

NATION Wednesday magazine

Who's fooling who?

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and KARIUKI WAIHENYA

"I would be history, if it were not for Dr Basil Wainwright (popularly known as Dr Stone) and his treatment," says a woman who claims she contracted Aids in a private clinic while taking care of a patient.

"I lost my wife and child to Aids. I had also given up but not until a Canadian friend told me about Dr Stone and his medical ozone treatment. If it were not for him, I would be in the grave," says Malawian-born Simeon Mbole.

But many others attest otherwise. "My husband died after going through the treatment," says a Kenyan woman.

Dr Stone's ozone treatment has been met with indifference by the Kenyan medical fraternity.

Says the chairman of the Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board, Dr Richard Baraza: "In order to effectively treat somebody, one ought to know exactly what he is treating and what kind of medicine is needed. This is not applied in ozone treatment."

He adds that Dr Stone is not allowed to practice medicine as he is a physicist — a fact Dr Stone admits. But he quickly adds that medical breakthroughs throughout history have not been the exclusive preserve of doctors.

Dr Stone says ozone treatment has effectively turned 38 Kenyan patients from positive to negative.

But what and who are Kenyans supposed to believe? First there was *Kemron*, which was dismissed as worthless in 1993 by the World Health Organisation but will now undergo another Sh40 million study, according to Kenya Medical Research Institute Director, Davy Koech, to determine its efficacy and safety in managing Aids. Then there was the controversy-riddled Pearl Omega. And now there is ozone treatment.

"The records are here for the medical board and any other doctor interested to see. I have nothing to hide and I can prove everything to them," Dr Stone said during an interview at his Karen home.

"We are not saying that this form of treatment is useless," argues Dr Baraza. "We simply want it proved."

"Medicine is a conservative profession, people take a long time to be convinced about treatment and drugs. That may be to our own detriment at times, but that's the way it is."

He says he has not come across the research reports Dr Stone says he has sent to the board.

But what is ozone treatment all about? According to a medical publication, ozone therapy has its origins in dental practice in the late 18th century.

According to a 1996 issue of *Here's Health* — a British magazine, ozone therapy uses a mixture of normal oxygen and its unstable form, ozone.

Medical ozone prepared under laboratory conditions dissolves 15 times faster in the blood than normal oxygen, hence the mixture improves viscosity and enhances circulation.

Once it is in the blood, the ozone sticks to anything without antioxidant protection.

Healthy cells in our bodies, says Dr Stone, have protection built in, but viruses, fungi and bacteria don't.

"Weakened by ozone, they become susceptible to the body's natu-



Controversy: Dr Basil Wainwright, (Dr Stone) with his wife Juffa Haase explains how the Ozone Treatment works. Right: Dr Stone in a wheel chair following a car accident last August. Picture by PAUL WAWERU

Controversy rages in medical circles about a new Aids drug fronted by a Kenyan-based physicist

ral defences," says Dr Stone.

He claims to have perfected the technology used and his medicine is a more sophisticated form of ozone treatment.

Medical ozone treatment is practised in many European countries. It is said that there are over 23,000 licensed health practitioners on the continent using oxygen-ozone treatment.

Ozone has been mentioned in scientific forums as an antiseptic, disinfectant, deodorant, bactericide, viricide, fungicide, protozoicide, circulatory stimulant and a wound cleansing and healing agent, among others.

"I am not saying the polyatomic treatment is 100 per cent effective for everyone who has Aids, just like other forms of medicine used in treating certain diseases, but positive results have emerged from the medical ozone treatment and all we need is to perfect the technology."

His insistence on the potency of polyatomic apheresis research got him into trouble with the US Government which dismissed his work and arrested him in 1992 for what he

says were "unexplained reasons."

A study by Carpendale, which was presented during the fourth International Conference on Aids in Stockholm, concludes that medical ozone has the ability to inactivate HIV body fluids and also inhibit the growth of intracellular HIV at concentrations that are benign to cells, usually stimulating the cells of the immune system.

"They felt positive feelings of high energy and wellbeing while on ozone as opposed to when they have not been taking it," Carpendale's report concludes.

But the mechanism by which ozone mediates the inactivation of HIV virus still remains a mystery, according to most reports.

This calls for more research and study.

