

FACULTY OF PHARMACY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2009

Community engagement is one of the key focus areas in the Faculty of Pharmacy. Academic members of staff in the Faculty contribute to policy decision-making in provincial and national arenas involving the use, management and distribution of medicine and the training of health professionals. Staff members make significant contributions through their involvement with the Medicines Control Council (MCC) and the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC). Staff members are also involved with professional bodies e.g. the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa and its associated bodies such as the South African Association of Hospital and Institutional Pharmacists (SAAHIP) and the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Community engagement is included in the curriculum and students are also encouraged to involve themselves in other voluntary community engagement projects. Awareness of the health-related needs of individuals and communities and the ability to respond to these in a professional manner are important aspects of the education of future pharmacists.

Staff and students are involved in various community engagement activities which are listed below.

PHARMACY STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

This programme is based on service-learning principles and forms part of the Pharmacy Administration and Practice course for final year students. Students interview patients with chronic conditions in their homes. All patients are dependent on public sector health care facilities. This course enables students to understand the social context in which pharmacy is practiced in South Africa and the effect of socio-economic factors on the patients' health and their pharmacotherapy. It also gives students the opportunity to see health and illness from the patients' perspective and to identify patient specific pharmacotherapeutic problems as well as to practise communication and counselling skills. (Course co-ordinator: Mrs Wendy Wrench)

NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SCIFEST)

This elective course is also based on service-learning principles. Students interact with scholars, teachers and members of the public who attend the National Festival of Science and Technology (Scifest) which is held annually in Grahamstown. In 2009, the health promotion exhibit at SciFest focused on HIV & AIDS, hypertension and diabetes. The exhibit proved to be popular with 1361 members of the community taking part in a computer-based quiz. Students also used posters and interactive models to explain the conditions. Information leaflets were also handed out to all those visiting the exhibit. (Course co-

ordinators: Prof Sunitha Srinivas, Dr Catherine Karekezi and Mrs Wendy Wrench)

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

All second and third year Pharmacy Administration and Practice students are required to spend 100 hours during their December vacation in a public or private sector pharmacy. During this time they interact with people and communities and are encouraged to identify areas of concern such as the availability of medicine and patients' accessibility to medicine. They also have the opportunity to see how various diseases affect people and the positive and sometimes negative effects that medicine has on the lives of individuals. (Co-ordinator: Mrs Wendy Wrench)

TRANSNET PHELOPHEPA HEALTH TRAIN

The Transnet Phelophepa Health Train offers Primary Health Care to people living in South Africa, many of whom have minimal access to health care. Students volunteer to assist in the pharmacy on the train. In 2009 Rhodes was allocated eight weeks during which time 16 Rhodes Pharmacy students each spent a week on the train issuing medicines and advising people on the correct use thereof while stationed in Middelrift, Grahamstown, Thaba Nchu, Hamilton, Piketberg and Oudshoorn.

While the train was in Grahamstown, academic staff and fourth year students assisted in reinforcing the directions for use and storage of the medicines issued. Interpreters used in the pharmacy were organised and remunerated by the Faculty. Transport was also provided for members of the Alexandria community to have their health care needs attended to. (Co-ordinator: Mrs Wendy Wrench)

PHARM D PROGRAMME

This postgraduate degree is unique to Rhodes University. Candidates for this degree work on four rotations a year for three years and are intimately involved with patient care at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital in Mdantsane, Frere Hospital in East London, Dora Nginza and Livingstone Hospitals in Port Elizabeth and at Fort England Hospital in Grahamstown. This programme focuses on the essential role of the pharmacist in solving drug related problems both in the hospital and at home once the patient has been discharged.

Two Pharm D students have been appointed to National Committees that are currently dealing with evaluating the Essential Drugs Lists for Adult and Paediatric use.

THE RHODES UNIVERSITY PHARMACY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (RUPSA)

Community engagement initiatives which RUPSA organized in 2009 are listed below.

“Bags of Love”

“Bags of love” is a project where underprivileged children are identified, and items such as clothes, toiletries and stationery to meet the specific needs of each child are purchased or donated. In 2009 RUPSA supported Exholweni, a local childrens’ shelter. The Clicks Pharmacy group donated bags into which the items were put. During Pharmacy week, the RUPSA committee took these bags to Exholweni shelter to hand over to the children.

Checkers Information day:

Leaflets containing information about: organ donation, chronic diseases and the safe disposal of expired and unwanted medicines were used as a means of educating members of the public outside Checkers. Registered pharmacists from the Faculty of Pharmacy were present to assist. Members of the public also gave donations towards the “Bags of Love” project.

Expired medicines collection:

RUPSA supported the initiative which the PSSA (Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa) started, to promote the safe use and disposal of medicines. Information leaflets were handed to the general public at the Checkers information day, and 1st and 2nd year pharmacy students went door to door in the university residences collecting expired medicines. The aim was to collect expired medicine and educate students on safe disposal. The expired medicines were taken to Settlers Hospital, transferred into the correct pharmaceutical waste containers and sent for destruction. Doug Scott, pharmacist at Settlers hospital, assisted with this.

Emergency medical cards distribution to clinics

Clinics in the greater Grahamstown area were visited and RUPSA designed Emergency medical cards which were given to patients with chronic conditions. The public sector primary health care clinics and hospitals visited were Virginia Shumane, Middle Terrace, Joza clinic, Raglan Road Clinic, Extension 7, Settlers Day Hospital and Fort England Hospital. Patients keep these cards containing vital medical information with them. The cards can be shown to health care workers when attending different clinics or other medical health care facilities. The Sisters in Charge at each clinic were extremely grateful and appreciative.

