

**College/Program:**

College of Pharmacy, Doctor of Pharmacy

**Hometown:**

Unguwar Kambai, Kaduna States, Nigeria

**Undergraduate Institution:**

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

**Undergraduate Degree(s):**

Bachelor of Pharmacy (B. Pharm), Pharmaceutical Science

**Hobbies/Interests:**

Music

**Previous Career:**

Pharmacist, Project implementer and Research

## PROFILE

**What inspired you to pursue your health sciences career path?**

I survived several infections growing up. This created a strong sense of compassion towards the sick. During my high school, I discovered a career in health sciences, especially Pharmacy, would enable me to contribute to practically treating the sick. I am happy that since becoming a professional

pharmacist, I have significantly contributed to treating and preventing HIV among people living with HIV.

**Describe the biggest challenge you overcame on your path to WesternU.**

The Western University of Health Sciences is highly competitive with strict requirements. However, I received considerable support and understanding from the school, especially in obtaining my transcript from the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, and the health clearance package. Extracting the history of childhood vaccination was the biggest challenge that I had.

**Why did you choose to attend WesternU?**

WesternU is a top medical university, the strongest motivation for the selection. The block system of learning and the clinical rotation is the best I could find. Furthermore, Western California has excellent weather

# Yohanna Kambai

# Avong



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## PROFILE CONTINUED

for learning. My mentor, Professor Richard Segal from the University of Florida, selected this university for me. He said WesternU is the smartest university offering the PharmD program. Finally, the weather in southern California also influenced my choice.

### **What is your proudest accomplishment?**

I managed a large public health program for preventing HIV in Nigeria. My proudest moments were meeting my targets in patient recruitment into care and being able to report the adverse drug reactions to the national drug regulatory body. In over ten years, I contributed to putting over 450,000 people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy and developed a rapid method of training healthcare workers on accurate reporting of adverse drug reactions.

### **Thank you letter to the Board of Trustees:**

I am deeply grateful to you for awarding me the prestigious Board of Trustees Scholarship for the PharmD International Pathway (PIP). This generous support will allow me to pursue my dream of becoming a clinical pharmacist at the esteemed Western University of Health Sciences, a goal that would have remained out of reach due to financial constraints.

This scholarship not only acknowledges my academic achievements but also affirms my commitment and contributions to various areas of health. One area of particular interest to me has been the treatment of HIV in underserved communities. With this award, I am inspired to deepen my knowledge in clinical pharmacy, especially in tackling critical 21st-century health issues such as improving medication safety. Adverse drug reactions (ADRs), even in developed countries, continue to pose a significant threat, claiming as many lives as some traditional diseases.

Since completing my Master of Public Health, I have aspired to improve public health in underserved populations. After finishing my clinical studies through the PharmD program, I plan to establish a Clinical Safety Organization (CSO) to advance medication safety at the community level. Regulatory bodies like the U.S. Food and Drug Administration rely on CSOs for post-market drug surveillance. While many Clinical Research Organizations (CROs) focus on pre-approval safety data, there is a pressing need for CSOs to monitor drug safety after approval. Addressing this gap is crucial, as ADRs have become a major public health challenge in modern society.

Your generous scholarship empowers me to make a meaningful impact in the field of pharmacy and to work toward a future where medications are safer for all. Once again, thank you for your invaluable support.

Sincerely,  
Yohanna Avong, PharmD '27