect.

The legacy of **Imhotep**, the ancient Egyptian figure celebrated for his wisdom and, across the centuries, associated with pharmacy, architecture, learning and healing, offers an inspiring African reference point. His enduring reputation embodies the ideal of the polymath: a mind willing to reach across disciplines. Historical

accounts distinguish his documented achievements from the medical roles attributed to him in later centuries, but his place in the cultural memory of knowledge and healing remains significant.

For today's pharmacist, that ideal should inspire intellectual breadth grounded in professional depth.

We need to understand medicines thoroughly, as well as the people who use them, the systems that deliver them, and the circumstances that influence treatment. Clinical science, public health, communication, ethics, technology, leadership and human behaviour all deserve our attention.

Knowledge must become useful at the point of care.

A conference attended, a journal article read or a qualification earned should influence how we practise. Learning achieves its purpose when it helps us recognise a risk, ask a better question, resolve a treatment problem or explain a medicine more clearly.

We should therefore ask ourselves regularly: What have I learnt? What have I changed because of that learning? How has the patient benefited?

These questions turn continuing professional development into continuing improvement in care.

Our responsibility is especially urgent in medication safety. The World Health Organisation identifies harm associated with medicines and therapeutic options as accounting for nearly half of preventable harm in medical care. Its *Medication Without Harm* initiative calls for coordinated action to reduce avoidable medication-related harm.

Behind that burden are people whose suffering might have been prevented.

A missed allergy, an incorrect dose, an overlooked interaction, an unclear instruction or an incomplete medication history can have serious consequences. We must consistently bring our knowledge and attention to these risks, including on the busiest and most demanding days.

Let us rededicate our professional lives to **preventing medication errors in daily clinical practice**, contributing to the worldwide effort to save lives and protect millions of people from avoidable harm.

That commitment must shape our everyday actions:

- **Review carefully:** Verify patient identity, indication, foods, medicine, dose, route, frequency and duration, taking relevant patient factors into account.
- **Ask and reconcile:** Establish what patients actually take, including non-prescription medicines, supplements and herbal products, especially during transitions of care.
- **Identify and resolve risks:** Check allergies, interactions, duplication and monitoring needs, and clarify uncertainties with the appropriate healthcare professional.
- **Explain and listen:** Use clear language and ask patients to explain their understanding, so that counselling becomes a conversation.
- **Document and learn:** Record interventions, report errors and near misses, and use the findings to improve systems.
- **Follow through:** Support appropriate monitoring and communication so that safety continues beyond the moment of dispensing.

Each action deserves to become a reliable habit.

Yet vigilance alone cannot carry the entire burden of safety. Pharmacists need manageable workloads, appropriate staffing, reliable information, clear procedures, and working environments that support concentration and sound judgment. Institutions must make it possible to raise concerns and report clinical medication mistakes without humiliation, while maintaining fair accountability.

When an error occurs, we must examine how it happened and strengthen the system against recurrence. Learning from a near miss may protect the next patient.

The same spirit must guide our use of digital technology and artificial intelligence. We should develop the

competence to assess these tools, verify their outputs and protect patient information. Professional judgement and responsibility remain essential.

Medication safety also requires collaboration. Pharmacists, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals must communicate respectfully, share relevant information and respond promptly to concerns. Patients and caregivers belong in this partnership. Their questions and observations can reveal risks that would otherwise remain unnoticed.

The patient's welfare must be our common purpose.

This responsibility extends from the bedside to the laboratory, the manufacturing facility, the supply chain and the policy table. Quality assurance, reliable access, pharmaceutical research and competent practice must reinforce one another. A medicine should reach the patient with its quality assured and its use properly supported.

As Fellows and leaders of the Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy, we have a particular duty to put our experience to good use. We must mentor younger colleagues, encourage rigorous enquiry and connect scholarship with practical improvements in care.

To our younger pharmacists: cultivate curiosity and humility together. Read deeply. Ask questions. Seek guidance when uncertain. Develop the courage to speak when something appears unsafe. Your attentiveness today may change the course of a patient's life.

To every pharmacist, I offer this challenge: let today's celebration lead to one measurable improvement in your practice. Strengthen the counselling process. Review a recurring safety concern. Improve a handover. Mentor a colleague. Help your team learn from an incident.

Let knowledge become action, and let action protect life.

May our legacy be found in the harm prevented, the trust preserved, the discoveries applied, and the generations prepared to serve with competence and compassion.

Happy World Pharmacists Day.

Let us learn more deeply, practise more thoughtfully and rededicate ourselves—every day—to the safety and well-being of those entrusted to our care.

Prof. Lere Baale (PLB)

President and Chairman of the Governing Council
Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy