

KASU HOLDS 21ST PROFESSORIAL INAUGURAL LECTURE ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN NORTHERN NIGERIA



By: Caleb Kanda & Abigail Emmanuel Dankande

Kaduna State University (KASU) has held its 21st Professorial Inaugural Lecture at the University's 1,000-Seater Auditorium. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Awawu Grace Nmadu, Professor of Community Medicine and Public Health, College of Medicine, with the theme, "From Access to Agency: Reimagining Reproductive Health in Northern Nigeria."

Prof. Nmadu highlighted the challenges affecting adolescent reproductive healthcare in northern Nigeria, stressing that the availability of health facilities and services does not necessarily guarantee that adolescents can safely access or use them.

She identified barriers including stigma, lack of privacy and confidentiality, inconvenient clinic hours, community attitudes, family influence, cultural and religious considerations, gender relations, legal challenges and weak accountability within the health system.

The prof. explained that her research found that many adolescents avoided health facilities because they feared being judged, exposed or scolded, noting that some health facilities were not designed around the realities and needs of adolescents.

She also highlighted challenges within the health referral system, including poor documentation, inadequate communication between referring and receiving facilities, lack of follow-up, limited knowledge of referral protocols among health workers and inadequate use of available data for decision-making.

Also she introduced the 4A Framework — Access, Agency, Acceptance and Accountability — developed from the experiences of adolescents and women in northern Nigeria. She explained that the framework asks whether services are available and reachable, whether adolescents can make decisions about their health, whether their communities accept their use of such services, and whether institutions and health workers are accountable for the care they provide.



She emphasised that dignity is the foundation of the framework, stressing that adolescents must be able to access healthcare without stigma, loss of privacy or violation of their rights.

She called for the creation of safe, private and confidential spaces for adolescent healthcare, rights-based counselling, greater engagement with male partners, sustained collaboration with traditional and religious leaders, improved use of health data and stronger accountability across the health system.

She urged parents to make their homes safe spaces where adolescents can seek help without fear of judgment, while calling on community and religious leaders to use their influence to protect young people and encourage open conversations around adolescent health.

Prof. Nmadu further advocated the development of solutions that reflect African realities, noting that global health frameworks should be complemented by evidence and approaches generated from local experiences.

In her remarks, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Strategy and Innovation, Prof. Helen Afang Andow, who represented the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Abdullahi Ibrahim Musa, described inaugural lectures as a significant and cherished tradition of the University, providing Professors with an opportunity to share their lifelong scholarly experiences and contributions to knowledge. She expressed the hope that the audience would benefit from Professor Nmadu's scholarly work.

At the end of the lecture, Prof. Bala Dogo, alongside the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, presented Prof. Awawu Grace Nmadu with a commemorative plaque of honour and certificate in recognition of her 21st Professorial Inaugural Lecture. Other presentations were also made during the ceremony.

Prof. Bala Dogo thereafter gave the vote of thanks, appreciating the University management, members of the academic community, family members, invited guests and all those who contributed to the success of the occasion.

Editor: Hamza Musa Makarfi

More Pictures from the 21st Professorial Inaugural Lecture



Layout and Design: Ezra Bature