

International Social Pharmacy Workshop

Editorial

The Malta College of Pharmacy Practice, will be hosting the 13th International Social Pharmacy Workshop next summer. The concept of social pharmacy is very clearly explained in the article by Professor Ellen West Sørensen and colleagues, who are considered to be pioneers in this field. Malta has successfully hosted a number of pharmacy conferences, however this one is somewhat different and rather special.

It is difficult to describe the feeling at a social pharmacy workshop, because one needs to experience it. This is a meeting of friends, or an extended family, with new friends being always welcome - a situation that lends itself perfectly to our culture and makes Malta the ideal venue for such a meeting. These friends are international leaders, and aspiring leaders in the pharmacy world from

academia and other fields of practice, who have recognised the importance of drawing on various non-traditional disciplines to strengthen the profession of pharmacy thereby enhancing patient care. The focus of this meeting is the patient's wellbeing, which necessitates the pharmacist possessing an excellent knowledge in the traditional subjects forming pharmacy's core knowledge base coupled with knowledge from

humanistic and social sciences. The strength of this conference lies in the quality of work presented, its multidisciplinary approach and the eagerness of participants to share knowledge. While the formal part of the conference provides the backbone of the workshop, it is in the informal-social part that new ideas start to form, new research projects start to take shape and international pharmacy agendas are influenced. We therefore eagerly look forward to hosting this conference, welcoming our foreign friends and having Maltese participants share this experience.

Our imminent membership of the European Union will influence the profession of pharmacy in a number of ways. An article in a previous edition of the *Chronic*ill* presented an overview

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of various relevant issues. The focus in this publication is on consumer medicines information, an area which definitely needs attention in our country. The article by Professor Theo Raynor, who is also very active within the social pharmacy group, provides a highly informative international perspective on consumer medicines information. A significant portion of the article is dedicated to work, that was conducted by his team of researchers in the UK. This work clearly shows that although EU legislation intended to provide consumers with information about their medicines in a clear comprehensive manner, in many cases the leaflets produced fall short of this aim. Professor Raynor's work could well serve as an eye opener to local authorities that would be responsible for adopting and enforcing EU legislation regarding pharmacy in Malta. Professor Raynor and colleagues

will be holding a workshop in Malta entitled 'Expressing the risk of side effects to patients-How to get the message across,' during the International Social Pharmacy Workshop next summer.

The other articles in this issue by our local contributors are highly relevant to our practitioners. On a very topical note, Dr Janet Mifsud, who incidentally was the first Maltese pharmacist to participate in the Social Pharmacy Workshops held in the UK in 1992, provides us with practical updated information regarding the use of drugs in sports. From the clinical aspect, Ms Antonella Tonna concludes her series on the management of Diabetes Mellitus, with an overview of insulin use. I would like to take this opportunity to support the sterling work conducted by Ms Tonna and her young and enthusiastic clinical pharmacy team. The need for clinical pharmacists to become integral

members of the patient care team is indeed a very real one. The regular presence of clinical pharmacists on our wards would not only contribute to the optimal therapeutic management of patients but would lead to a significant decrease in drug related morbidity and mortality. The provision of a regular clinical pharmacy service would provide Maltese patients with additional safeguards to their health and definitely lead to an improvement in their quality of life.

Finally, I would like to thank the editorial board, the members of the council of the Malta College of Pharmacy Practice and our sponsors for their support. I would like to conclude by encouraging Maltese healthcare professionals to participate, experience and enjoy The 13th International Social Pharmacy Workshop in July 2004.

Maria Cordina
Editor-in-chief