

JEMP

JOURNAL
OF EUROMED
PHARMACY



DOCUMENTATION
AND ANALYSIS OF
AFTER-HOURS DRUG
INFORMATION
REQUESTS IN A
GENERAL HOSPITAL

IMPACT OF
PHARMACIST
ADVICE
ON METABOLIC
SYNDROME

USE OF
INTERNET
PHARMACIES
BY THE PUBLIC



Historical books donated to the
Department of Pharmacy

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JEMP publishes original research manuscripts, subject reviews and other contributions related to all aspects of research within the field of pharmacy. JEMP is dedicated to improve the dissemination and interpretation of results of scientific investigation and evaluation of pharmacy processes, pharmaceutical services and interventions and economic outcomes of pharmacy services.

DRUG INFORMATION

Drug information services provided by pharmacists answer clinical questions about medications and contribute towards merging evidence-based practice and personalised patient management. Drug information is often considered an early example of clinical pharmacy activities which developed in hospitals in the United States of America.

Drug information specialised skills are one of the areas of focus in the post-graduate Doctorate in Pharmacy degree programme offered by the Department of Pharmacy of the University of Malta in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy of the University of Illinois in Chicago, USA. Literature evaluation skills for providing evidence-based recommendations for the use of medications and in the evaluation of innovative medicinal products are developed during this course.

On the occasion of World Pharmacists Day 2015, Professor John Rizzo Naudi donated 50 historical books to the Department of Pharmacy. These books are now part of the historical collection within the Department and represent reference sources used in Malta over the last one hundred years.

The editorial board would like to recognise the contribution of Actavis, who are supporting this journal through a collaborative agreement with the Department of Pharmacy.



CONTENTS

- 3 EDITORIAL
- 4 JOINING THE PROFESSIONAL
DOCTORATE IN PHARMACY
- 6 DOCTORATE IN PHARMACY STUDENT
REFLECTIONS
- 8 DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF
AFTER-HOURS DRUG INFORMATION
REQUESTS IN A GENERAL HOSPITAL
Jeffrey Cassar, Lilian M. Azzopardi
- 12 PHARMACIST INTERVENTION IN PATIENT
MONITORING IN A PSYCHIATRIC SETTING
Maria Mamo, Lilian M. Azzopardi
- 16 IMPACT OF PHARMACIST ADVICE
ON METABOLIC SYNDROME
Stephanie Liane Magro, Lilian M. Azzopardi
- 20 USE OF INTERNET PHARMACIES BY THE PUBLIC
Elaine Gatt Baldacchino, Maurice Zarb Adami
- 24 AVAILABILITY OF MEDICINAL PRODUCTS ON THE
MALTESE MARKET AS AFFECTED BY REGULATION
Anna Maria Cassar, Anthony Serracino-Inglott
- 28 APPLYING QUALITY SYSTEMS TO COMPUTERISED
STOCK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
Joseph Giglio, Maurice Zarb Adami
- 30 PROPOSING GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE PERSON
ELIGIBILITY IN MALTA
Simon Corrieri, Anthony Serracino-Inglott
- 33 PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AT
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY
- 35 MALTA PHARMACEUTICAL STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION
- 36 AUTHOR GUIDELINES



EDITORIAL

THE JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH FOR DOCTORATE IN PHARMACY CANDIDATES

This issue of the Journal of Euromed Pharmacy (JEMP) gives some reflections by pharmacists currently following the Doctorate in Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) course which is now in its second year. The Pharm.D. is an innovative level 8 degree (Ph.D equivalent) which bridges the professional aspects of pharmacy with research. The Pharm.D candidates have now embarked on their research projects in earnest and have all submitted their proposal to the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. The research topics cover areas of interest to the student and the faculty and reflect some of the needs of pharmacy practice in Malta and internationally.

Medication errors can occur at any time during drug provision and community pharmacists are in a very good position to prevent occurrence of drug-related medication errors. Clifton Curmi is investigating this subject including the use of technology such as e-prescribing. Danika Agius Decelis is working towards proposing an innovative approach to improve outcomes in the use of glucagon in paediatric Type I diabetic patients. Khaled Abdelmaula is also working on a topic concerning diabetes by investigating the self-management of insulin in Type I diabetic patients. Optimising the practice of self-medication in a safe and appropriate manner is then studied as a general concept through the community pharmacist as the subject of research by Andrew Fenech. Patient-centred studies are music to the ears to those promoting pharmacy ensuring the provision of high quality, safe and effective medicinal products. Martina Muscat centres her studies on chronic disease management around patients in community pharmacy, while Elena Mifsud looks at a pharmacist-led approach to safer anticoagulation management in the community.

The introduction of innovative medicines showed impact on pharmacy practice from several aspects. Roberta Agius is investigating the evolvement of EU regulations regarding innovative medicines while Alison Attard is researching the pharmacotherapeutic and pharmacoeconomic implications of stem cell therapy. Another innovative therapy issue is the efficacy and safety of biosimilar therapeutic products. Mark Cilia is establishing the pharmaceutical issues involved in the use of biosimilars. A number of innovative medicines are also being introduced in cardiovascular disease. Mark Cardona is comparing the novel oral anticoagulants to warfarin considering costs of drug

acquisition, INR monitoring, events and other direct or indirect costs. Regulatory implications are considered in a number of projects mentioned. Another thesis related to regulatory implications is that by Amy Tanti on the detection of signals in electrocardiogram QT prolongation or shortening.

Shared care of patients leading to personalised care is key to pharmacists working as part of the healthcare team. One is assuring that the Doctorate in Pharmacy Course equips pharmacists with the tools required for a successful and rewarding participation in direct personalised care. Topics related to this area of personalised care forming part of the proposals submitted by these students include the implication of monitoring tumour markers: A personalised medicine approach (Charyl Fava), shared care guidelines for patient medicines management in breast and colon cancer (Rebecca Theuma), a sustainable pharmaceutical care approach to prevention and management of digoxin therapy (John Vella) and risk assessment in pharmacotherapeutic practice (Richard Despott).

On a different pharmaceutical note, Noelia Helgado Sanchez is presenting the impact on clinical practice of culturing the bacterium *Clostridium difficile* and the relevant pharmacotherapy involved in the treatment. Another impact assessment is that on the quality and safety of herbal medicinal products and the way that these products are classified (Alexandra Curmi).

The success of this extensive research is highly dependent on the dedication of our Pharm.D. candidates. This would not be possible without the contribution of the seasoned supervisors and the many advisors and collaborators from all areas, especially in the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. The Pharmacy Department is blessed with talent and the contribution of the three fresh Ph.D graduates cannot be overestimated. Louise Grech working on rheumatoid arthritis, Janis Vella on antibiotics in peripheral artery disease, and Francesca Wirth on the pharmacogenetics of antiplatelet drugs have made the Department of Pharmacy proud of its research teams. These new Ph.D graduates are now also supporting the Pharm.D. candidates in their quest for excellence. Our best wishes go to all the Doctorate of Pharmacy students for a rewarding and fruitful research journey towards success.

Professor Anthony Serracino-Inglott