



# THE PHARMACY DEPARTMENT REVIEW

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## The Department of Pharmacy 2013 Annual Pharmacy Symposium



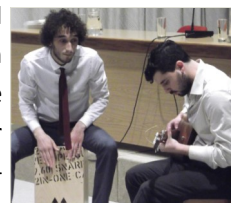
Second and third year students posters

The 2013 Annual Pharmacy Symposium was held between the 4 and 8 March. During the course of the week 29 Master of Pharmacy students, 6 Master of Science in Pharmacy students and 34 fourth year Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) students presented their work through a computer presentation. This year the Pharmacy department has presented a new logo, developed by Mauro Abdilla and Eric Santucci, and poster templates were followed by students. These changes were well welcomed by the attendees.



Prof Lilian M. Azzopardi

Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi, Head of the Pharmacy department, congratulated Christopher Tate who will form part of the delegation that will represent Malta in Sweden in the 2013 Eurovision song contest. During the opening ceremony of the Symposium the attendees were welcomed with music provided by two fourth year pharmacy students, Miguel Manara and Christopher Tate. Prof L. M. Azzopardi commented that in the 2012 Global Pharmacy Workforce Report Malta ranked first in terms of pharmacist to population ratio from the 90 countries included and pharmacy graduates are in employment. This can be attributed to the exposure that pharmacy students get to diverse pharmacy settings during their placement and to the course content which is developed in collaboration with future employers.



Christopher Tate and Miguel Manara



BSc(Hons) Pharmacy Technology

Amongst the speakers at the opening ceremony there was Kurt Borg, President of the Pharmaceutical Technology Students Association, an association which is being launched this year, who represents the BSc (Honours) Pharmaceutical Technology students. Thirteen fourth year students who have been on an ERASMUS experience during the first semester of the academic year shared their experiences through a presentation coordinated by Claire Bugeja. Twenty three students from various countries including Poland, France and Italy who have chosen the Pharmacy department for their ERASMUS experience delivered a presentation describing their work. Christina Noella Abela, President of Malta Pharmaceutical Students Association (MPSA), gave a brief overview of the evolution of the association and introduced the renewed MPSA logo. MPSA on campus acts as a link between the pharmacy students and the Pharmacy department.

Professor Godfrey LaFerla, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, commented on how the Pharmacy department achieves the aim of internalization through different activities including the ERASMUS mobility project. Prof G. LaFerla congratulated the projects supervisors who guide the students during the completion of their projects which are then presented during local and foreign conferences. The Pharmacy department made over 30 submissions for the VIII Malta Medical School Conference which was described by Prof G. LaFerla as a record.



Prof Godfrey LaFerla

This newsletter is published as part of an undergraduate project carried out by Marion Sammut under the supervision of Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott.  
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### Inside this issue

The 2013 Pharmacy Students Symposium	2
VIII Malta Medical School Conference	2
Research Spot	3/4



During the opening ceremony Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott presented this years' pharmacy recognition to Prof William Bannister, Mr Joseph Micallef, general manager of Karin Grech Rehabilitation Hospital and Ms Pierina Zammit. These distinguished collaborators represented the research, clinical and community pharmacy sectors respectively. Prof A. Serracino Inglott thanked the Rector and the Dean for their continuous help and support throughout the years.



Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott and Pharmacy recognition awardees



Mark Cardona presented with the Actavis® award.

During the symposium a number of publications were disseminated including the third issue of the Journal of Euromed Pharmacy, compiled by the Pharmacy department and supported by Actavis and Overdose, the yearly MPSA magazine. Ms Lilian Wismayer, Prof Frederick Fenech, Prof Andrew Borg, Dr Ray Galea and Dr Anthony Fenech chaired the different Master of Pharmacy Oral communication sessions. A common comment was that the chairpersons were pleased that the Master of Pharmacy students managed to convey the relevant points from their dissertations while keeping within the allocated time which is not an easy task. This year the Actavis® best Master of Pharmacy presentation award was presented to

Mark Cardona, for his presentation on 'Cardiovascular medicines: Comparative costs and benefits', a dissertation undertaken under the supervision of Dr Maurice Zarb Adami. The symposium was brought to an end as is a tradition by the Master of Pharmacy students who thanked the staff at the pharmacy department for their help throughout their course years. The students directed a video which depicted the past five years of the class.