RUPSA clinic day 26th August 2009

The RUPSA clinic day is an annual health promotion activity at Rhodes. Staff and students are encouraged to attend it highlights the need for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

- **Promoting organ donation**

The National Organ Donor Foundation explained the advantages of organ donation.

- **Blood typing and recruitment of blood donors**

The South African Blood Services offered blood typing services and also educated the students and staff about blood donation. Through this they recruited students to become blood donors.

- **Tests provided by pharmacy students**

Various clinical tests such as vision acuity, lung peak flow, reflex tests, colour blindness tests and body mass index measurements were performed by the pharmacy students.

- **Emergency contact detail cards**

RUPSA provided Emergency Medical Cards for students and staff. These were designed to fit in a wallet and contained critical information such as blood type, organ donor status and emergency contact details for the person. Once the details had been completed, the cards were laminated.

Award for community engagement

The Centre for Social Development held a Student Volunteer and Community Engagement Awards evening and RUPSA won the society award for community engagement for 2009.

ACADEMIC INTERNS

An academic internship allows the post-graduate student the opportunity to complete their Masters degree whilst also meeting the requirements of an internship. Academic interns are required to work in a pharmacy, either hospital or community, for a minimum of 400 hours. They also have to pass the pre-registration exam and submit their portfolio for assessment before being deemed competent. The Faculty of Pharmacy encourages its postgraduate students (including foreign students) to undertake their 400 hours of work in the public sector at Settlers Hospital.

PHARMACY FACULTY STAFF AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PHARMACY AND THERAPEUTICS COMMITTEE (PTC)

Meetings are held to discuss issues related to the use of medicines at clinics and hospitals. The Rhodes University Faculty of Pharmacy is involved with the PTC meetings that are held in the Public Health Care sector. Prof Sunitha Srinivas, Emeritus Prof Beverly Wilson, Mrs Wendy Wrench and Mrs Yoland Irwin have been involved in the District PTC meetings. Here representatives from primary health care clinics and hospitals in the Makana Local Services Area get together with members from the Makana Local Services Area District office. Problems are identified and solutions are formulated. Whenever needed, the academics on this committee provide evidence based research articles which can guide the PTC in making informed decisions about the medicines to be included on the essential drugs list.

Professor Srinivas is a member of the Provincial PTC which evaluates the supply and use of essential medicines by the community and formulates policy to improve safety and efficacy.

TRADITIONAL HEALERS

Professor Sunitha Srinivas is involved with a group of traditional healers in the Makana Local Services Area by collaborating with Umthati, an NGO. Issues such as HIV & AIDS as well as the use of antiretroviral medicines are discussed.

PARTICIPATION ON NATIONAL COUNCILS

Professors Izzy Kanfer, Rod Walker and Roy Jobson participate in various activities of the Medicines Control Council (MCC) where the mandate of that council is to protect the public and to ensure that medicines in South Africa are of the necessary quality, safety and efficacy. Input from staff contributes to the development of national policies on medicines. Professor Walker has been actively involved on the Committee of Heads of Pharmacy Schools in South Africa and he is Chairperson of that committee for the period 2009-2011. As Chairman, he serves as a member of the SAPC's Education Committee that deals with various professional issues including continuing education and the certification of short courses for health professionals as well as community service for pharmacists and the educational requirements of pharmacy interns.

M-NET PROGRAMME JULY 19 2009

Professors Jobson and Kanfer participated in a Carte Blanche feature which focussed on problems with complementary medicines – particularly in terms of quality. The programme can be downloaded from:

<http://beta.mnet.co.za/carteblanche/Article.aspx?Id=3722> .

DRUGINFO E-LIST

Several members of the Faculty academic staff have contributed to the Druginfo email listserv which is hosted by Health Systems Trust. This listserv provides health and medicines-related information to healthcare professionals and members of the community.

THOUGHT LEADER BLOG

Professor Jobson has continued to publish the occasional article on his Thought Leader blog. This is read by a wide cross section of the community. In 2009 two of his articles were directly related to medicines issues: Seven Fat Years -- <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/royjobson/2009/03/07/seven-fat-years/> and An Open Letter to the Medicines Control Council -- <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/royjobson/2009/04/15/an-open-letter-to-the-mcc-from-concerned-academics-and-others/>

RU-TV

Professor Jobson participated in a documentary which formed part of the Department of Journalism's RUTV4 Documentary Film Festival, which was open to the public.

INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The International Pharmacy Federation (FIP) represents the interest of 2 million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists world wide. A major challenge has been identified in terms of the academic capacity to develop the pharmaceutical workforce. The FIP's Pharmacy Education Taskforce has been working since 2006 to improve this situation through developing partnerships (for example with

the WHO and UNESCO), policy instruments and conducting research and developing policies. Associate Professor Billy Futter is the strategic lead of the taskforce.

Professor Dowse is also a member of one of the working groups of the FIP.

Professor Walker continues to serve in a number of capacities of the Controlled Release Society.

WATER AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Safety of the drinking water supply and environmental water quality have been of major concern to the population of different parts of South Africa in recent years. Lack of adequate drinking water infrastructure, increasing population density in informal settlements, and the use of untreated water pose risks to the water supply, and public health. To prevent panic, and help develop the needed scientific expertise at Rhodes University, Dr Roman Tandlich of the Faculty of Pharmacy in collaboration with other departments, has been involved in providing the expert opinion on water-related issues to the community of Rhodes (undergraduate research projects in the Department of Environmental Science and the Department of Chemistry), as well as to the local community of Grahamstown, Bathurst, and Port Alfred.