



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

The Pharmacy Department Review

Volume 1 Issue 7

May 2010

Pharmacy Students' Symposium 2010



Hon. Dolores Cristina addressing those present at the Pharmacy symposium.

"The presence of all of you students, graduate pharmacists and other participants is evidence that the Department has succeeded to bring you all together in one family."

- Hon. Dolores Cristina
22/3/2010.

The Annual Pharmacy Students Symposium is a very important event in the Pharmacy Department calendar. In this annual meeting undergraduate and postgraduate students showcase their research through poster presentations, poster discussion sessions and oral communications. This year's Pharmacy Symposium was held at the Aula Magna, University of Malta, Valletta, between the 22nd and 26th March 2010.

The areas tackled included: Pharmacy Information, Pharmaceutical Care and Point-of-Care Testing, Pharmacotherapy and Treatment Protocols, Pharmacoeconomics and Pharmacy Administration, Regulatory Affairs, Clinical and Pharmaceutical Analysis, Drug Design and Industrial Pharmacy.

Highly distinguished guests participated in this year's symposium. These included: the Hon. Dr Joe. Cassar, Minister for Health, the Elderly and Community Care; the Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister for Education, Employment and the Family; Prof. Alan Lau and Dr Marieke Schoen from the University of Illinois, Chicago; Prof. Godfrey Laferla, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery; Prof. Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta and Prof. John Rizzo Naudi, Chancellor of the University of Malta.



Hon. Dr Joe Cassar at the Pharmacy Symposium 2010.



Prof. Juanito Camilleri one of the speakers at the Pharmacy Symposium 2010.

During her speech on Monday the Hon. Dolores Cristina acknowledged that the pharmacists have interesting and challenging jobs and that this should serve as a catalyst for others that want to join the course. On the same day the Hon. Dr Cassar emphasized the importance of the pharmacists to continue to progress at a post-graduate level and that expertise has to be developed in the clinical area of pharmacy. He was pleased to note that Rector Prof. Camilleri is working with the Head of Department of Pharmacy at the University of Malta to explore the possibilities that will facilitate the advancement of the pharmacist through academic teaching and research collaborations. In fact during his speech on Monday, Prof. Camilleri mentioned the agreement he recently signed for a joint research project between the Department of Pharmacy and Starpharma, a local pharmaceutical industry specializing in the formulation of slow-release oral dosage forms. Dr Cassar also recognised the intention of Prof. Alan Lau to embark on a post graduate research and teaching collaborative programme with the Pharmacy Department.

As a sign of recognition two awards were given to pharmacists who have made significant contributions to the pharmaceutical field. Ramon Xuereb, the pioneer of the first pharmaceutical industry in Malta, now recognised as Actavis and Anna Dingli Miggiani who has been recognised for her exemplary work relating to medicine information while working for GlaxosmithKline.

Pharmacists from various areas also contributed to this year's symposium. These included Josette Sciberras and Mark Zammit from Mater Dei Hospital, Damiana Gentili from Aminochemicals, David Caruana from Associated Drug, Edwina Bajada from the Chemi-mart Group and Elisa Nicholl from Pharma MT. These representative were in search of recruiting promising fifth year pharmacy students.

The gala dinner held at the Grand Hotel Excelsior marked the conclusion of this year's symposium, which was followed by an after-party at the same venue organised by the Malta Pharmaceutical Students Association.

Book Launch: Lecture Notes in Pharmacy Practice

The book *Lecture Notes in Pharmacy Practice* was launched on Wednesday, 24 March 2010 at the Institute of Health Care's Central Auditorium, Mater Dei Hospital. This book is an important tool for pharmacists and pharmacy students. It is an excellent guide for students in their studies as it summarises key aspects of pharmacy subjects. It covers a wide range of topics including: Introduction to Pharmacy, Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacotherapeutics, Responding to Symptoms in Community Pharmacy, Pharmacy Information, Research and Pharmacy Systems. At the end of each topic, questions can be found to serve as a self-assessment of the topic tackled. This book is highly recommended to those who have the Pharmacy profession at heart.



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Calendar of past events

Commemoration of Remò Mifsud



Prof. John Rizzo Naudi being presented with the portrait of Remo Mifsud.

On the 26 October 2009, the Pharmacy Department in collaboration with the Malta Pharmaceutical Association organised a commemoration of Raymond (Remò) Mifsud at the Lecture Hall of the Institute of Health at Mater Dei Hospital. Remò Mifsud, a former medical representative for the Laboratories Servier passed away at the age of 51. Mifsud was highly

esteemed by numerous people including the Pharmacy Department where he had generously sponsored a number of projects. At the end of the ceremony a medal was presented to the Mifsud family as a sign of recognition for the distinguished service offered by Mifsud to the Department. Jean Pierre Ronan, Matthew Galea from the Les Laboratoires Servier and Mifsud's family presented a portrait of Remo to the Head of Pharmacy Department, to the Pro-rector and to the Chancellor of the University of Malta.

7th Malta Medical School Conference



Prof. Lilian Azzopardi and Dr Maurice Zarb Adami, the moderators during one of the plenary sessions.