## VIII Malta Medical School Conference

The Malta Medical School Conference is hosted every three years by the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. The VIII edition was held between the 29 November and 1 December 2012 at the Westin Dragonara Resort. The conference was opened by the chairman Dr R. Galea and HE Dr George Abela, the President of Malta. Local and international speakers from varying medical fields took part in this conference. Sessions directly related to pharmacy were held on each day of the conference and a special symposium on Drug Development was held on Saturday, during which presentations were carried out by guest speakers from the Faculty of Pharmacy, La Sapienza Rome and speakers from the pharmaceutical industry.



The first pharmacy related session was chaired by Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott and Ms Lilian Wismayer, during which presentations relating to clinical pharmacy were discussed. Master of Pharmacy students presented their work, including 'Developing a course for pharmacist prescribing', by Andrew Fenech under the supervision of Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott. The second session was chaired by Prof Lilian M. Azzopardi and Dr Maurice Zarb Adami; work relating to pharmaceutical sciences were discussed. Master of Pharmacy projects presented during this session varied from 'International Normalized Ratio testing and anticoagulation drug therapy monitoring', by Elena Maria Mifsud under the supervision of Prof Lilian M. Azzopardi to 'Investigating the anti-oestrogenic effect of synephrine', by Cristina Pace Bardon under the supervision of Dr Claire Shoemake. Clinical pharmacists also presented their work amongst whom there was Louise Grech who presented her work relating to rheumatoid arthritis. The VIII Malta Medical School Conference was brought to an end by a prize giving ceremony and a gala dinner held on 30 November

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## Research Spot: Pharmacy Students' Presentations in 2011/2012

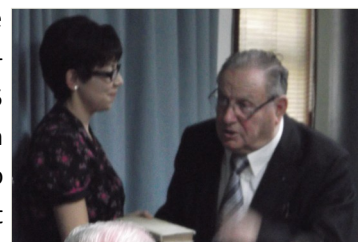
### Renovated Pharmacy Bench



Restored pharmacy bench

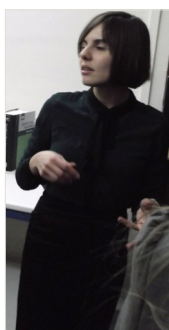
The Pharmacy Department acquired a pharmacy bench dating back to the 1900s from Portelli pharmacy. The bench was renovated by the University of Malta in collaboration with sponsors and was inaugurated on the 6 October 2011. The Pharmacy bench can be found on the first floor of the Pharmacy Department. During the inauguration Rebecca Tonna, a third year pharmacy student, delivered a presentation in which she highlighted the properties and uses of the bench. At that time the pharmacy bench consisted of two distinct sides which fulfilled two different functions. The front side was meant to showcase the pharmaceuticals available at the pharmacy. In fact one can find the front shelves lined with carefully labeled containers. The rear of the bench was meant for compounding and for patient counseling, here one can find the compounding and dispensing equipment such as pestles, mortars and pill boxes. The two sides of the bench used to be divided by a 'No Admittance' sign. The back of the bench was used by the pharmacist to counsel patients in private. In her presentation Rebecca Tonna pointed out that nowadays this sense of privacy has been lost in the pharmacy.

During the inauguration Prof John Rizzo Naudi, former chancellor of the University of Malta, presented the Department of Pharmacy with a pharmacy book which was owned by his ancestor, Agostino Naudi in 1815 entitled 'Materia Medica Therapeutica'. During his presentation Prof John Rizzo Naudi made a reference to the times when pharmacists used to compound the medicines they sold and mentioned that this bench will act as a reminder of the history of the pharmacy profession for generations to come. Prof John Rizzo Naudi also mentioned the ever increasing number of medicines becoming available on the market and the added pressure that pharmacists face nowadays to learn their respective properties.



