Since establishment in 1949, IPSF now represents over 313,000 pharmaceutical students and recent graduates in over 80 countries worldwide.

IPSF is the leading international advocacy organisation of pharmacy students promoting improved public health through provision of information, education, networking, and a range of publication and professional activities.

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Lead, Teach and be a pharmacist

“The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life.”

Plato

Dear readers!

What does the future hold for the Federation? When searching for those who can provide us with a glance to the future, we usually end up on known thinkers: from Plato to Camus, from William Shakespeare to Malcolm X.

Some say that we need to be prepared now, and that this part of our lives is about education. Therefore, to think about IPSF future, maybe we should ask ourselves what will we teach the pharmacy students, and mainly those who will decide to join IPSF.

Thinking about the three pillars of the Federation – pharmacy education, professional development and public health, we can easily see how the education can be a part of the process, or even the objective of it. But maybe, it is a nice way to think about each activity as a part of the educational process.

From these three different pillars’ perspective, our students need to be educated – educated to be pharmacists, to be future leaders and to be educators.

We enhance the knowledge of future pharmacists with encouraging them to share therapeutic and scientific knowledge, through campaigns, clinical skills and patients counselling events, research activities and posters. Our experience and knowledge sharing, something so specific from our worldwide experience, adds to pharmacists and expands our view of health.

The leaders, except for the born leaders which appear once every generation, are educated through the Leaders in Training or Coaching the Contact Persons, and are given the opportunity to lead in IPSF positions as Committee Members, Coordinators and, especially on the Executive Committee. Moreover, this leading opportunity is brought closer to the students, in their own organizations as Contact Persons and Student Exchange Committee.

And in every single opportunity which we establish for future pharmacists and leaders, the possibility to be an educator appears showing all our possibilities. We can teach during our campaigns, presentations, while telling our histories and experiences, while giving trainings and handovers.

Forming pharmacists, leaders and educators is the true way to prepare and determine where IPSF’s future is going. And after a year of work, I want to share with you the outstanding work some IPSF Team members and Contact Persons have done. They lead, teach and show the pharmacist of the future.

Mr. Lucas Ercolin
IPSF Chairperson of Internal Relations 2015-2017

Emergency Disaster medical care.

~What can we do as a pharmacist??~

Karin Shibuya

The Great East Japan Earthquake happened on March 11th, 2011. In all, 15,894 people died and 2,562 people are still missing due to the tsunami.

After March 11th, there continued to be people who suffered trauma as a result of building collapses. However, there are many people who continue to struggle to manage chronic disease after March 11th, often as a result of difficulty in medication transportation systems that were destroyed by the tsunami. Transportation systems were restored as soon as possible and many medication relief supplies were delivered to disaster areas. However, many of these drugs were unfamiliar to the doctors and patient medication histories were washed away by the tsunami.

In these circumstances, pharmacists were asked about the proper uses of medications. After March 11th, pharmacists were recognized as one of the important clinicians when disasters happen. Furthermore, last month a strong earthquake happened in Kumamoto. At this time, pharmacists used their experiences from the March 11th earthquake to handle the situation and provide a more rapid response.

Mobile pharmacies arrived at disaster area the day after the earthquake and received prescriptions from the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and military medical teams, then dispensed them. Mobile pharmacies are operated from a truck where medications can be stored in place of the buildings that may have been lost in the disaster.

When March 11th happened, they could gather pharmacists and medicines, but there was nowhere to dispense the medications from, they could not use the medications to the fullest extent. Mobile pharmacies were developed by the Miyagi Pharmaceutical Association based on the March 11th Earthquake.

In disaster areas, many people need their medicines, but many patients don't remember the name of medications that they take on every day. In such situation, pharmacists can help patients to identify their medicines by talking with them. If patients have one dose of the packaged medicine, pharmacists can identify them by formulation and colour. When one medicine is out of stock, pharmacists can help patients to find the similar medication, but many patients don't remember the names of the medicines, but many patients don't remember the names of the medicines, but many patients don't remember the names of the medicines.

