Annual Department Report

Academic Year 2013-2014

Department of Pharmacy
Faculty of Medicine and Surgery

Year Overview

Courses

The department accepted applications for courses leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Technology, Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Science, Master of Pharmacy, Master of Pharmacy (part-time) and Master of Science in Pharmacy.

In October 2013, 29 students completed the course leading to a Master of Pharmacy degree. The external examiner was Professor Alan Lau from the College of Pharmacy of the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA. In November 2013, 6 students graduated with a Master of Science in Pharmacy degree, 54 students with a Master of Pharmacy Degree, and 34 students with a Bachelor of Science (Hons) Pharmaceutical Sciences degree.

International activities

Dr Mike Maddux, Executive Director of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy visited the Department of Pharmacy to discuss research projects in clinical pharmacy and pharmacy practice and learn about experiences in pharmacy practice teaching at the Department. The Department participated in the Discover University activities in November 2013 by presenting aspects of pharmacy related to pharmaceutical analysis, compounding of medicines and history of pharmacy.

Twenty-five pharmacy students (fourth year BSc (Hons) Pharm Sci) participated in exchange programmes at different European schools of pharmacy. The Department hosted 15 students from a number of pharmacy schools in Europe on the Erasmus mobility programme and one student on the International programme from the University of Florida. During their stay, these students either followed modules offered within the pharmacy curriculum, or participated in research projects or undertook an internship.

World Pharmacist Day 2013

The Department of Pharmacy of the University of Malta (UOM), in collaboration with the Malta Pharmaceutical Students Association (MPSA) and the Malta Pharmaceutical Association (MPhA),
celebrated World Pharmacists Day, with the support of Actavis. World Pharmacists Day is co-ordinated by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and the theme selected for this year is ‘Pharmacists - simplifying your medicines use, no matter how complex’.

Activities were organised during the week 23 to 27 September, in various localities, including Birkirkara, Birgu, Sliema, Valletta and Zejtun, to reach out to the general public on the importance of pharmacists as accessible, trusted and valued healthcare professionals, who help in achieving better health outcomes, improving patient safety and overall quality of life.

Pharmacists are providing professional services in different sectors of pharmacy from the development and manufacture of medicines, to ensuring patient safety during distribution and use of medicines. By commemorating World Pharmacists Day, pharmacists are highlighting the focus of their activities for patients and consumers. An information leaflet, outlining the various roles of the pharmacist was disseminated amongst the general public by pharmacy students.

Through this activity, pharmacy students, pharmacists and the Department of Pharmacy of the University, reached out to the public to emphasise the professional services of pharmacists in ensuring safe use of medicines. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to obtain feedback from the public with regard to services which they wish pharmacists to provide. Having pharmacy students actively participating in this event is very encouraging since these future pharmacists are already being exposed to essential contact with patients and consumers.

A press conference to launch the activities was held on 23 September at the University of Malta Valletta Campus. Speakers who addressed the conference were: The Hon. Dr Godfrey Farrugia, Minister for Health; Professor Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta; Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi, Head of the Department of Pharmacy at the University of Malta; Ms Althea Xuereb, MPSA, and Ms Janis Vella, MPhA.

*Development of new Post-graduate Professional Doctorate*

In March 2014, the new post-graduate programme leading to a professional doctorate in pharmacy (PharmD) was launched. The programme is offered by the Department of Pharmacy of the University of Malta, Malta which enjoys a strong international excellence in pharmacy education in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy at the University of Illinois in Chicago which ranks among the top colleges of pharmacy in the US. The course is starting in October 2014 and is intended to
attract European and International pharmacists who would like to develop advanced skills in pharmacy activities and take up research skills to a doctorate level.

This PharmD course which is being launched is unique in that it combines the development and application of advanced clinical pharmacy skills from a wide perspective with contextual research. All study-units are delivered jointly by the University of Malta and the UIC College of Pharmacy. The taught programme covers aspects of pharmacotherapeutics, drug information and statistics, pharmacoeconomics and drug use policies and technology assessments, health systems in Europe and the USA, pharmacovigilance and clinical trials. The course is targeted at pharmacists who would like to advance their careers by enhancing professional practice with a research perspective. It offers a professional doctorate and is suitable for pharmacists working in hospitals, primary-care or community pharmacy and pharmacy administration and regulatory settings. The course will empower pharmacists to assume leadership roles that will drive policies and developments in pharmacy processes that draw on scientific, evidence-based and innovative research.

