

JEMP

JOURNAL
OF EUROMED
PHARMACY



REFERENCE
PRICING FOR
PHARMACEUTICALS

USE OF
NSAIDS AND
PATIENT
SAFETY

STANDARD
OPERATING
PROCEDURES IN
PHARMACEUTICAL
QUALITY SYSTEMS



Picture taken by Jakov Cordina (B.Pharm) from the traditional pharmacy bench at the Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta.

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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.

TRADITIONAL PHARMACY BENCH

A traditional pharmacy bench of the type that would have been the centrepiece of most pharmacies until recently was presented to Professor Juanito Camilleri, the Rector of the University of Malta at the Department of Pharmacy on Thursday the 6th of October 2011.

Dating from 1919, the pharmacy bench had been located at Portelli's Pharmacy in Paola until recently. Its acquisition was co-ordinated by the Malta Pharmaceutical Association on the initiative of pharmacist Reginald Fava. The bench was sponsored by Associated Drug, Beta Pharma, Chemimart, Novartis, Starpharma, the Malta Pharmaceutical Association and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

The event was held at the Department's upper foyer, where the traditional pharmacy bench is located, an area dedicated as a study area for pharmacy students. Rector Professor Camilleri, ex-Chancellor Professor John Rizzo Naudi, Professor Godfrey Laferla, Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Professor Lilian Azzopardi, Head of Department, Ms Janis Vella from the Malta Pharmaceutical Association and Mr Noel Pace, President of the Malta Pharmaceutical Students' Association addressed the students, staff and department's collaborators on this occasion. Rebecca Tonna, a third year pharmacy student carrying out her pharmacy practice project on the historical aspects of pharmacy delivered a presentation about the history of pharmacy in Malta with particular reference to the dispensing equipment and dispensing benches used in pharmacies in earlier times.

The bench is a very valuable addition to the collection of medicine containers and equipment used in the preparation and dispensing of medicine compiled by Seychell in 2010. Seychell's study forms part of a research programme in the Department on the historical aspects of the pharmacy profession in Malta which included studies carried out by Zerafa (1991), Borg (1998), Grech (2002) and Abela (2010) as part of their undergraduate and postgraduate studies.



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EDITORIAL

Two years have now elapsed since the Minister for Health Dr Joe Cassar during the Annual Pharmacy Symposium mentioned the need for pharmacy practice in Malta to evolve by considering formalising pharmacist prescribing while ensuring a safe, timely and efficient service to Maltese society.

A number of other countries including the United Kingdom have taken the subject of Pharmacist Prescribing very seriously and the concept is now established on a firm basis resulting in an evidence-based improvement in the rational use of medicines. The Department of Pharmacy at the University of Malta has along the years evolved its curriculum. This upgrading of the curriculum has taken into consideration that this present generation of students will be in a position to take up the organised function of prescribing of medicines effectively rendering a safe and rational service.

The Malta Pharmaceutical Association (MPhA), a pharmaceutical society which looks into professional matters without the shackles of a trade union, may devote attention to this subject with greater vigour. The Association having supported since its conception the successful implementation of the MPharm degree, having also supported the addition of Mathematics at Intermediate level as a special entry requirement to the course of pharmacy, should now focus on the introduction of pharmacist prescribing. The course of pharmacy at the University of Malta is at all times kept at the required top notch standards and new graduates can take up present day and future roles both in community pharmacy, hospital services and the pharmaceutical industry with confidence.

The articles dealing with pharmacoeconomic aspects of pharmacy published in this journal indicate clearly that pharmacy needs to evolve and pharmacists prescribing rights, if applied intelligently, may in many cases improve the quality of prescriptions especially in the scenario of the Pharmacy Of Your Choice (POYC) scheme. Pharmacist prescribing undertaken in collaboration with physicians may enhance a more rational pharmacoeconomic drug regimen such as by swapping to a less expensive generic product in certain cases and may lead to the rationalisation of medicines through a medicines review exercise particularly for those patients who are managed by a number of separate specialist clinics. Such scenarios may be a good start to pilot a project in pharmacist prescribing.

Tanya Formosa, Gillian Soler and Yvette Azzopardi working under the supervision of Dr Maurice Zarb Adami looked at pharmacoeconomic aspects which relate to costs of medicines involved in establishing their price, the POYC and the perception of generic medicine use. Doris Baldacchino has shown how the pharmacist could contribute to safer use of NSAIDs. She worked under the direction of Professor Lilian Azzopardi and her work was published as a book by

Lambert Academic Publishing, a leading German publishing house of academic research. The book is entitled *The Use of NSAIDs and Patient Safety*.

While the profession of pharmacy makes these strides forward especially in the areas of pharmaceutical care and clinical pharmacy the contribution of pharmacists to the pharmaceutical industry is also providing significant stimulus to the development of the pharmaceutical industry in Malta. Pharmacists play a key role in all areas of the pharmaceutical industry and are recognised to show excellence in regulatory affairs aspects. The two articles in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) by Simon Serge and Enas Mansor are evidence of the depth and breadth covered by pharmacists in this area. Simon Serge and Enas Mansor carried out their research under my supervision.

The impact of pharmacy education on young students is the key to the future evolvement of pharmacy. The Malta Pharmaceutical Students' Association (MPSA) empowers the students in encouraging them to improve their communication skills – a tool indispensable in evolving from good dispensers to excellent prescribers. The MPSA helps to implement formal education for future pharmacists. A casual look at the students' contribution shows the versatility of pharmacy education. Areas of voluntary active participation by pharmacy students include Mental Health, HIV/AIDS and Dementia. Pharmacy students organised blood donation sessions, Ask your Pharmacist and Know Your Medicines campaigns. The MPSA provided skills training courses with emphasis on communication. The pharmacy students and the staff of the department of pharmacy as well as the pharmacists working in various areas are to be congratulated for the team work which is continuously going on to the benefit of the pharmacy profession.

The Editorial Board would like to recognise the support provided by Actavis sponsors of this journal without whose contribution, it would not have been possible to achieve such a fruitful and rewarding publication.

Professor Anthony Serracino-Inglott