

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2021: GIVE BLOOD AND KEEP THE WORLD BEATING

Together with countries around the world, the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigerian students (PANS-Nigeria) observes June 14 as the World Blood Donor day. Despite the dire need of blood supply across the country, only less than 15% are voluntarily donated. Pharmacy students from PANS-Nigeria are setting the pace, together with medical students, as members of the broad multi-disciplinary team of the healthcare sector, to celebrate the World blood donor day by coming out in numbers to freely donate blood for the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital blood bank. The importance of each pint of blood donated cannot be over-emphasized as the amount of blood supply in Nigeria is insufficient to meet the needs of accident victims, pregnant women, surgical patients, anemic patients and a lot of other patients who need blood transfusion.

According to the World Health Organization, multiple professions in healthcare can operate more successfully as a team by establishing interprofessional collaboration; learning to work together, and respecting one another's opinions. We therefore established a partnership with the medical students to ensure a successful turn up for the event. A 10-man team from both ends was established and given specific roles (Logistics team, Publicity team, Management Team, and Fundraising Team). Numerous meetings were scheduled with the blood transfusion service at the teaching hospital to ensure a successful blood drive campaign. Awareness and publicity was then conducted on both social media and face-to-face contact to spread the word on the upcoming event. An interactive live radio session was then conducted to answer all the questions the prospective donors had and to also relay the process of the blood drive to them.

On the day of the event, donors were transported down to the location that is closest to the blood bank as specified by the blood transfusion service. The donors were seated under an enclosed and well-ventilated tent. Registration commenced at exactly 10:00am (GMT +1) and vital signs like weight, blood pressure, and pulse rate were collected. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the blood donors were asked to wear masks and symptoms like fever, cough and other related symptoms were checked before carrying out the blood collection. Also, physical distancing was maintained at all times during the course of the blood drive. A small sample of blood was first taken to conduct other necessary tests like hemoglobin levels, hepatitis B, and HIV. Donors that passed the screening processes were then taken forward to collect their blood. 450mL of blood were taken from each donor and a total of 87 donors were recorded thus bringing the total volume of blood collected to 39,150mL (39.15 L) during the blood drive. After the participants were bled, they were asked to wait behind for at least 10minutes to ensure that all were fine before they moved to the refreshment room. Donors were also given souvenirs and a donor certificate to celebrate and appreciate their selfless service to

humanity. The event ended around 4:00pm (GMT+1).

The demand for blood is universal and never stops. Blood transfusions are performed on a daily basis all over the world, saving millions of lives. This year's theme "*Give blood and keep the world beating*" emphasizes on the role of young people in ensuring a constant blood supply. Young people all around the world have taken the stance and have been on the forefront of activities aimed in making awareness of blood donation and also taking part in the process. We do not want to be left behind in this humanitarian work and since we understand the fact that the need for blood never stops, we therefore took it as a responsibility to ensure voluntary donations were conducted to mark the day so as to maintain a sufficient blood supply. After a successful event, the most important lesson learned was that the youth can be a positive force for development and we hereby call and encourage youth to embrace the humanitarian call to donate blood and inspire others to do the same.

Let's all give blood and keep the world beating!