

# A Deeper Look..... looking into the lives of people and projects that are making a difference in Malawi.....

**“It is time the masses are sensitised that men too, like women, have reproductive problems .....”** *Fanuel Lampiao talks to Thengo Kavinya on his career in Spermatology*



## Brief me on your background

I am an associate professor in physiology and deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences and Health Professions at the College of Medicine. I studied andrology specialised in male infertility, so I am a spermatologist. I teach physiology at College of Medicine and my research is focused on understanding factors that necessitate or inhibit the process of fertilization.

## What are your views on the current standards of health care in the country and what should improve?

I feel men's reproductive health is a neglected issue in Malawi. A lot of men don't know whom to talk to when they are faced with reproductive health problems such as erectile dysfunction, pre-mature ejaculation and even if they want to have fertility testing.

It is time the masses are sensitised that men too, like women, have reproductive problems that need specialist attention. There is need to train people in the field of andrology so that men's reproductive issues can be competently addressed.

## What are some of the challenges faced in your career?

Apart from my laboratory, there is no other andrology laboratory in Malawi which can provide reliable and quality andrological services. There are no well trained laboratory personnel in Malawi who can provide andrological services. We don't have assisted reproduction clinics in Malawi so infertility can only be diagnosed but we cannot provide a remedy. On the part of research, it is very difficult to recruit semen donors in Malawi. Most men are not willing to donate may be because semen donation is a new concept to them. We also don't have enough equipment to conduct cutting-edge research.

## Mention any highlights you are proud of in your career.

It should be in 2012 when I was chosen as the AU-TWAS (African Union and The World Academy of sciences) young scientist of the year.

## What's your day like?

During the week days especially in the morning hours I am usually lecturing. I lecture to medical, pharmacy, laboratory and physiotherapy students. So I have a huge teaching load. In the afternoons I usually sit in the laboratory conducting research, writing manuscripts, or reviewing manuscripts from different journals. During weekends that's when I find time to rest and watch soccer.

## Why should people consider joining your specialty?

Reproductive medicine is one of the fastest growing fields in the world. Generally there is steady increase in infertility for both men and women world-wide so assisted reproduction has become the main option to have children. In Malawi this field is still untapped so there is a huge potential for both research and practice.

## What are your views on the current standards of Medical Education in the country?

I feel our Medical education standards are one of the best in the region. The College of Medicine is striving to produce well qualified health practitioners.

## Please give me your brief background? (Year born, Primary/Secondary Education, Home Village)

I was born on the 18th of February 1978 in Chikhwawa District. I come from Lyton Village, TA Ngabu in Chikhwawa. I did my primary education at Gumbo Primary School in Ntcheu and Nsanje Primary School in Nsanje. My secondary education was at Chikhwawa Secondary school from 1992 to 1996. I was selected to Chancellor College between 1997 - 2001 to pursue a bachelor of education (science) majoring in Biology. In 2004 I went to Stellenbosch University in South Africa to pursue a BSc (Hons), Masters, and PhD in Medical Physiology.

## Any last words?

I would like to see Malawians start to specialise in different fields of reproductive medicine such as embryology and andrology so that soon we can have our own centre for assisted reproduction.