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The pharmacist has a role in the disaster area that is different from doctors and nurses. Pharmacists are becoming a more integral part of the health care team.
Since its foundation, ASEPA is at the service of health, the population and pharmacy students. It is within this latter context that the idea of organizing a ceremony to honour and reward graduates for their efforts naturally imposed itself to us. ASEPA students were previously receiving their diplomas from the pharmacy department, issued by an officer of the faculty, without any ceremony. It was similar to retrieving a simple paper at the city council.

This event consists of a ceremony at the auditorium of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, followed by an evening gala.

It is an opportunity to show our peers that students are more than capable to organize big ceremonies, relying only on their hard work and skills. Indeed, whether it is the organization of the event, which is assured by an organizing committee composed of 25 members, or the implementation and moderation of the gala and the ceremony, everything is achieved by ASEPA’s members. Even the musical breaks were performed by pharmacy students, who are part of the symphonic and Andalusian orchestras of the National Fine Arts School.

Furthermore, the ceremony’s organizing committee follows the Secretary General’s instructions, who is the maestro and is responsible for harmonizing tasks and ensuring consistency within the team. As a result, tasks are accomplished in time, and every goal achieved before the deadline so that everything proceeds like a perfect symphony during the day of the event.

This year, we introduced in the event program, the famous Pharma Got Talent! The stage was given to the graduates to express all of the emotions they felt, the memories they accumulated, and the crazy and euphoric moments they shared, through performances of humorous shows and songs. It was an amazingly moving and heartfelt moment.

For the last 4 years, the organization of the graduation ceremony has become a must in ASEPA’s annual calendar and is awaited every year with impatience.

Hello IPSF,

I’m pleased to share with you my experiences in membership promotion, which has been set as one of the priorities that must be done throughout my mandate as a Regional Relations Officer!

I was the Contact Person for my association FPSA-Sudan for the 2014-15 year, which helped me a lot in building extensive relations with other Contact Persons and pharmacy students within and outside of the region. I’ve always been keen to be involved with all of the countries in EMRO within IPSF and to expand our member’s associations and our pharmacy profession opportunities.

I started by setting a target for myself at the beginning of the mandate, and a list of the countries in EMRO that are not members of the Federation yet. After a lot of attempts to reach these countries we got lucky to have contacts there but, only one association was capable and willing to apply for the membership this year, DPSU-United Arab Emirates.

I’ve been in a continuous contact with DPSU before they started the official application procedure, starting with a long Skype meeting about what IPSF is and how to be involved. I’ve shared with them the Official Documents so they can prepare all the questions they have in mind to be discussed in another Skype meeting. After preparing all the needed documents we’ve moved to the official application procedure via email.

DPSU-United Arab Emirates are now officially applying for membership, and hopefully their application form will be accepted at the next General Assembly.
Pharma-heroes: Pharmacy students’ gatherings can also help and improve people’s lives

As pharmacy students, we’ve always been told about how important our career as a healthcare professional will be. But, is being a pharmacist the only moment when we can help people and make an impact in their lives? Must we start providing our knowledge and cast “superpowers” as superheroes of health only after graduation?

Well, that is something that here in Argentina at AEFRA, we think we should change and in fact, ever since you become a pharmacy student, you can actually help people.

At the Pharmacy Students’ Argentinian Congress, we held a humanitarian initiative that we called: “AEFRA Solidario” (AEFRA Solidary) in which every attendee of the event was invited to collaborate by donating items such as non-perishable food, clothing for children and adults, school supplies, toys, and others. On the 6th and 7th of November, some donations collected were taken to the «El Tartagal» neighbourhood, from General Güemes in the province of Chaco, Argentina. There, 42 Wichí families live (the indigenous people of the province). Then, on the 13th of November, we delivered other parts of the donations to a kindergarten class from Roque Saenz Peña city, where 150 children ages 3 to 5 years old, attend in the morning and afternoon.

