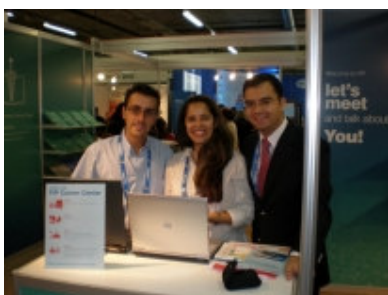




The 68th FIP World Congress took place from the 29 August until the 4th of September 2008 in Basel, Switzerland. The FIP Young Pharmacists Group was pleased to organise a range of educational and social program at the Congress, highlights of which we share with you below.

YPG Educational Forum: The role of pharmacists in primary healthcare in the developing world.

For many communities, the pharmacy is the most accessible or even the sole provider of healthcare advice and services. In some developed countries, pharmacists are considered essential for to optimal primary care delivery. They provide direct patient care, face-to-face counseling and education to patients. In developing countries, several issues undermine the quality and equity of the services provided by pharmacists in primary health care. These include, but are not limited to, the lack of training, regulation and resources. This Forum debated the difficulties and obstacles faced by pharmacists in the developing world and the importance of primary health care.



Five speakers presented different perspectives on the topic at the YPG Educational Forum. Dr. Marthe Everard from the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the topic and reminded the audience about the importance of the WHO/FIP joint handbook entitled "Developing pharmacy practice - A focus on patient care". Her talk was followed by Dr. Stephen Kimatu's, Head of the Medicines Information Department, Pharmacy & Poisons Board at the Ministry of Medical

Services, Kenya. Dr. Kimatu described the role of pharmacists in primary health care in Kenya. He described the challenges faced by pharmacists, which include but are not limited to: inadequate training to encompass roles undertaken, brain drain (rural-urban) and poor remuneration. Dr. Kimatu suggested that the following be provided: support and remuneration for cognitive and other value added services, training to equip pharmacists with current and relevant skills, as well as improving infrastructure and work environments, especially in the public sector.

Nina Viberg from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden described how in a country like Tanzania with a population of 36 million people, only an average of 35 pharmacists is trained every year. Nina presented results from her research which focused on "drug sellers". Nina's research indicates that there is a potential to empower Tanzanian drug sellers to provide effective and safe advice on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) management, especially to male patients. Nina's talk also highlighted how intricate the balance between enforcement of regulation and access to drugs by non trained personnel is.

Billy Futter from Rhodes University, South Africa looked at the extent to which academia has facilitated or restricted the practice of primary health care by pharmacists in the developing world. Billy's presentation explored some of the conceptual and practical challenges that face pharmacy training institutions in producing primary health care-oriented graduates. Examples of innovations were discussed to illustrate the range of options available. Billy concluded that whilst there has been evidence of



political commitment, outcomes have not matched expectations. Despite pockets of excellence and many innovations, good intentions have seldom been converted into primary health care-oriented actions and results. Most pharmacy graduates are stuck in the traditional role of product-oriented dispensers without adopting the patient orientation required by primary health care. They have migrated from rural areas to cities, and from developing countries to developed countries. Curricula have been slow to change and quality assurance systems have not brought about the re-alignment required.

Keith Johnson from Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in the USA provided the non-governmental agency perspective. Keith's presentation described how even in remote regions with few, if any, pharmacies or pharmacists, the local population does access the medicines they need-most often from unregulated, untrained, and unlicensed drug sellers. With thousands of such drug sellers dotting the countryside, Keith highlighted that it is this potential pool of providers that cannot be ignored when structuring sustainable solutions to the shortage of human resources in health. These individuals need to be brought into the formalised health system, not ostracised from it. He shared some examples of how MSH is working with governments and the private sector in East Africa to improve the quality of pharmaceutical products and services in retail drug shops.

The symposium concluded with Keith's remark "the need to craft creative solutions based on each country's specific needs and situation, including the number and geographic location of all types of health professionals, political considerations, strength of professional societies, and health care financing. In a country with few pharmacists, should their role shift to non-pharmacy functions? Maybe-it depends".

For more information and highlights of the Forum, please see the article written by Lindsay McClure for the Pharmaceutical Journal (PJ).

Trends in community pharmacy - debating the future of the profession: Forum for policymakers in pharmacy practice



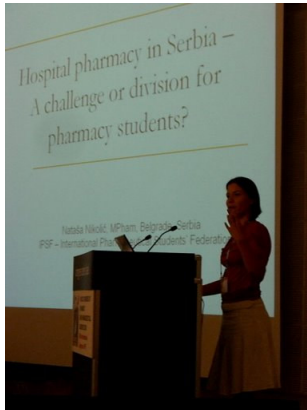
Joint session with the FIP Community Pharmacy Section, Industrial Pharmacy Section and the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation

Following the success of this new format in Beijing in 2007, three contentious community pharmacy topics were chosen. After a brief presentation of each topic, young pharmacists and pharmacy students invited by YPG and IPSF challenged the views

and provided their comments on the topic being discussed. This proved to be a great way to express different viewpoints.

Topic A: Changes in regulatory classification of medicinal products - Lessons learned and the role of the community pharmacist in rational drug use. The topic was introduced by Hubertus Cranz, AESGP, Belgium and responses were provided by Lotte Fønnesbaek, Director, Pharmacy Practice and Health Strategies, Association of Danish Pharmacies, Denmark, Hugo Figueiredo, FIP Young Pharmacists Group, Switzerland and Neveen Abdelghani, IPSF, USA.