The Pharm D course is spread over three years of study and spanning a total of 6 semesters. The first year of study is mainly composed of taught units with the second and third years being based primarily on research and clinical experience. The programme is delivered using a blended learning model that includes lectures, distance learning and practice-based learning. Candidates who complete successfully 90 ECTS are awarded a Master in Advanced Clinical Pharmacy if they do not wish to proceed further.

The PharmD course presents a unique opportunity for pharmacists in all areas to acquire a doctorate degree reflecting present and future international developments in pharmacy education, practice and research.

List of recent publications

a) Books

b) Department's Journal
c) Publications in refereed journals


Captur C, Azzopardi LM, Serracino-Inglott A. Health-related quality of life and hormone replacement therapy. Hospital Pharmacy Europe 2013; 70.


Magro L, Shoemake C, Serracino-Inglott A, Azzopardi LM. Chemical enhancement of fingerprints on various porous and non-porous surfaces. Indican Jouranl of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, 2014 accepted for publication.


d) Publications in refereed conference proceedings


e) Presentations


Grech L. The clinical pharmacist within an interdisciplinary team. Plenary presentation, European Pharmaceutical Students Association Annual Congress, Budapest, May 2014.

Grech L. Focus on rheumatoid arthritis – educational seminar for continuing professional development, Department of Pharmacy, University of Malta, November 2013

Grech L. Pharmaceutical care issues within a multidisciplinary team. The Multidisciplinary approach to health care conference, Malta, November, 2013

Grech L. Rheumatology educational seminar, Gozo General Hospital, January 2014

Grech L. What patients need to know? Malta Osteoporosis Society. February 2014

Grech L. Rheumatology Drugs Primary Healthcare Seminar, Malta, March 2014


2. Conferences/seminars/meetings

a) The Annual Pharmacy Symposium was organized by the Department of Pharmacy this year between the 4 and 8 March at the Aula Magna, Valletta Campus. During the symposium students in their final year of the course leading to a degree in Master of Science in Pharmacy and the Master of Pharmacy presented their dissertations. The first group of students completing their studies in the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Technology presented their projects. Second, third and fourth year students presented their work-in-progress project. The symposium was an opportunity for students at the department of pharmacy, staff and collaborators of the department of pharmacy to meet, network and discuss research programmes.

b) Conferences where members of staff participated:

- European Society of Clinical Pharmacy Annual Conference, Prague, October 2013
- The Multidisciplinary approach to health care conference, Malta, November 2013
- Heads of Medicines Agency Meeting, Athens, February 2014
- Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe Conference, Malta, March 2014
- European Association of Hospital Pharmacists Annual Conference, Barcelona, March 2014

Introduction to Surfactants seminar, Institute of Chemical Engineers, London, March 2014

37th Annual Epsa Congress, Budapest, April 2014

British Society for Rheumatology annual Conference, Liverpool, April 2014

2014 European Association of Faculties of Pharmacy Annual Conference, Ljubljana, May 2014

Institute of Food Science and Technology Jubilee Conference, London, May 2014

EULAR, European League against rheumatism Annual Conference, Paris, June 2014

Heads of Medicines Agency Meeting, Rome, July 2014

c) Other international activities

Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi was elected President of the European Association of Faculties of Pharmacy during the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Association in Ljubljana in May.

d) Seminar on Clinical Pharmacy organised for University of Florida off-site experiential programme

The Department of Pharmacy at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the University of Malta, on the occasion of an educational visit from students of the College of Pharmacy at the University of Florida organised an International Seminar in Clinical Pharmacy. Ten students reading for a PharmD degree, led by Professor Jennifer Williams started their visit to European schools of pharmacy by visiting Malta.

The event took place between the 8 and 9 of May where a number of different topics were presented and discussed in a transcultural exchange of professional ideas. During the opening session, Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi, Head of Department of Pharmacy at the University of Malta and President for the European Association of Faculties of Pharmacy presented an introduction into developments in pharmacy education in Europe.

The seminar consisted of a number of workshops which included sessions at Karin Grech Rehabilitation Hospital and patient interviews and discussions on aspects of clinical pharmacy
education and clinical pharmacy service provision in Malta, in the USA and internationally. Research studies in the area of clinical pharmacy which are currently being undertaken within the Department of Pharmacy were presented by pharmacy students and postgraduate students. Some of the topics presented were: Patient Management and Treatment in Rheumatology, Risk Management in Pharmacy, Patient Management in Cardiovascular diseases. The variety of topics presented the students from both Universities with an opportunity to discuss the latest and most upcoming aspects of clinical pharmacy. Professor Serracino Inglott presented developments in pharmacy education and research in Malta including an insight into historical aspects related to local pharmacy practice. An international pharmacy students evening was organised by the Malta Pharmaceutical Students Association and this provided the opportunity for the students from Florida, pharmacy students from European Universities who are currently in Malta on an Erasmus mobility and pharmacy students and faculty from the University of Malta to interact in an informal setting.

