

# WAB Newsletter



## West African Bioethics

**funded by:** the Fogarty International Center of the  
United States' National Institute of Health

A Newsletter of West African Bioethics Training Programme

## About WAB

The West African Bioethics is program for teaching, service and research in International Bioethics

The West African Bioethics training program is unique because it uses the opportunity afforded by its location in West Africa to research and train in Bioethics in English and French languages, both of which are widely spoken in the West African subregion.

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**Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New year**







## Training for lay members of Ethics Committees by the West African Bioethics Training Program, the New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society and the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria



A five-day workshop was organized by the West African Bioethics Training Program, Ibadan (WAB) in collaboration with New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society (NHVMAS) and the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria. The training curriculum was accredited by the National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC/TR/28/09/2012). The aim of the workshop is to train lay persons on how to review research protocols and provide constructive feedback to ethics committee and health researchers. The training came up between the 7th and 11th October, 2013 at the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria. In attendance were eighteen participants exclusive of the four facilitators. 15 plenary sessions were taken. Sessions included history and evolution of ethics, Legal, moral and philosophical foundations of research ethics, Principles of research ethics, Informed consent, Community engagement in research, Standard of care in treatment and prevention research, Voluntariness and Vulnerability in Research and Monitoring of clinical trials/research- the role of community representatives amongst others.

The training used various participatory mechanisms to facilitate learning. These include: brainstorming, question and answer sessions, cases studies, mock HREC session, plenary discussions, group work, games and lectures.



### Training for lay members of Ethics Committees by the West African Bioethics Training Program, the New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society and the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria **contd.**



Dr. Oyedeji during his plenary session



Participants at the workshop during practical session

The workshop evaluation showed that participants had indeed acquired new knowledge and skills. The mean pretest score was 24%. The scores ranged from 0% to 55%. Eighty three percent of those who took the pretest scored less than 40%. The mean post test score was 47%. The scores ranged from 30% to 90% with one participant scoring less than 40%. They all could identify new skills they had acquired and the new things they plan to do with the skills acquired.



Mr. Yakubu during his plenary session



Participants during the 'clinical trials terminology game'





## My Journey into Bioethics – Ms. Chitu

It all started towards the end of 2008. I had just finished a master's program on Biosafety from the Institute of Gene Ecology, University of Tromsø, Norway. I got to my office at the National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), ready for the day's work. At about 11am I was told that the Director General/CEO wanted to see me. I went up to his office and met a crowd of people. Thinking it was a mistake, I wanted to leave when he signalled to me to sit down. I took a sit and waited for the person speaking to finish. This person I later came to know as Prof. Clement Adebayo Adebamowo. After he finished speaking, my DG/CEO announced that I was the candidate and I exclaimed "candidate for what"? Again he signalled to me to sit and be calm. At this point, Prof Clement got up and explained everything about the Bioethics training in Ibadan and we all moved to the conference hall of NABDA for the sensitization training program.



Later that week, Prof. Clement Adebayo Adebamowo and I met at an H3Africa program held at Bolingo Hotel, Abuja. He spoke to me again about the Bioethics program I was nominated to attend but I told him I would not be around when it starts as I would be away to the UK for three months, but he encouraged me to make myself available. Even though I agreed, I still left for the UK and did not bother with the Bioethics training. He followed me up with e-mails which I saw much later in the UK. As fate would have it the resumption was postponed to a later date. He informed me about this and encouraged me to fill out the scholarship form from the West Africa Bioethics (WAB) Program, which I did and here I am today.