Dr Stone says he has been researching on Aids using polyatomic apheresis for about an year with the blessing of the director of medical services, Dr James Mwanza. He, in fact, received a letter from Dr Mwanza thanking him for setting an apheresis treatment centre in Kenya.

Dr Mwanza has preferred to re-

main silent on the issue. However, Dr Baraza says that the board has the support of Dr Mwanza on the issue.

Dr Stone says polyatomic apheresis therapy can treat 84 major diseases besides Aids, including cancer, burns, wounds, hypertension.

"Medical ozone is a holistic treatment that knocks out many diseases when applied," he said.

However, Dr Baraza challenges this, saying medicine is a profession that practices evidence-based techniques.

Normal ozone, Dr Baraza notes, can be poisonous if not prepared under stringent laboratory conditions and applied well.

"Even hydrogen peroxide, the most commonly used gas in therapies, can be poisonous if not handled with care when it's being administered," he says.

Dr Baraza said the medical board is aware that some doctors are working with Dr Stone "but we don't want to appear vindictive," he said.

He adds that doctors are not allowed to associate with non-medical people in "dubious ways".

The British-born physicist sees the war against him as part of a large

er war waged by pharmaceutical companies based in the Western world who risk losing billions of shillings if a cure for Aids is found, and more so in Africa.

He says he is here for the good of Kenyans, a comment which Dr Baraza dismisses.

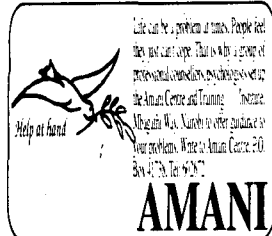
"If medical ozone works, why isn't it used all over the world to cure Aids?" asks Dr Baraza. "He can be richer than Bill Gates if his treatment works."

But Dr Stone argues: "We can show the West that Africa can also make a breakthrough in Aids research."

Kenyans will only know the truth if the medical board and Dr Stone work together and answer pending questions on ozone treatment and Aids.

But more important is the need for the Government, through the Ministry of Health, to facilitate a healthy flow of accurate information about new developments in the medical world. Otherwise, sceptics cannot help suspecting a hidden agenda.

Confused about this therapy



Dear Amani,
We appreciate your enlightening articles and look forward to your weekly column. Please comment on ozone-therapy. I am very confused and upset by the recent discussions in the newspapers and on TV and would appreciate clarification on this issue.

Dear Concerned reader,
Thank you for your letter and enquiries about ozone-therapy. Your concern has disturbed a number of people in our centre. Even though ozone-oxygen therapy has been developed in Germany, it has not been recognised as a commendable medical treatment method. It is regarded as one of those unorthodox treatment methods which have some merits and many shortcomings.

Ozone is a special form of oxygen. The first systematic theory about this gas and its medical possibilities was published by Constantin Lender, Berlin, around 1870, who recommended ozone as a means to disinfect blood. Lender assumed that he had discovered a therapeutic means superior to oxygen. Another therapist, E. Payr, later also believed that ozone could accomplish what oxygen could not accomplish. His studies were published around 1935.

In World War I, ozone was used successfully to disinfect and heal serious or infected wounds. Ozone does indeed kill bacteria, viruses and fungi. It has been widely applied to disinfect water.

Ozone itself is a poisonous gas which, when inhaled, can lead to complications in the respiratory tract. For treatment, ozone is mixed with oxygen. The gas can be applied externally to treat skin problems, it can be injected into the muscles, acupuncture points, veins, arteries, under the skin or onto joints to relieve a variety of symptoms. It neither cures Aids nor cancer but has been found beneficial as ancillary to classical methods.

In Germany, ozone-oxygen treatment is considered a "high-risk-therapy" which has occasionally led to complications such as circulatory collapse, unconsciousness, irreversible paralysis, blindness, allergic shock among others. It appears that people have also died from this treatment.

The costs for external application of the gas in Germany in 1996 amounted to about DM 40 (roughly Sh1,300) and for major haemodialysis to up to DM 120 (roughly Sh3,900). The high costs in Kenya seem unrelated to the actual costs of the materials used. Pure oxygen is an inexpensive gas and the rent of a medium size bottle in Kenya is about Sh400 for three months.

Whoever is willing to risk this kind of treatment should insist on the use of disposable needles as cases of hepatitis and other complications have been reported from other European countries.

It is also important to know if the equipment used to transform oxygen to ozone has been manufactured under licence or to an internationally approved standard.

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