

PHOTO SPEAKS...

Medical Education for the Masses: Outreach to New Gbagi Market, Ibadan, Oyo State

- AO George



WEDNESDAY the 6th of June was a very sunny day-the previous days having been marred by heavy winds and rainfall.

It was also a great day because it opened the South West Dermatology Society to another experience-which other regional dermatological societies-Lagos and the East had gained. We were dressed in purple vests bearing the Nigerian Association of Dermatologists (N.A.D) logo in front and the phrase, "Black skin is beautiful", at the back. There was a white cap to go along it also had the N.A.D logo on it. We had rented a lorry and hired some band boys 'armed' with drums, and trumpets. The lorry was draped with purple clothing materials. Banners hung from the front and sides of the lorry announcing the focus of our mission to the market and the oncoming dermatology conference in Ibadan. We had other vehicles to convey the females in our midst since it could result in orthopaedic



problems to force them to climb the back of the open and very high lorry back. A mini truck came along to convey an electric generating set and amplification set-amplifier and microphones.

As we left the Queen Elizabeth road gate of the University College Hospital the band boys opened up with popular songs choruses and traditional ones. Expectedly all eyes focused on the convoy and while some passers-by on the roads waved others took to dancing along.

New Gbagi market is the largest market in Ibadan with hundreds of stalls for various items ranging from (predominantly) clothing to food items and other household goods. It runs for nearly one and a half kilometers along the ever-busy Old/New Ibe roads.

On arrival at the market we visited the 'head' (Baale) of the market with his able regional assistants to intimate them with our mission in order to secure their permission and cooperation.

We had two health nurses who spoke fluently in Yoruba. The convoy stopped over at about 25 spots spread out in the market. The mini talk lasted approximately 7 minutes at each spot. The message was simple:

- God has blessed the black race with a lovely skin less prone to damage

- Everyone should be on the lookout for chemicals such as Hydroquinone, steroids and heavy metals such as mercury in skin products soaps and creams being purchased
- Systemic side effects are possible- related to the heart and kidneys.
- For individuals already having 'bleached skin' they can come to the Medical Outpatient to seek advice and treatment from the nurses and doctors.
- There is a need for shaded materials like umbrellas for those who cannot afford to rent shops /stalls.
- They were advised to encourage their albino relatives to seek advice on prevention at the hospitals. This category of Nigerians would benefit from protection from the sun.

The visit lasted about three hours. It was quite remarkable that about 4-5 of every ten female traders had evidence of 'bleached' skin.

Many came over to ask our members to write the names of these disagreeable ingredients for them on pieces of paper. Some called members to their shops for clearer explanations.

Overall it was three hours well spent.

