

46th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES OF F.I.P.

Helsinki . . . Chernobyl Notwithstanding!

Mary Ann Felice Sant Fournier, B.Pharm., M.Phil.

The Congress announcement appearing in 1986 issues of F.I.P.'s official journal, 'Pharmacy International' assured participants that "as far as the Chernobyl catastrophe and its consequences are concerned, there is no dangerous radio-activity in Finland" (June '86) and "foreign customers may be informed, without reservation, that the situation in Finland is completely normal; all food on sale being completely safe." (July '86). But, as we all know, the Maltese are, by nature, diffident and perhaps this time we may concede the benefit of the doubt and not 'harass' colleagues for not rushing to finally "meet Harry" at the Helsinki appointment!

Fortunately however, over 1700 pharmacists attended this year's congress and amongst them was our 'roving reporter', Harrison K. Abuthiate; here he is, punctual as ever, with his Helsinki Congress report:

LETTER FROM KENYA



The 46th F.I.P. International Congress of Pharmaceutical Sciences was organised in Helsinki, Finland from 1—5 September 1986.

Over 1700 Pharmacists registered to attend this year's congress which was held in the magnificent Filandia Hall. This year there was no general theme associated with the congress. The Board of Pharmaceutical Sciences of F.I.P. presented a programme whose emphasis was on several symposia with either a post graduate education character or with topics which represent timely and interesting new developments of the profession of pharmacy and pharmaceu-

tical sciences or which represent relevant discussion items for pharmacy in general e.g. side effects of drugs and sexuality by Prof. Erik Khriige, Division of Pharmacology, Department of Pharmacy, University in Helsinki, Finland; ulcers and different types of treatment by Dr. Lars Olbe, Department of Surgery, Samgren Hospital, Gotenborg Sweden; vomiting and diarrhoea and constipation by Prof. H.K. Roth; mechanisms of membrane transfer of drugs by Prof. William I. Higuchi, The University of Utah Salt Lake City, Utah 84112; Rate controlled drug delivery systems by Prof. L.F. Prescott, Dept. of Clinical Pharmacology, The Royal Infirmary, Edinburg Scotland; Impact of Patients' non compliance on drug costs by Dr. Enlund, Dept. of Social Pharmacy, University of Kuopio Finland, and 'The Traditional Chinese Medicine Today' by Prof. Ding Guang-Sheng, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai, China. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Dr. Pekka T. Mannisto on the topic "Erythromycins — Problems but also progress". The highest award for Pharmacy by F.I.P., the Host-Madsen medal was awarded to Prof. T. Nagai, Dept. of Pharmaceutics Hoshi University Ebara, Shinagawa-Ku, Tokyo, Japan. He gave a lecture on Topical Mucosal Adhesive Dosage Forms. In the studies with his colleagues, they produced several topical mucosal adhesive dosage forms containing hydroxypropyl cellulose for carcinoma colli, then oral mucosal dosage forms for absorption of insulin and adhesive tablets for aphthous stomatitis, and a powder dosage form for nasal absorption of insulin.

The congress changed venue from Filandia Hall to the Exhibition and Congress Centre at a suburb of Helsinki as the Filandia Hall was reserved for Helsinki Festival.

Bahra Singh — Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya and I manned the stand announcing the 4th Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association Conference Scheduled for Nairobi, Kenya 9—13 March 1987.

(continued on page 15)

by the superintendent of Public Health in order to obtain their prescribed requirement. Is the Department introducing something which it is not prepared to handle or able to handle but fails to do it? These control cards are going to involve pharmacists and doctors with increased paperwork. Patients are going to be subjected to a lot of useless anxiety, and are given an emergency supply of three days, until the card is issued. It also discourages doctors from prescribing the medicine they consider best for their patient. The needs of the genuinely sick under doctor's care are being sacrificed

The Real Problem

A number of participants believe that our local problem is heroin addiction, and not psychotropic drugs. Drug addicts obtain heroin illegally as it cannot be prescribed. Heroin is a far superior drug to morphine, in myocardial infarction and terminal cancer, yet it is **not** available for use for medicinal purposes.

Though we know that there are heroin addicts, these are seldom prosecuted — due to failure of the police and custom forces. Most of the cases brought before the courts are Cannabis addicts.

Registered drug addicts are known to the police force and they are subject to continuous surveillance. A register with the list of Heroin addicts does not exist at the Police Department and presently three cases are pending in court of registered drug addicts charged of being in possession of Heroin.

A lot of regulations are made and though they may impress, in reality they achieve very little to fight the problem of drug abuse. The Dangerous Drug Ordinance does not distinguish, between one drug and another. The penalties given for someone convicted of being in possession of Cannabis sativa is much lower than that of possession of Heroin, so the court without realising is making a distinction between hard and soft drugs.

If we have a drug problem we have to define it, as suddenly everything becomes a drug. If we put them in their proper perspective alcohol comes first followed by cigarettes. Psychotropic drugs like Benzodiazepines are of more benefit than harm to society if used correctly. They help a person to go from a nervous wreck, back to normal life style.

Education

Our major concern is to educate the public both young and old on the problems of drug abuse. As a former drug addict said in a recent

forum, if he had known the facts, he would never have started on drugs. Pharmacies and doctor's clinics can become distribution points of leaflets on information on the drugs of abuse.

Conclusion

This forum was an initial effort and other activities should be organised for all pharmacists and doctors so that together they discuss a subject which is of interest to both professions.

LETTER FROM KENYA

(continued from page 8)

F.I.P. Assembly of Pharmacists met on Wednesday 3rd September. This assembly was created by the new statutes of F.I.P. in order to offer members an opportunity to participate in a broadly based discussion. The items discussed were:—

- (a) Presentation of the results of the council meeting and of the activities of the Federation over the past year by Mr. L.G. Felix Faure, Administrative Director.
- (b) F.I.P. involvement in continuing education by Prof. Breimer, Scientific Secretary.
- (c) New International Code of Ethics for Pharmacists by Mr. A. Bedat, President F.I.P.

A declaration was adopted by the members of the council and Assembly of Pharmacists. (See page 9)

This year's F.I.P. Third World programme discussed the theme:— "Treatment and Prevention of Diarrhoea Diseases Pharmaceutical Involvement" under the Chairmanship of Prof. P.F. D'Arcy, Vice President F.I.P. speakers included Dr. M.H. Merson, Director Diarrhoea Diseases, Control Programme WHO Geneva.

The Congress ended with Sectional Dinners on Thursday 4th September 1986 and Final Dinner/Dance at the Dipoli Centre on Friday 5th September 1986.

The newly elected President of F.I.P. is Dr. J. Oddis of U.S.A. The next Congress will be held in Amsterdam, Holland 1—5 September 1987 to mark the 75th Anniversary of F.I.P.

H. K. Abuti

Harrison K. Abuti B. Pharm (Hons)
Zone Manager East & Central Africa
Merck Sharp Dohme International
Nairobi, Kenya