The seventh edition of the Malta Medical School Conference took place between the 5th and 7th November 2009 at the Hilton Malta Conference Centre. This conference is a multidisciplinary meeting held triennially where papers and posters related to clinical work

and research carried out by graduates and students are presented. A good number of pharmacy students and pharmacy graduates participated in this conference. Areas tackled included: Pharmacy Information, Pharmaceutical Care, Point-of-Care Testing, Pharmacy Administration, Clinical Analysis, Industrial Pharmacy and Pharmacotherapy. Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi formed part of the organising committee and scientific committee. A gala dinner was held on the 6th November at the Excelsior Hotel, Floriana.

Book launch MCQs in Pharmacy Practice Second Edition



Prof. Lilian Azzopardi addressing all those present at the book launch.

The book launch of MCQs in Pharmacy Practice, Second Edition marked the ending of the Malta Medical School Conference. The event took place at the Palazzo Castellaniana Valletta. A number of distinguished guests participated in the event. These included Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Dr Joe Cassar; Dr Philip Von Brockdorff, Chairman of the Commission for higher education; Prof. Godfrey Laferla, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and

Dr Bernard Coleiro Consultant Physician and Lecturer at the Department of Pharmacy. Also present were Chancellor Prof. John Rizzo Naudi and Prof. Sam Salek from the Welsh School of Pharmacy. Books were awarded to presenters of research at the Malta Medical School Conference. These were: Alison Anastasi, Kristen Buhagiar, Wendy Scicluna, Elaine Vella, Janis Vella, Francesca Wirth, Marie Clare Zammit and Karen Sapiano.

7th World Meeting on Pharmaceutics, Biopharmaceutics & Pharmaceutical Technology



Fifth year pharmacy students with Prof. Anthony Serracino Inglott at the Gala dinner.

The Seventh World Meeting on Pharmaceutics, Biopharmaceutics and Pharmaceutical Technology was held between the 8th and 11th March 2010 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre

in Valletta. This meeting attracted over 1300 delegates from 50 countries. Final year students that participated in the meeting included: Maria Fenech with her poster on the feasibility of setting up an accredited microbiology laboratory for the local pharmaceutical industry, Thomas Vella with his project on the production of intravenous fluids and Stefanie Farrugia with the poster entitled "Developing a GMP compliant training documentation system for a pharmaceutical manufacture". Also participating were Nicolette Bartolo and Helga Farrugia, both fourth year pharmacy students. Prof. Lilian Azzopardi and Prof. Anthony Serracino Inglott formed part of the local organising committee.

The research spot- POYC

POYC- The Pharmacy Of Your Choice Scheme is a current controversial matter occupying the media headlines. The Pharmacy Department is researching aspects of this system, with two projects currently being carried out by Rosanne Mahoney, a fourth year pharmacy student, and Gilles Briffa Rizzo, a fifth year student.

The POYC scheme was implemented as a pilot project in December 2007 with the aim being that of facilitating the patient's life. Through this system the patient is able to collect free medicines from the preferred pharmacy of ones choice and most importantly from the pharmacist of the patient's choice. There are various benefits of the POYC system, an important one being that the pharmacist will know the conditions the patient is suffering from and what medication is being taken for the treatment of the associated condition. Adverse reactions and drug interactions, amongst others, are identified and prevented from occurring. This will ensure optimal pharmaceutical care and drug usage. The drawbacks of this system include the workload, time constraints due to added administrative work, necessary computer software upgrades as a professional tool for more effective clinical interventions and the maintenance of adequate medicine stock levels.



The pharmacist providing the medication to the patient.

Briffa in his study entitled "Distribution of free medicine in Malta", attempted to monitor the progress and implementation of the POYC system. He also compared this system with the previous system of free medicine distribution. The study was accomplished by compiling and distributing a questionnaire to 400 patients currently registered in the scheme. Through this study it has been shown that eighty-four percent of the patients were not satisfied with the previous government dispensary system. The main reason being that of the time spent in waiting to obtain the free medicines. It was estimated that every patient waited around 1-1.5hours. The patients perceived the new system as being user-friendly, efficient, and well-managed. However, the main limitation of the system was that of the 'out of stock' medication.



Rosanne Mahoney a fourth year pharmacy student is undertaking a project related to the POYC system.

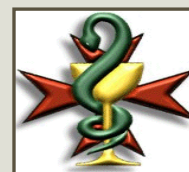
Mahoney, in her study "Implementation of the POYC scheme and interprofessional relations", is analysing and evaluating the impact of the POYC scheme on interprofessional relations. This analysis is being carried out by means of questionnaires addressed to physicians and pharmacists. The researcher is also carrying out observational studies at a local community pharmacy. In these studies, twenty-one cases of drug-related problems have been observed.

The POYC system still requires to be implemented in other areas. It is hoped that the system will point out the need for reengineering of the National Health Service Medicines Entitlement and other related policies and protocols making them more cost-effective and robust to meet today's patients needs.

This newsletter is published as part of an undergraduate project carried out by Antine Vella under the supervision of Professor Anthony Serracino IngloTT. E-mail: anthony.serracino-inglott@um.edu.mt

The projects referred to in this newsletter are carried out under the supervision of members of the academic staff of the Department of Pharmacy with the collaboration of other academic staff from various faculties and institutes in the University including other departments in the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. The Department of Pharmacy is fortunate to have such an expert collaboration from so many academics and recognises such distinguished contributions.

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¹- Schering Plough. Summary of product characteristics.

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