AEFRA Solidary was a beautiful experience where we met people who welcomed us with open arms, great kindness and affection. We feel their gratitude and the real impact of our help in their lives, moving our hearts and encouraging us to keep doing these kinds of events.

Pharmacy students’ gatherings don’t only have an academic goal, but also provide a favourable environment for humanitarian activities that are important in forming future pharmacists, aiming to instil strong humanitarian and sanitary values for caring for patients. We can say that a Congress...

«Besides giving us knowledge and friends, can also give back to people some of the plenty they give to us».
Dear IPSFers,

As we are approaching the upcoming Regional Symposiums and the IPSF World Congress the PD team has been incredibly busy preparing workshops and writing cases for the Patient Counselling, Clinical Skills and Compounding Events. We are seeing more PD Events than ever before at the Regional level with every Regional Symposium hosting some type of PD Event. For the first time ever, we are also hosting Compounding Events during at least two of the symposia! This is a huge accomplishment for the Professional Development portfolio and IPSF as a whole. Of course, you can expect all of the traditional PD Workshops and Competitions to be held during the IPSF World Congress in Zimbabwe.

We have also been working very closely with the European Regional Office and the CZPSA to organize the 3rd IPSF Trainers Development Camp which will occur in Prague from July 2nd-6th, 2016. This 5-day event will establish and empower a new international generation of IPSF trainers to further develop our training program within the Federation. As new leaders within our organization these trainers will go on to host Leaders’ in Training events, individual training workshops and pass on their knowledge to future IPSF leaders. Our goal is to give all pharmacy students the opportunity to develop and practice these skills with their peers from around the world in a fun and safe learning environment.

Viva la Pharmacie

Stephanie

Professional Development Chairperson 2014–2016

IPSF TDC 2016 held in Huye, Rwanda

It sounds a good tone since when we learnt that RPSA, Rwanda would host the IPSF Trainers Development Camp 2016. With no experience and a clear picture of what TDC looks like, we accepted the good challenge and went on to organize such an existing event which saw 15 participants from 3 different countries forged into IPSF Trainers committed to delivering leadership trainnings around the World. And guess what? It was consecutively the second IPSF event to be held in Rwanda just few months after the epic 4th IPSF African Pharmaceutical Symposium.

As I said, IPSF TDC 2016 came as a surprise to our Association and we had no time for enough preparations. We started as soon as possible, coming up with concept, budget, Call for application and other basic stuff for any other event. Thanks to IPSF (especially the chairperson of AFRO, IPSF Professional Development Chairperson and IPSF Training Coordinator) for their incredible support in each and every step of the preparations of this event.

Challenges...

On trainers, at then, IPSF had a shortage of trainers and few who were on board had some other commitments which could not let them make it to event and we as the organizing committee and IPSF responded wisely while embracing good changes of involving other non IPSF trainers in case they understand well the content to be delivered in trainings; that is where Mr. UMUNNAKWE Henry, the former president of AFRO, IPSF African Pharmaceutical Symposium.

Finally, the day arrived, international participants made it for the first time to the country of thousand hills. A day after TDC officially kicked off, awesome topics, ranging from leadership, cultural awareness, and communication skills to presentation skills and training delivery were discussed, teambuilding games, energizers and ice breakers were part of fun life as well. Facilitators and trainees were very much vibrant and that is what made IPSF TDC – Rwanda, one of the best but most importantly, the future trainers presented way forward and are more committed to delivering trainings and becoming professional trainers.

Hosting TDC in Rwanda was milestone achieved on association level and personal level because of challenges faced, fun and learning acquired from it.
THE ONLINE PCE EXPERIENCE

“This made me more confident, wholehearted, completely thankful for being a Pharmacist….”

The Online PCE is an online IPSF event where students develop their patient counselling skills by interacting and discussing patient case scenarios. This event is a great initiative aimed at giving every student the opportunity to practice patient counselling as opposed to the limited opportunity they get in World Congress and Regional Symposia due to space and time constraints.

