

INTERVIEW

Prof. P.F. D'Arcy

Maria Brincat, B.Pharm.

Prof. P.F. D'Arcy O.B.E., B.Pharm., D.Sc., Ph.D., F.P.S., F.R.S.C., is Head of the Department of Pharmacy of the Queen University of Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland. He is a very prominent personality in International Pharmacy. He is Director of F.I.P. Federation Internationale Pharmaceutique, Third World Department and Editor-in-chief of 'International Pharmacy' Journal, the Official journal of F.I.P. His specialization is Pharmacology and his publications include various articles on the subject including the regular feature 'Drug reactions and interactions' in the International Pharmacy Journal.

Prof. D'Arcy is a regular participant in international conferences abroad. Over the last year he has travelled to Pakistan, Turkey, Nigeria, Sudan, Kuwait and America among other countries. He arrived in Malta on the 29th February accompanied by his charming wife.

Prof. D'Arcy was this year's external examiner of the fourth year pharmacy students. During his stay in Malta he established good contact with the Chamber of Pharmacists and on several occasions met members of the executive both formally and informally. He also had several meetings with various Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and visited the hospital Pharmaceutical services.

Queen's University, Belfast

Asked about some of the postgraduate courses held at Queen's University, Prof. D'Arcy said that they do a lot of pharmacokinetic research, providing much useful work for the medical colleagues. They have an M.Sc. in Hospital Pharmacy which is generally taken 3 to 4 years after practice in the field. Among the subjects covered in this course are updates in pharmacokinetics, pharmacology, Pharmacy practice, legislation and a research project. Foreign students are also taken up for such courses but they are generally asked to do a 2 year instead of one year period of study. Other areas of interest include New Formulations and Drug Design.

External Courses

In conjunction with the Kuwait government,



Prof. P.F. D'Arcy with Council Members. (Left to right) Ms. M.A. Ciappara, Prof. A. Serracino Inglott, Mrs. M.A. Sant Fournier, Mr. R. Fava, Mrs. M. Brincat, Mrs. E. Lepre, Mrs. M. Parascandolo and Prof. P.F. D'Arcy.

the Queen's University has provided an external course in Clinical pharmacy and management. All teaching material is provided by the Queen's University. Local tutors supervise and guide the students. Written assignments are sent to the Queen's University for assessment. During the course lecturers from the Queen's regularly visit the country to maintain personal contact with the students.

Asked about the possibility of Malta making use of such facilities Prof. D'Arcy stated that this would certainly be possible not necessarily in the above subject. He mentioned the possibility of a course in 'Drug Formulations and Design'. Of course there would have to be a minimum number of students and expenses such as lecturers' travel expenses involved would have to be made by Malta.

Pharmacy Education in Malta

Asked about local Pharmacy Education, Prof. D'Arcy said that the students are as capable as their foreign counterparts, a fact amply illustrated by their theses, however he recom-

mends that immediate action must be taken to increase the staff student ratio. Furthermore it is essential that Pharmacy Education is completely in the hands of Pharmacists. He was pleased to note the seminar held recently by the Chamber, on Pharmacy Education and considers the curriculum proposals to be in the right direction, but can in no way be implemented with the current staff compliment. He strongly recommends increased contact of students with experienced local pharmacists in the University environment.

In Northern Ireland, continuing education programmes have been held in the past 15 years. They consist of evening lectures with half-day symposia and short courses in subjects such as pharmacokinetics. An attendance certificate is given to those attending more than 75 per cent of the lectures. This post qualifications training scheme has become so well established that attendance certificates are required before people are considered for employment in hospital pharmacy. He was most pleased to learn about the Chamber's policy and efforts in continuing education and has promised us access to some of the material used in their lectures in his University.

Hospital Pharmacy

With respect to Hospital Pharmacy in Malta, Prof. D'Arcy did not mince words. In his opinion it did not exist! He has advised that both hospital and community pharmacy must be brought up to date before Malta becomes a member of the E.E.C., not only through legislation, but in the actual standard of practice.

F.I.P.

Prof. D'Arcy was dismayed to hear that Malta was once a member of the F.I.P. but was forced to resign because membership was too expensive. He hopes that in the future it would be possible for countries like Malta to become full members. Local pharmacists can benefit by becoming associate members of F.I.P. Indeed he was pleased to note that both the President and the secretary are associate members. In his opinion there is much to be gained through C.P.A., of which Malta is a member.

A Conundrum

How is a small developed country like a large developing country? Answer: neither can afford to become members of F.I.P.! There are no prizes for guessing the right solution to this riddle, nor indeed are there any prizes for those countries that cannot afford to join F.I.P., nor indeed should there be any prizes for the F.I.P. Bureau who have so far failed to come up with a fiscal policy that will attract and enable Third World countries to join and participate in the activities of F.I.P.

I have just returned from the George Cross Island of Malta, where I spent two enjoyable and instructive weeks with my academic and professional colleagues. I learnt to my undying shame that Malta was once a member of F.I.P. but was forced to resign because it could not afford to continue its membership.

Many national pharmaceutical bodies in developing countries do not have obligatory requirements of membership for their pharmacists and they charge only nominal registration fees for those who do join. To add an additional amount to this to cover the ordinary membership of F.I.P. would be too expensive and might indeed cause resignations from the national society.

May I suggest that the Bureau and Council of F.I.P. give urgent attention to helping less well-endowed countries, developed and developing alike to become ordinary members of F.I.P.

P.F. D'Arcy

Director F.I.P. Third World Department

(Reprinted from International Pharmacy Journal (1988), Third World News, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 148)

A regular feature in "International Pharmacy" is an article on Pharmacy in various countries, and Prof. D'Arcy has requested one on "Pharmacy in Malta".

Asked what he thinks of "The Pharmacist", "It's an excellent journal", and has promised to contribute articles, and welcomed us to republish any of his articles that appeared in "International Pharmacy".

Prof. D'Arcy's visit as external examiner was certainly a most profitable one for pharmacy in Malta.

Both Prof. and Mrs. D'Arcy enjoyed their stay in Malta and look forward to coming again.