The focus of Hubertus' keynote presentation was the switch from prescription to over-the-counter (OTC) status for an increasingly expanding number of medications and classes of medications. While a number of countries have embarked upon this path, questions have abounded regarding the safety of making more medications available directly to consumers and the impact this would have on the pharmacy profession. Alongside common medications used to alleviate allergies, acid disorders, pain/inflammation, migraine headaches, fungal infections, and cholesterol/obesity, Hubertus gave the example of the recent switch from prescription to OTC status in the UK of single dose azithromycin (pack of



2-500mg tablets) for the use of C.trachomatis infections. Respondents' views on the topic were mixed with the majority opinion being against this increasing trend: making more medications accessible to the public does the opposite of empowering consumers to take control of their health; instead, it actually endangers consumers and may even encourage people to bypass the pharmacist if s/he is unavailable to provide consultation. While there can be no doubt of how such a switch puts more responsibility on the shoulders of pharmacists, an amusing story by the last respondent provided optimism and hope that even if we cannot control this new trend, we can, at the very least, use it as an opportunity to improve our own medication knowledge, as well as, the public's image of pharmacists and of the profession as a whole.

Topic B: Information to Patients (Direct to Consumer Advertising). This was introduced by Nicola Bedlington from the European Patients Forum, Switzerland. Responses were provided by Eugene Lutz, FIP Community Pharmacy Section, USA, Christie Robinson, University of California, USA, Georgina Gál, IPSF, Hungary and Ivana Silva, Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union, Belgium. Nicola introduced the topic and the possible dangers of direct to consumer advertising. The United States was used as an example and perhaps as the path not to follow. The respondents all agreed in principle, Eugene Lutz, Christie Robinson and Ivana Silva spoke against direct to consumer advertising and Georgina Gál said direct to consumer advertising can only be useful if supervised very carefully.

Not surprisingly everyone agreed on this topic. The United States was used as an example and perhaps as the path not to follow.

Topic C: Changes in drug supply - Direct to consumer and new channels of distribution. The keynote speaker was Per Troein, IMS, UK. Per described how the pharmaceutical sector is transforming at an unprecedented rate. He highlighted two main factors that have driven these changes - the pressure to contain healthcare cost and the change in the makeup of pharmaceutical portfolios with an increasing focus on specialist-driven products. At the

other end of the spectrum, Hemant Patel, FIP Community Pharmacy Section and current President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, United Kingdom, alluded to how these changes affect pharmacy practice. Richard Bergström, Swedish Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry (LIF), Sweden and Halil Tekiner, FIP Young Pharmacists Group, from Turkey also provided their responses to this very contentious issue which brought up a lot of discussion focusing on the unavoidable changes to distribution channels and how to prepare for these changes.



The forum provided a great opportunity to debate recent changes and upcoming trends in community pharmacy practice and healthcare systems that impact on the profession globally. A third forum for policymakers in pharmacy practice will also take place in the upcoming conference in Istanbul in 2009.

Social Events

The social events in Basel were organised by the swissYPG and sponsored by pharmauisse and Mepha. Over 80 people attended each event. The traditional YPG Dinner was replaced by a YPG Welcome Reception which was held on Sunday 31st August at All Bar One. A few nights later, on Tuesday 2nd September, the IPSF/YPG International Night was held at The Annex, a place described as "the most exclusive garage of the city". The party featured DJ Mozart who played a mixture of classics from the 80's and 90's.

These two events gave us the opportunity to meet some of the young, newly qualified pharmacists who have recently joined us. It allowed young members of FIP to network and meet people from around the world.

Members also participated in the section dinners that were held on Wednesday night as well as the closing event which was held around Museums in Basel. .



YPG Grant for Professional Innovation

The YPG Grant 2008 was awarded to Mr. Luther Gaza, from Zimbabwe. The title of his research is "African Potato and ARVs: Evaluating the effect of African Potato (hypoxis obtuse) on drug metabolism in healthy volunteers". Luther described how the lack of scientific information on herb-drug interactions creates major problems of therapeutic failure, resistance and/or toxicity with antiretroviral drugs considering that the majority of HIV positive people in Zimbabwe use herbal medicines. Hypoxis species are known for immune boosting properties and as such are widely used by HIV positive people and often together with ARVs. The potential clinical effects of such a combination are not known despite the known in vitro effects of Hypoxis species on drug metabolizing enzymes. The aim of Luther's research is to evaluate the clinical significance of the effects of African potato on drug metabolizing enzymes.



More information on the award is available in the opportunities for members section of the website.



YPG Assembly of Members

The YPG business meeting was held on Wednesday 4th September 2008. During this year's business meeting, suggestions for the 2010 YPG Educational Forum were provided as well as ideas and new opportunities for YPG members. The future of the social events as well as the expanding opportunities for young pharmacists within the FIP Sections were also discussed. The winner of the FIP/YPG Grant for professional innovation and the Mike How Award were announced. Last year's Grant winner Christie Robinson was also officially presented with a certificate. Christie presented the results of her research project at the congress.

YPG is recognised as an additional service provided for FIP members who are young professionals and young pharmaceutical scientists. Bridging the knowledge gap of recent FIP members (<5 years) about the Federation's projects and activities is still identified as the target for YPG activities. At the end of the meeting, the Assembly of Members elected the 2008/9 YPG Steering Committee.

They are:

Chair: Sónia Faria, Portugal

Project Coordinator: Zhining Goh, Singapore

Public Relations Officer: Cairo Toledano, Mexico

Click on the links below to download the 2008 Conference Brochure and the 2008 YPG Annual Report:



Congress First Timers

Like previous years we also had the occasion to be present at the first comers' reception organised by FIP. Delegates were encouraged to meet at the FIP Showcase where they could talk to representatives from the various FIP Sections and Special Interest Groups and sign up for events relevant to their sector of the profession.

