

## REPORT ON THE PAN AFRICAN FEDERATION OF OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGICAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE, 13–16 NOVEMBER 2017, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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The team from the Institute Physiology and Pathology of Hearing were thanked for their active participation

The Pan African Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies (PAFOS) is an African non-government organization (NGO). The organization brings together African otorhinolaryngology experts who understand the common daily health care needs and ENT challenges in Africa. The main aim of the organization is to develop otorhinolaryngological care in Africa. The meetings take place once every two years and involve specialists in otolaryngology, audiology, and speech therapy from Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and elsewhere. Members of the society have often studied abroad and understand otolaryngology as it is practised in Europe and America.

This year's conference was held in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, a large strategically placed city which is home to about 6 million people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds. The conference was organized under the patronage of the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. Dr Oluwatoyin Akinlade welcomed participants on behalf of the local organizing committee of the Otorhinolaryngological Society of Nigeria (ORLSON). Since PAFOS began, this is the first time that ORLSON has hosted the conference. The aim of the meeting was to work out a consensus for ENT challenges in Africa. It also provided a venue for ENT surgeons and their allied professionals to share knowledge that might provide the solution to common problems.



Maciej Ludwikowski presented work on advanced hearing screening in school-age children in different African countries



Ass. Prof. Piotr H. Skarzynski presented results of hearing screening among a group of school-age children in Nigeria during the Cochlear Symposium



Team from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing with Boye Olusanya, initiator of neonatal hearing screening in Nigeria



Katarzyna Bienkowska and Weronika Swierniak with founder of the Otolaryngological School in Nigeria

The main theme of the conference was “Challenges of ORL Practice in Africa”. The biggest challenge in Nigeria and many other African countries is a dearth of specialists: there are only 250 ENT surgeons in Nigeria, a country of about 160 million people.

During the conference, panels dealt with topics on head and neck cancer management, cochlear implantation, audiological services in Africa, and causes of hearing loss. Notably, the most common cause of hearing loss in Africa is taking medicine for malaria, which can have ototoxic effects. A study conducted on a group of 136 patients who had ototoxicity was presented. The commonest drugs implicated in ototoxicity were injected chloroquine, gentamicin, and quinine. About 70% of the study group had

severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss as side-effects of drugs. The disability can be due to lack of knowledge by medical specialists about adverse reactions. Education of medical specialists is needed in order to prevent ototoxic effects, and this calls for multidisciplinary cooperation between pharmacists, doctors, and other health specialists. The same problem was noted in June 2017 during a visit to Lagos State University College of Medicine in Ikeja, Nigeria, by a team from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing.

One area which aroused considerable interest was Telemedicine, the benefits of which were presented by a number of participants. Shortages of financial resources and limited infrastructure suggest that telemedicine has good



Pupils of Rose Valley School



Pure tone audiometry examination conducted using the Sensory Examination Platform



Pure tone audiometry examination conducted using the Sensory Examination Platform

prospects of treating an extensive group of patients at minimal cost.

The Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing and the World Hearing Center were represented at the conference by Prof. Piotr Henryk Skarzynski, Maciej Ludwikowski, Katarzyna Bienkowska, and Weronika Swierniak. The team shared their experience during discussions and also during dedicated presentations:

- Bone conductive implants: World Hearing Center experience with different systems
- Cochlear implantation: important surgical steps
- Audiological results and quality of life after Bonebridge and Baha Attract surgery
- New directions and indications in cochlear implantation
- Advanced hearing screening in school-age children in different African countries
- Tediagnostic net in Poland and other countries
- Diagnosis and rehabilitation of patients with auditory processing disorders
- Tinnitus evaluation in adult patients with otosclerosis.

It was a valuable experience to see different perspectives on day-to-day otolaryngology problems in countries other



Team from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing with pupils



Pupils of Rose Valley School

than Poland or other developed countries. A topic which attracted strong attention was a presentation by Maciej Ludwikowski on “Advanced hearing screening in school-age children in different African countries”. This presentation was given four times and every single time the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing was congratulated for this work. Proposals were made to continue hearing screening in collaboration between IPPH and African counterparts.

At the end of conference a ceremonial dinner was held. Organizers thanked the team from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing for their active participation and a number of PAFOS members said they intended to come to the 4th International Symposium on Otosclerosis and Stapes Surgery in Cracow, Poland, in April 2018.

After the conference, the team from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing conducted a hearing screening in Rose Valley School, Lagos, where about 200 pupils were examined using videotoscopy, otoacoustic emissions (TEOAEs), and pure tone audiometry. At the beginning, our team was welcomed by the local teachers and pupils.



Pupils of Rose Valley School in Lagos during lessons