Prof Lilian M. Azzopardi and  
Prof John Rizzo Naudi

### Pharmacy Practice Resource Unit (PPRU) Presentation



Jaclyn  
Azzopardi

The Pharmacy Practice Resource Unit (PPRU) is a mock pharmacy located on the ground floor in the Pharmacy department, which has been inaugurated on the 16 February 2012. Jaclyn Azzopardi, a Master of Pharmacy Student, carried out a presentation in which she described the work that went into constructing and evaluating the PPRU. The PPRU hosts over 380 medicines catalogued according to the BNF classification. The PPRU offers students the opportunity to become acquainted with product packaging, the appearance of the medication, the patient information leaflet, information supplied by medical representatives, wound care items which are usually packaged in the pharmacy, vitamins, nutritional supplements and baby foods. Medical devices such as blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose monitors can be found and each device is accompanied by a protocol for use and log book. A link for the PPRU can be found on the Pharmacy Department Website.

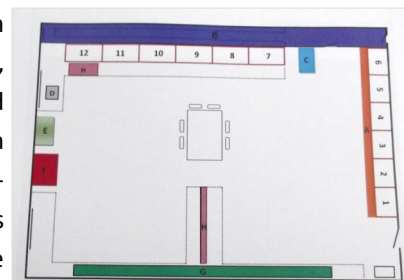


Figure 1: Floor plan of the PPRU

PPRU floor plan





Lawrence Zerafa

During the PPRU inauguration the Pharmacy Department was presented with 32 pharmacy books by pharmacist Lawrence Zerafa. These books were acquired by Lawrence Zerafa while conducting his Master of Philosophy thesis focused on the history of pharmacy. These textbooks were obtained from various sources such as from the Jesuit library in Naxxar, second-hand book shops in London and car boot sales. The oldest book was a British Pharmacopeia which dates back to 1809 whilst the most recent book was a BNF dating back to 1974. Most of the books come from the second quarter of the twentieth century in the period between World War 1 and World War 2. The books are mainly in English and Italian which is reasonable as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of the professions were taught in Italian. Some of the books also contain hand-written notes from the pharmacists who used them.

A number of these books are available on Google books as full text, one example being the British Pharmacopeia of 1907. Through notes found on the books themselves it is known that such books were available from ordinary book shops not only from specialized book shops. In his speech Lawrence Zerafa said that a future possibility is that the Pharmacy Department will acquire more of these historical pharmacy books and these pharmacy books which could be used by students in their research.



Donated pharmacy books

## Re-enactment of compounding of medications

Angelique Camilleri, a third year pharmacy student, carried out a re-enactment of medicament compounding during the 2012 pharmacy students' symposium, as part of her undergraduate project relating to the history of pharmacy in Malta, under the supervision of Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott, with the help of compounder Michael Bonnici. During the session Angelique Camilleri re-enacted the compounding of a potassium citrate and citric acid mixture used in cystitis, a phenobarbitone sachet used as an anti-colic and a salicylic acid cream used as a keratolytic agent.



Michael Bonnici and

During this re-enactment students witnessed the accuracy and time required by pharmacists in the past to be able to prepare medications that nowadays we find ready to sell on the pharmacy shelf. Prof Anthony Serracino Inglott pointed out the fact that the pharmacist could not touch any powder or solution which added to the difficulty of formulating.

The possibility of viewing the re-enactment of medicaments is being extended to the general public. Angelique Camilleri has carried out re-enactments at the University of Malta and at Santo Spirito in Rabat. These re-enactments are going to take place the last Friday of each month starting in March giving the chance to a larger audience coming from different walks of life to get an insight on medicinal compounding. A flyer has been designed by Angelique Camilleri to advert the event and is going to be placed in the Synapse issues of 2013.



Flyer designed by Angelique Camilleri