

Leading scholar authors book on new methods of cancer treatment

Cancer is one of the most dreaded ailments that have caused anguish in many families across the world. The management and treatment of the disease is not only laborious but also costly, besides the intense pain experienced by patients.

A leading researcher and scholar at the University of Nairobi, Prof Nicholas Abinya, has authored a book which provides the latest methods of cancer treatment and management. The scholar is based at the Department of Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics and is head of oncology at the School of Medicine, College of Health Sciences (CHS).

His book, *Drug Management of Haematologic Neoplasms*, gives background information on cancer treatment, how the cancer cells behave and the medicines used in treatment. It is a valuable publication in the health sector. It will empower medical practitioners and cancer specialists to cure cancer with minimal costs.

"The book highlights immune checks and reviews current cancer treatment methods. Most lethal types of cancer have been covered and their treatment methods. The book takes pride in using locally generated data," said Prof Abinya at the book launch on April 24, 2017.

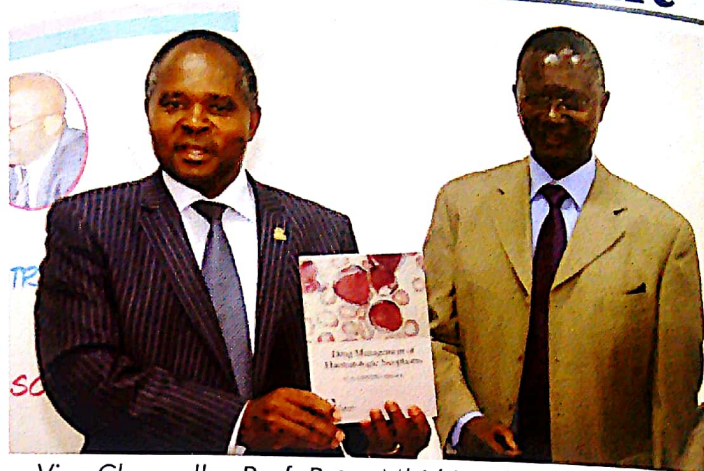
"I developed an interest in this field during my postgraduate studies. I was encouraged by one Prof. Thomas Ogada who advised me to pursue hematology. After high school, I read a novel titled *Cancer Ward*. It built an interest in me on cancer treatment and research," Prof Abinya told *Varsity Focus*.

Throughout his postgraduate studies at

the University of Nairobi, Prof. Abinya worked in the hematology ward at Kenyatta National Hospital and had a short stint at the Royal London Hospital between 1991 and 1992. He joined UoN in 1974 as a medical undergraduate student and graduated in 1979. In 1987, Prof. Abinya was employed at UoN as a lecturer in the Department of Hematology and Oncology. The scholar is highly published in the areas of cancer treatment with several books and articles on breast cancer, prostate cancer and cancer of the cervix. He has written articles in *Africa Journal of Cancer* and *the American Chinese Journal of Medical Health Sciences*.

"I have analyzed data on biological correlation of cells and leukemia. Looking at determinants to failure of treatment of leukemia, the rare manifestation of leukemia and the malignant cells growth. I have authored and co-authored text books on cancer treatment. In addition, I have been privileged to head the Ministry of Health Taskforce, National Cancer Treatment Guidelines in 2012."

Prof. Abinya is also running a programme dubbed the Glivec International Patient Assistant Programme, (GIPAP) which was started by Mark Foundation, USA.



Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Mbithi with Prof. Nicholas Abinya during the book launch at the College of Health Sciences.

"The foundation buys drugs from Novartis and donates to those who cannot afford to buy. The programme is based at the Nairobi Hospital. We have over 1,000 patients on free treatment. We are the only country in Africa, doing a fellowship on medical oncology," said the researcher.

What motivates Prof. Abinya?

"The desire to discover something, make contributions to the society and help mankind is my main motivation. There is this desire to discover something faster than the Americans. The Americans have the funds. We are discovery oriented, rather than publications oriented."

Prof. Abinya believes that Kenya has the resources to deal with cancer treatment.

"We can cure 95% of cancer cases and hence no need for travelling abroad. The main challenge is that Kenyans do not believe that a black doctor can treat them. Surprisingly, white people believe in African doctors more."

Prof. Abinya says that he is training people from Africa. He advises young and upcoming doctors to be specialists and not to be motivated by money. VF