This year’s Online PCE was a three-week long interaction among students from across the globe.

The Professional Development team is pleased to feature the winners of the event as they share their experience. Read what they have to say!

Rana Kamel El Nady, 3rd year pharmacy student, EPSF Egypt

“I think the experience will be useful for pharmacy students to remember and gain knowledge about medicines….”

For me, Online PCE was an interesting experience. It was like written discussions among us students around the globe and that attracted me to participate. It gave me a clear look on how patient counselling has reached different countries. Excitingly, waiting for the cases to be posted, trying to answer them, thinking of how I’ll satisfy the patient and myself as a pharmacist, interacting with others; this whole thing was an enjoyable challenge.

This made me more confident, wholehearted, completely thankful for being a pharmacist and more determined to help others throughout my journey. So, thank you IPSF PD Committee for giving us the opportunity and helping me to realize how much a pharmacist can be a partner in health. Also, thank you PD members in EPSF for teaching me the sense of patient counselling.

Alíén Rodríguez, AEFRA, Argentina

“With every week that passed, I felt that my counselling skills had improved….”

In my case, it was a very rewarding experience as pharmacists that we will be in future. I did my professional practice so some cases were familiar to me and others weren’t. In some cases, for example in the case of a patient with basal cell carcinoma, I had to read about the melanoma and the medication so as to give professional and thorough counselling. So, I think the experience will be useful for pharmacy students to remember and gain (if the student has not yet studied pharmacology) knowledge about medicines. And most importantly, it is very useful to learn patient counselling because, in the university we study a lot of medicines but we don’t have real contact with cases like that.

These cases were very similar to those experienced by patients who come to the pharmacy for our help, so it was very helpful to us as students. It also made us aware of the importance of pharmacists to the patient and the health system. I am very happy for taking part in it.

Razan Hashim, FPSA, Sudan

“I found this year’s event as a great way to reaffirm my knowledge in pharmacology and how to counsel patients….”

It was a wonderful experience to participate in the Online PCE. With every week that passed, I felt that my counselling skills had improved. Also, it was fun and beneficial, screening through the answers of colleagues from other countries of the world and comparing them to my answers.

This event encouraged me to practice more and more on my counselling skills and I can’t wait to challenge myself again at the World Congress to be held in Zimbabwe.

Lastly, I would like to thank IPSF for giving us such a splendid opportunity and I am looking forward to the next Online PCE.

Viva la Pharmacie!

Pharm. Mr. Roberto E. Chaile, IPSF Contact Person for AEFRA, Argentina 2015-2016

“With every week that passed, I felt that my counselling skills had improved….”

On the other hand, I learned new concepts like those for counsel in case 3 and case 4, where I had to “study” a little bit to give proper and useful counsel to patients. That is the main goal of this event, to learn and realize that pharmacy profession is a day by day learning activity, where you will always learn and make your knowledge and counselling skills better by an unlimited growing, gaining year by year a wider professional experience and also getting wiser.

I personally want to thank all AEFRA members for their wide and active participation, and IPSF PD Committee who awarded and recognized all our efforts and enthusiasm spelled by participating in the event.
To know that our knowledge and assertiveness in counsel are fundamental tools in caring for patients and making their lives better is the most encouraging reason to keep going further in our academics, clinical formation and soft skills, aiming to be the best professionals as pharmacists and providing the best health care within our capacity!

Ante Begonja, 4th year pharmacy student, CPSA, Croatia

“To the good thing is that all pharmacy students were able to participate regardless of their year of study.”

During April of 2016, I had an extraordinary opportunity to take part in the IPSF Online PCE. The cases themselves were not that challenging, but the emphasis was on counselling, rather than the therapy. This unique type of dynamic and interactive learning is often neglected in education systems, and we are aware of the role of patient counselling and soft skills in our future careers. This was a terrific opportunity to learn about different counselling techniques in various countries worldwide, which makes this multicultural experience much richer.

