

19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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## PRESS RELEASE ON GLOBAL LIFESTYLE MEDICINE WEEK

The Global Lifestyle Medicine Week is a worldwide celebration of healthy behaviours marked by a public awareness campaign on the impact that lifestyle choices have on chronic disease. An annual weeklong celebration, the global lifestyle medicine week focuses on the six pillars of Lifestyle Medicine. This day is marked between the 21st to 26th of May annually with the main objective of creating an awareness campaign to draw the attention of the world to how these lifestyle medicine pillars can prevent, treat and often times reverse chronic disease, also referred to as non communicable diseases (NCDs) lifestyle-related diseases. This advocacy to confront chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, hypercholestromia and even some cancers as a critical public health issue calls for unified efforts by individuals, stakeholders and governments in over 160 countries of the world.

The statistics from the World Health Organization reveal that:

- Non communicable diseases account for the top causes of death worldwide
- In 2019, the top 10 causes of death accounted for 55% of the 55.4 million deaths worldwide.

- In Nigeria, non communicable diseases were responsible for 29% of all deaths

Other studies show that:

- 80% of all premature deaths are attributable to tobacco use, poor diet and lack of physical activity.
- Poor diet is associated with elevated BP, coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers even without one being overweight.

The root cause of disease provides a credible unifying theory of commonalities in the mechanisms leading to chronic disease. Unhealthy behaviours depicted in our poor diets, decreasing levels of physical activity, lack of quality sleep, unabated stress, ingestion of psychoactive substances and poor relationships compromise the body's immunity and promote chronic inflammation.

However, there is good news about how we can reduce the scourge of these chronic lifestyle-related diseases. This is captured in the theme of the Lifestyle Medicine Week: Beat the Root Cause of Disease with D.R.E.A.M.S which is an acronym for the pillars of Lifestyle Medicine. Lifestyle medicine, a medical sub-speciality is an evidence-based approach to helping individuals and families adopt healthy lifestyles thereby helping them to reduce the risk of chronic disease and improve health outcomes as well as longevity.

The pillars of Lifestyle Medicine are key in the prevention, treatment and reversal of chronic, non-communicable or lifestyle related diseases. This is achievable by enabling sustainable lifestyle changes based on D.R.E.A.M.S where 'D' represents Diet and healthy nutrition. A healthy diet entails eating predominantly whole, plant-based foods (grains, legumes, tubers, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds), minimally processed foods (canned or packaged foods) and minimal consumption of dairy products such as meat, poultry and eggs.

'R' stands for relationships and positive, healthy connections between individuals and family members or colleagues, 'E' connotes exercise which is organized regular, recurring physical activity such as brisk walking, dancing, skipping or jogging for at least 30 minutes on five days of the week. 'A' stands for avoidance of psychoactive substances such as alcohol, tobacco and street drugs. 'M' represents mental wellbeing and effective stress management using stress reducing techniques while 'S' stands for sleep which should be adequate in duration and restorative in quality. The recommended number of sleep hours for individuals between 18-65 years is 7-8 hours.

A healthy lifestyle has been shown to affect gene expression positively (epigenetics), reduce insulin resistance, provide antioxidants and reduce chronic systemic inflammation. Scientific research including numerous randomized clinical trials and longitudinal studies have reported remarkable outcomes in applying lifestyle interventions in the management of many chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, prostate cancer, Alzheimer's disease and diabetes. Healthy behaviours are also linked to planetary health and the stability of our ecosystem which is central to human survival.

The severity and recovery from acute, infectious and endemic diseases which are highly prevalent in this era such as COVID-19 disease, have also been shown to be worse and slower respectively where poor lifestyle practices abound. There is therefore no better time than now to publish the good news of Lifestyle Medicine. This calls for concerted efforts to establish the speciality of Lifestyle Medicine in our medical institutions. Our doctors and other health

professionals need to be trained adequately on how to pass across relevant messages across to the populace and drive change in lifestyle behaviours.

This is a call for the government to enact policies that enable healthy lifestyle practices and restrict unhealthy behaviours. It is a prime time for medical institutions to accredit Lifestyle Medicine at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Lastly, the entire public needs to embrace the principles of healthy behaviours which are life changing and long-lasting. Let's join hands together during this week and beyond to celebrate healthy behaviours and beat the root cause of prevailing lifestyle-related diseases.

May God bless Nigeria.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moyosore Makinde', enclosed in a simple oval scribble.

Dr Moyosore Makinde

President, Society of Lifestyle Medicine of Nigeria (SOLONg)

Consultant Family Physician & Int'l Board-certified Lifestyle Medicine Physician