The Seminar provided an opportunity for the students from Florida to experience clinical pharmacy developments in Malta and to understand our cultural and historical roots. It was an opportunity for students from the University of Malta to share their experiences and discuss aspects related to the progress of clinical pharmacy, such as the development of an international curriculum for clinical pharmacy, within an international perspective.

e) Maltese Pharmacy Graduate Awarded EAHP-EPSA Best Research Paper award

During the 19th Congress of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) held in March 2014 in Barcelona, Danika Agius Decelis an MPharm 2013 graduate, was presented with the EAHP-EPSA Best Research paper award for the research paper submitted on the intervention of the pharmacist together with the other members of the healthcare team in the management of pain following heart surgery. The paper draws on the research study undertaken by Ms Agius Decelis as part of her Master of Pharmacy degree. In this study it was shown that the pharmacist’s intervention to advise the patients on the use of analgesics and the preparation of medication charts to help patients to follow the intake of the analgesics as prescribed, resulted in a better pain management for the patients. The study was carried out under the supervision of Dr Maurice Zarb Adami from the Department of Pharmacy in collaboration with Mr Joseph Galea from the Department of Surgery at the University of Malta.
4. **Collaboration with third parties**

a) Establishment of collaboration for student placements and/or joint research programmes.

**Clinical and Hospital Pharmacy:**
- Mater Dei Hospital clinical departments and department of pharmacy.
- Karin Grech Rehabilitation Hospital, Pharmacy department
- Sir Paul Boffa Oncology Hospital
- Gozo General Hospital
- Mount Carmel Hospital

**Government authorities:**
- Government Pharmaceutical Services
- POYC

**Community pharmacy:**
- Private community pharmacies

**Pharmaceutical Industry:**
- Starpharma, Actavis, Aurobindo, Poligas, Arrow Pharm Ltd.

**Regulatory Affairs:**
- Associated Drugs, Freedor, JV Pharma

**Others:**
- Malta Pharmaceutical Association, Malta Chamber of Commerce

**Erasmus collaborations:**
- Student-staff mobility with several schools of pharmacy in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Brussels, Poland, United Kingdom

**International collaboration**
- School of Pharmacy, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA
- School of Pharmacy, University of Bari, Bari, Italy
b) *Actavis Collaborative Agreement*

On the 29 September 2011, a collaborative agreement was signed by the Rector of the University of Malta, Professor Juanito Camilleri between the Department and Actavis Ltd. The three year Agreement covers support towards the teaching and research programmes of the Department of Pharmacy. Through this agreement, Actavis Ltd. is co-ordinating the design and printing of the Department’s journal, the Journal of Euromed Pharmacy (JEMP) that carries research papers from post-graduate students. The Journal of Euromed Pharmacy is published jointly with the Malta Pharmaceutical Association. The 2014 Actavis Award for the student with the best presentation was presented to Rodianne Conti during the Annual Pharmacy Symposium.

c) *Sterling, Malta Research Lab*

Sterling Malta have signed a collaborative agreement with the Department of Pharmacy and are supporting a pharmaceutical chemistry research lab. This has led to the installation of state-of-the art equipment used in pharmaceutical research. Sterling Malta and the Department of Pharmacy are collaborating on research projects in the development of processes for innovative processes in the manufacture of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients.

5. **PhD students at the department**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Research Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Anastasi</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical care models in heart failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maresca Attard-Pizzuto</td>
<td>Innovative tools to investigate risk in pharmaceutical processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marise Gauci</td>
<td>Quality assurance of prescribing in the elderly population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Grech</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical care models in patients with rheumatological conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Ellul</td>
<td>Individualisation of standard static model based <em>de novo</em> rational drug design techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicolette Sammut-Bartolo</td>
<td>Synthesis of steroids</td>
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Janis Vella  
Dissemination of antibacterial agents in the peripheries

Francesca Wirth  
Pharmacogenetic implications in clopidogrel therapy: A pharmacist-led management approach

Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi  
Head, Department of Pharmacy  
30 September 2014