What makes us stand out are the skills we gain during these kinds of events; teamwork, time management, prioritizing, motivation, compassion, empathy and patience. With many more important messages to take home, and many to implement in our future work life, I can only say that I can’t wait for the next Online PCE.

Ante Rogosic, 4th year pharmacy student, CPSA, Croatia

“I found a Patient Counselling Event Online remarkable as an idea due to the fact that it was available to every IPSF member worldwide with an internet access.”

Online PCE was a great opportunity to enrich my knowledge of pharmacy in practice. It gave me the confidence to use my preknowledge that I gained in pharmacy school. In fact, it is a good preparation for a real case which could happen tomorrow in a pharmacy. It also educates you on how to counsel a patient and how to improve your communication skills towards patients. I am glad that I have participated and strengthened my skills in patient counselling and I advise everyone to join next year.

Anamaria Tegeltija, 5th year pharmacy student, CPSA, Croatia

“One of the strongest points is the ability to show your knowledge without fear of being wrong.”

To begin with, I find a Patient Counselling Event Online remarkable as an idea due to the fact that it was available to every IPSF member worldwide with an internet access. The competitors were able to share and challenge their knowledge and advices on the same therapy treatment with their colleagues all over the world, hence that kind of professional experience is priceless and praiseworthy. Furthermore, it was very useful to meet a few very common trends of medicines since I am currently doing the internship in a Croatian Pharmacy where tourists’ population is quite high, therefore it turned out to be very educational. I would like to commend the Professional Development Team for the conception of the cases because of its everyday life potential and a professional but still compassionate tone which represents proper pharmaceutical care. Nevertheless, I would suggest the cases to gradually complicate towards the end of the competition as well to include a few more commonly prescribed interactions in the therapy we can prevent. Secondly, I would make the remaining comments visible to the competitors only after the results of each case has been released. Doing so, every one of us can implement a few useful information in our professional development without having been given some crucial counselling ideas in advance by other colleagues.

On the other hand, I found myself learning and repeating not only facts from our profession as an entertainment, but also the adequate human approach to each patient with some kind of health ailments. Consequently, it added more points to the extraordinary work done organizing this PCE. Finally, I would like to recommend precaution regarding the given time frame in order to improve the subsequent Online PCE.

In conclusion, I would like to warmly congratulate the Professional Development Team on the great work they did during the 3 weeks’ competition process in April and the entire organizational procedure they put through. Lastly, I want to thank the IPSF PCE Coordinator, Miss Juliet Onyinyechi Obi, on her promptness and availability whenever a question was posed and her kindness while accepting some suggestions given.

In the end, I found this such an easy and entertaining way of a lifelong learning process and professional development. I am glad I took part in this year’s Online PCE and hoping to continue it in the future.

Martina Laus, IPSF Contact Person for CPSA, Croatia

CPSA has loved the idea of having Online PCE from the moment we heard rumours about it, until the moment it was ready for promotion. Technology has nowadays become an integral part of a pharmacist’s job, so the modern concept of online patient consultations makes this project very urban and reachable to every pharmacy student around the globe. One of the strongest points is the ability to show your knowledge without fear of being wrong, while on long term basis it helps us deal with issues before they become real-life problems. Every participant from my association commented on the professionalism behind the organization in combination with the simplicity in posing one’s treatment suggestion. Support in my association has been great Miss Petra Orlic has put a lot of effort in making this project appealing to our students, and ultimately it was successful.
Introducing IPSF Compounding Event (CE) sponsor:
PCCA (Professional Compounding Centers of America)
by Clement Haack, IPSF Compounding Event (CE) coordinator 2015-16

As last year’s Compounding Event (CE) coordinator, I would like to acknowledge and thank our CE sponsor: PCCA (Professional Compounding Centers of America).

PCCA is an international company based in the USA which integrates the complete resource for independent compounding pharmacies, providing high-quality products, next-level education and above-and-beyond support.

It was incorporated in 1981 by a network of pharmacists, united by a commitment to help patients who require commercially unavailable or personalized medications.