### The Bioethics Training in Ibadan

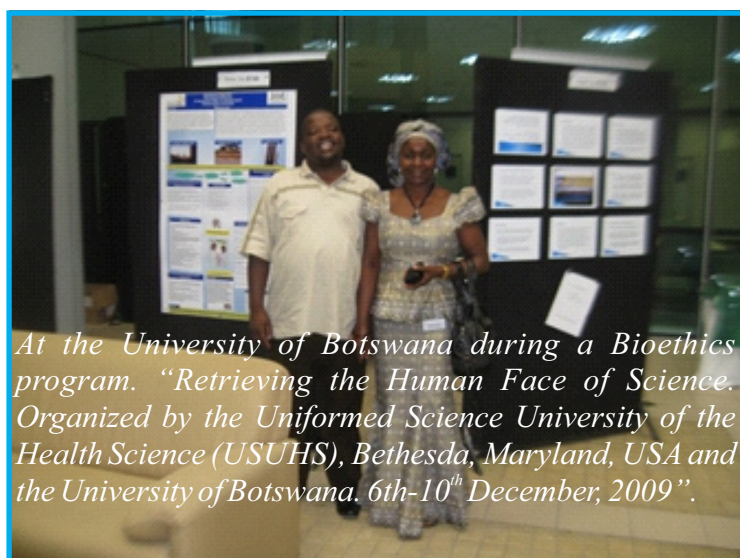
The training was sponsored by the Grant Number R25TW007091 from the United States National Institutes of Health (NIH), Fogarty International Center and the National Human Genome Research. It was interesting and worth the time spent. I met new people and experienced the good and the bad, all of which proved to be very important in my journey of life. My lecturers were very wonderful and full of knowledge. They were always willingly to help and assist when approached. Of all the courses that were taught, I particularly found philosophy very interesting.



## My Journey into Bioethics – Ms. Chitu **contd.**

Initially Bioethics appeared to me like a field developed to halt research but as I progressed with the program; I got better understanding of what it entails and I am happy I am part of the Bioethics family. It does not only take care of researchers and research participants, it also teaches patience and how to meticulously approach issues of life.

### Working as a Bioethicist



*At the University of Botswana during a Bioethics program. "Retrieving the Human Face of Science. Organized by the Uniformed Science University of the Health Science (USUHS), Bethesda, Maryland, USA and the University of Botswana. 6th-10<sup>th</sup> December, 2009".*



*Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee Meeting (IGBC) held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 with a participant from Azerbaijan.*

On completion of my M.Sc. Bioethics program in 2011, I returned to my Agency, the National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), Abuja. I was made the Head of Bioethics/Chief Scientific Officer (HBE/CSO) and my Agency was nominated as the Focal Point for Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO on Bioethics. Since my Agency is the Focal Point for Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO on Bioethics, it represents Nigeria for all Bioethics meetings within and outside the country. As the Head of Bioethics in my Agency, I represent Nigeria wherever Bioethics meetings are held. I represent Nigeria at the UNESCO International Bioethics Meetings (IBC) and the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee Meetings (IGBC). I have presented several papers on Bioethics and was actively involved in establishing the Independent Institutional Review Board of the African University of Science and Technology (IIRB-AUST).





## My Journey into Bioethics – Ms. Chitu **contd.**



Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee Meeting (IGBC) held at UNESCO Headquarters, 5th - 6th September, 2011 with Dr Az'bairu, Prof. B. O. Solomon, DG/CEO, NABDA, Former Nigerian Deputy Ambassador to UNESCO, Prof Alex u. Akpa, Director, Medical Biotech Department.



Nineteenth Session of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) Meeting, the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee Meeting (IGBC) and the joint session of both the IBC and IGBC held at UNESCO Headquarters, 11th - 14th September, 2012 with the Director of Admin and Finance, Federal Ministry of Education, Mr. Peter Momoh, and Nigerian Deputy Ambassador to UNESCO, Mr Patrick Ozulonye Okafor.

# NIGERIA

I am extremely glad that I participated in the M.Sc. Bioethics program of the University of Ibadan. I have recently been offered admission for a PhD degree in Biomedical Ethics at the University of Basel, Switzerland. I am grateful to my Director-General/CEO, Prof. Bamidele Ogbe Solomon for nominating me for the program and Prof. Clement Adebayo Adebamowo for all his encouragement and support in making the nomination a reality. Bioethics has



Twentieth Ordinary Session of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) Meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 19th-21st, June, 2013

**Ms. Omodu Chitu**  
Head of Bioethics/Chief  
Scientific Officer, National  
Biotechnology  
Development Agency,  
Nigeria

**Past WAB Scholar  
(2008/2009 set)**







## Advancing Ethical Research Conference 2013 – My experience

Olubunmi Ogunrin

I was privileged to attend the just concluded Advancing Ethical Research (AER) conference in Boston, Massachusetts, on the east coast of USA between 6th and 9th of November, 2013 as an international scholar. I must admit that the conference was a memorable one. The conference is no doubt the largest gathering of bioethicists and IRB officials to the best of my knowledge. I participated in a special program organized for the international scholars on the 5th and this involved interaction with the Partners Group (a group of professionals actively involved in the coordination of all research being conducted in research institutions – medical and otherwise) in Boston. The pre-conference workshop on Ethical Issues in Global Research held on 6th of November was illuminating. This workshop covered talks on Declaration of Helsinki, Ethical considerations in HIV and Infectious disease research and prevention, multi-regional clinical trials initiative, successful approaches to building research ethics capacity in low-resource research settings and small group case study discussions. It was indeed an informative session.



