

Change in Practice

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Editor

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Over the past few years the pharmaceutical sector in Malta has evolved significantly. Changes have occurred both in the public and private sector; changes in the community practice of pharmacy, changes in the regulatory framework, in industry, in the marketing of medicines and also in structures within the government sector. Change has therefore also occurred in medicines management and care of patients through medicinals. Patients' expectations have also changed.

All these changes affect the day to day practice of health care professionals, yet it is difficult for most of us to keep up with all that is going on due to the limited time available. However, our lack of knowledge may lead to suboptimal practice, dissemination of incorrect information, with conflicting messages reaching patients, adding to their burden and frustration.

This edition of the Journal includes a number of topical issues including the significant reform of the Social Security Act which improves access to medicines. The College is particularly satisfied with the section of the reform related to prescribing criteria which contributes to achieving better patient care through appropriate therapeutic management. The College has been instrumental in bring this issue, which was of significant concern to its members, to the attention of the Directorate for Pharmaceutical Affairs (DPA) through one of its continuing education sessions. We would also like to thank the DPA for constructively addressing this and other issues presented by our members.

The paper on improved antibiotic stewardship highlights the need for health care professionals to make judicious use of the antibiotics available. This invited paper is the MCPP's effort in supporting the relentless work of the National Antibiotics Committee. This article is complemented with case studies relating to the management of infections in primary care, aimed at community pharmacists by Tonna *et al.*

The candid approach taken by Xuereb in the paper on drug use amongst Maltese sports men is an eye opener. The paper addresses a topic which few feel comfortable discussing openly and yet is a problem which requires urgent attention.

In an age where legal issues are becoming increasingly important in daily practice, Zammit explores the law's response to medical treatment that has gone wrong, the degree of responsibility that the law demands of healthcare professionals and the reasons for this.

Flores and Vella Bonanno present the contribution of the Medicines Authority in response to the evolving needs of health care professionals and patients alike. This is presented in the light of European Union directives.

The paper on adherence provides us with a practical approach to enhancing adherence to therapy in patients. This is a highly relevant topic considering the relatively low levels of adherence in patients with chronic disease. A timely intervention may make a significant contribution to improving patient outcomes.

The management of dementia is addressed by Sultana. This is a condition which is increasing in our population. It has a significant impact on patients, carers and the economy. Facts about indwelling catheters are presented by Calleja in a contribution which may be used as a quick reference.

Victor Grech provides an interesting, fascinating and innovative paper about immortality, extreme longevity and pharmacological induction of immortality as depicted in science fiction. This paper emerges from the Humanities and Medical Science Programme (HUMS) which is outlined by Professor Joseph Cacciottolo who is the coordinator of this novel programme.

We would like to invite our readers to comment on these papers on our facebook page.

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