



FUTA NEWS

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS HAVE POTENTIALS TO TREAT CANCER, DIABETES AND OTHER AILMENTS --FUTA DON

Natural products derived from plant and animal sources if prudently used have the potential to prevent and treat challenging health issues such as cancer, diabetes, liver cirrhosis, heart related diseases and a number of ailments threatening the wellbeing of people globally. This was the submission of Professor Muftau Oladunmoye while delivering the 96th Inaugural lecture of the Federal University of Technology Akure, FUTA. Speaking on the topic: Natural Products Derived Antimicrobials: The myth and Reality, Professor Oladunmoye cited various examples of scientifically proven efficacy of extracts from herbs and plants in the treatment of ailments. He said, amongst others, extracts from mistletoe growing on cocoa and Kolanut trees have proven anti-cancer property.

He however advocated for thorough research into how to improve the quality and safety of natural products for therapeutic purposes and for intellectual as well as material investment in its development to ensure its survival. The lecturer, said while there are some potential hazards associated with herbal medication such as allergies and cellular respiration inhibitors, the greatest challenges facing the use of these products is the prevalence of myths associated with its use. He however reiterated that the reality is that the advantages of natural products outweigh the disadvantages as traditional remedies are mostly compounded from natural products and there is the likelihood of them being accepted by the body than substances produced in the laboratory.

He said in recent times, especially in the sub region, preference of traditional health products over

orthodox medicine has been on the rise due to low incomes and weak financial strength of most people in rural areas and high cost of imported chemically synthesized drugs some of which have undesirable side effects. To this effect he said concerted effort should be geared towards evaluating the potentials and medicinal value of natural products for prophylactic and therapeutic applications to health. He said maintenance of good health should be holistic embracing orthodox and traditional methods, and the lines of convergence between them must be promoted not demarcated by health authorities as part of measures to guarantee improve physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the populace.

The Professor of Pharmaceutical Microbiology defined natural products as chemical compounds or substances produced by living organisms or found in nature that have pharmacological or biological activities. He stated that nature has been a source of medicinal agents for thousands of years and an impressive number of drugs have been isolated from natural sources, many based on their uses in traditional medicine. Professor Oladunmoye recommended that modern scientific approaches in extraction and purification should be explored by pharmaceutical industry while considering traditional medicine as a source of identification of bioactive agent that can be used in the preparation of synthetic medicine. He stressed the need to have standardized, effective and ethical, quality control practices on conserving and propagating natural products in whatever way they can be used and the development of globally applicable guidelines to promote the safety and quality of natural products through formulation of codes.

Oladunmoye said local health authorities should, where applicable, seek the collaboration of traditional practitioners in promoting programs such environmental sanitation, personal hygiene, family planning and immunization. While traditional health practitioners should be trained to improve their skill and to ensure their cooperation in making use of referral system in dealing with high risk patients. The Don urged the government and stakeholders in the health sector to establish formalized National, state and local

government boards on traditional medicine to coordinate and regulate their activities and practices. Oladunmoye called on universities to establish Centers for Natural Products Research in order to standardize indigenous medicine and pharmacopeia through teaching and scientific research. In his remarks, chairman of the occasion and Vice Chancellor, Professor Joseph Fuwape commended the lecturer on the delivery of the lecture describing it as timely and enlightening given the prevalent health challenges facing people globally. He said Oladunmoye is a scholar par excellence who has contributed immensely to the body of knowledge in his area of specialization and the development of the institution. The lecture was graced by royal fathers, stakeholders in the academic sector, staff and students of the university.