Photo showing from left: Betty (Kenya – international scholar), Director, Partners Group (middle) Boston, Bunmi Ogunrin (Nigeria – international scholar)



Photo showing Bunmi Ogunrin (WAB, Nigeria), Patricia Marshall (Case Western Reserve, USA) Busola Onasile (WAB, Nigeria) and Patrick Okonta (Nigeria)





## Advancing Ethical Research Conference 2013 – My experience

Olubunmi Ogunrin **contd.**

The 3 days of the conference were full of activities including plenary sessions, basic and advanced fast track sessions, panel discussions, exhibitions and poster presentations. The panel discussion on applying the Belmont principles across borders and culture was interesting (Professor Clement Adebamowo was on the panel of discussants). I also attended sessions on informed consent, ethics of genomics and bio-banking, ethical issues involved in qualitative research, etc. I presented two posters one of which was on my Master thesis conducted at WAB – Development and pilot-testing of an online module for research ethics education based on the Nigerian Code of Health Research Ethics. It was an opportunity for networking with other professionals from different backgrounds including bioethics, medicine, NIH and IRB. I was glad I met Patricia Marshall, a professor of bioethics and anthropology and co-Director of the Center for Genetic Research Ethics and Law at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio, Joan Rachlin, the executive Director of PRIM&R since 1975 who welcomed all international scholars personally to the Reception program, and Professor Paul Braunschwenger, the Director of CITI who was so helpful to me while I was doing my MSc bioethics research. The conference was filled with so many interesting events that I cannot possibly cover all of them in this short report. The AER is a conference I would recommend to anyone interested or engaged in research ethics.

Finally I must commend the PRIM&R director and management staff for an outstanding and efficient organization. The conference was 'that which the LORD has made' with neither hitches nor flaws. I am appreciative of the efforts of Maeve Luthin and her team in ensuring hitch-free attendance for the international scholars, and I also thank Joan Rachlin, Director of PRIM&R for her commitment towards advancing ethical research globally. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I am grateful to WAB and the faculty for giving me a solid foundation in bioethics, transforming me from a 'reticulocyte' to an 'erythrocyte'. I remain grateful.

**Prof. Olubunmi Ogunrin**

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

**Past WAB Scholar (2007/2008 set)**



Panel discussants at AER conference 2013  
(second from left is Clement Adebamowo)



### BeOnline Journal – Accepting Manuscripts for Review and Publication

BeOnline, the Bioethics Online journal of the West African Bioethics Training is an open-access online journal. This journal contributes to the global discourse on bioethics with the focus of adding the voice of Africans and research in Africa to the debate about clinical and research ethics, primarily in Africa and in the world at large.



Submit your work for review by our panel of experienced reviewers and get it published in BeOnline journal. Rapid review and decision is guaranteed. Let the world hear your view about research ethics.

For more information on how to submit a manuscript for review, please visit us @

<http://www.bioethicscenter.net/journal/> or send an email to [admin@westafricanbioethics.net](mailto:admin@westafricanbioethics.net)



*The entire WAB family wishes you all*

*Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year*



**West African Bioethics**





## CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you for taking your time to read the issue of the newsletter, Your comments about the current issue, and ideas for the next issue are what will keep the West African Bioethics Newsletter an interesting and lively newsletter!!

Please send contributions and suggestions to **[admin@westafricanbioethics.net](mailto:admin@westafricanbioethics.net)**

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[www.bioethicscenter.net](http://www.bioethicscenter.net)

[www.westafricanbioethics.net](http://www.westafricanbioethics.net)

### Contact Information

#### ::Contact Address

102, Bashorun Road, Ashi, Bodija P.O.Box 29822,  
Ibadan, Oyo State  
Nigeria, 23402

#### ::Email

[admin@westafricanbioethics.net](mailto:admin@westafricanbioethics.net)

#### ::Telephone No:

+234-027512634