The company’s members are more than 4,000 independent community pharmacists in the United States, Canada, Australia, and other countries around the world.

IPSF will be able to build on this collaboration to help patients find the medications they need — and then some. What began in 1981 as a small network of compounding pharmacists every step of the way — it has grown to over 4,000 member pharmacies worldwide.


To be able to take part, compete and win the CE at the 63rd World Congress in Taiwan, do not forget to register for the event, places are limited!

PCCA provides member pharmacists and prescribers more products, education, and support than any other compounding organization. We have been the innovative compounding leader for 35 years, developing new industry-changing bases and equipment. With studies to back up our quality products, we are proud to have helped compounders solve some of the toughest patient challenges.

At PCCA, we have made it our business to support compounding pharmacists every step of the way — and then some. What began in 1981 as a small network of pharmacists, has grown to over 4,000 member pharmacies worldwide.

While our members have access to over 4,560 active and non-active chemicals — more than any other compounding pharmacy supplier — the competitive advantage we bring our members is the industry's most comprehensive quality control and assurance program we bring to those chemicals every day. Find out more at: www.pccarx.com/quality.

Here is the Quality Difference that PCCA Brings to Member Pharmacies Every Day:

**Every Lot — Not Just the Initial Lot — Is Tested**

We do not solely rely upon the USP or manufacturer’s label to ensure the quality of the chemicals received.

Every lot received is tested using Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy, ultraviolet-visible analysis, melting point, specific gravity, solubility, and chemical identifications.

Additional testing of APIs is done using actual formulations.

14 Checks and Analyses are Performed on Each Chemical Lot

Nine qualitative and quantitative analyses are performed on every incoming chemical lot before it is released for repacking or sale.

Each lot is tested against the certificate of analysis (C of A), including: USP, EP, NF, FCC, ACS, and PCCA standards.

After initial testing, all results are reviewed for accuracy by a second QC analyst.

Chemicals are tested only by degree Chemical Analysts.

PCCA Rejects Almost 250 Chemical Lots Per Year

PCCA is fully registered by the FDA, DEA, and State of Texas as a manufacturer and follows current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP).

Only FDA-registered and GMP-certified manufacturers are used for the purchase of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs).

**Proven Bases for More Patient Options**

With access to more than 60 proprietary bases — unavailable to other compounders — your PCCA pharmacy will have more options to treat patients, from VersaBase® topicals, specifically designed for compounded HRT delivery, to Lipoderm®, the industry’s only transdermal proven to deliver four drugs simultaneously, to PracaSil™-Plus, our base for scar therapy backed by a number of studies showing its effectiveness.

**Comprehensive Education is the Key to Compounding**

Continuing education is the key to quality compounding solutions. PCCA pharmacies have access to more Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)-accredited continuing education than anyone else.

In 2016, PCCA will conduct more than 115 ACPE-accredited sessions across the United States, Canada and Australia, as well as scores of other training sessions from clinical and technician related topics to sales and marketing.

**Complete Support**

Member pharmacies have access to the industry’s best support with more than 30 pharmacists and pharmaceutical chemists on-hand to answer the toughest compounding and clinical questions.

**Advocacy**

Through our dedicated Public Affairs department, PCCA advocates for each member’s right to compound through such things as regulatory and insurance support, product availability, and crisis intervention. We work hard on your behalf to raise awareness of compounding and to protect your practice and your patients manage this vital but complex process while providing the care and protection your patients need.
The 2017 FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences will give pharmacists the chance to get to grips with the ‘soul of pharmacy’ in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Session chair and co-organiser, Betty Chaar, pharmacist and senior lecturer in professionalism in pharmacy at the University of Sydney, Australia, tells us more about this year’s congress theme and how we can develop the future of pharmaceutical science.

The origin of pharmacy and pharmaceutical science lies in the creation and supply of medicines to treat patients. However, there is far more to the profession than that. This year’s FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences theme is ‘Medicines and beyond! The soul of pharmacy’, and it seeks to explore how pharmacists can go beyond medicines and be there to offer further services, advice and help to patients, adding even more value to their treatment and well-being.

More to pharmacy than medicines

“Medicines are the heart and soul of the profession. Without medicines, there really would be no profession of pharmacy,” explains Professor Chaar. “However, there’s now more to medicines than just the ingestion of a tablet or administration of a treatment. Pharmacy today encompasses services, electronic applications, new devices and gadgets, prevention measures and disease state management; going beyond the basic medicine.” With pharmacy and medicine comes a duty of care and the requirement to heal, and that is where the soul of the discipline lies. She adds: “Patients come to pharmacy for relief of pain and suffering, and we are able to help with the aid of medicines.”

Threat to the soul

Over time, we have seen increasing corporatisation of the pharmaceutical profession. Some fear that potential financial gain distracts from patient care that lies at the core of the soul of pharmacy. Professor Chaar notes, “The soul is in danger of deterioration at the hands of those who wish to render the profession an entrepreneurial business; commercialising our services and patient relationships to a point of no return. We do need to remind ourselves of our professionalism and our duty of care towards our patients, regardless of whether there is financial return or broad margins of profit.”

Collaboration cures all

With these concerns in mind, pharmacists continue to work together to ensure that the core values of medicine, healing and care are maintained and nurtured. For example, there are scientific advancements under development that will bring precision pharmacotherapy to patient groups, bringing specificity to a previous one-size-fits-all model. For this to be a success, academic researchers, with scientific and theoretical knowledge, are aligning with practitioners who have the practical expertise and personal skills, to bring the right treatments to the right patients.” Encouraging this level of interdisciplinary collaboration within the profession is set to improve patient care and treatment efficacy globally.

Education and innovation are key

To truly nurture the soul, pharmacists must constantly expand and update their knowledge base and skill set. In this way, patients can be sure that the treatment they receive is the best available, and tailored if necessary. The education of pharmacists must also address their attitudes and values and motivate them to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and attention to patient care. With these instruments, pharmacists can offer the most appropriate medicines, care and advice as required by patients. Professor Chaar believes: “We need to be aware of the contemporary issues the profession struggles with — not hide in our dispensaries — and maintain a spirit of innovation and remodelling to ensure we are up to date with the times. We need to realistically understand and abide by ethical principles of practice. And, importantly, we need to reign in the commercialisation of our profession, and remind ourselves of our duties to our communities and the human race at large.”

Join us in Seoul

Pharmacists from across the globe will gather to discuss key issues related to the “soul of pharmacy” at the 2017 FIP world congress between 10 and 14 September. They will also discuss precision pharmacotherapy; pharmacy services, or value-added services; smart pharmacy and how technologies improve pharmacy; and will delve into the properties of natural medicines and their regulation. Professor Chaar notes: “This congress is unique due to the exceptional and inimitable gathering of pharmacists from around the world that come together as attendees, speakers and workshop leaders. The knowledge shared is cutting edge and of the highest quality. Each session has been chosen after meticulous analysis and screening. The people you will meet and networks you will set up are invaluable.”

77th FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Seoul, Republic of Korea
10-14 September 2017

Welcome to Seoul

Seoul, the heart of the nation and home to 10 million national and foreign residents is a remarkable world-class city where the Korean Wave pop culture phenomenon or Hallyu, attracts many from all over the world.

www.fip.org/seoul2017

In this session, congress delegates will learn about global variations and challenges that are inherent in the 21st century and beyond. Congress delegates will learn in detail about many new ways that pharmacy professionals can add the value of pharmacists must also address their attitudes and values, regulation and ethical considerations defining responsible use, and delve into the properties of natural medicines, the evidence base, and the regulatory background for natural medicines, the evidence base, and therapeutic interventions to an absolute demand for high quality help and advice.

Pharmacists from across the globe will gather to discuss key issues related to the “soul of pharmacy” at the 2017 FIP world congress between 10 and 14 September. They will also discuss precision pharmacotherapy; pharmacy services, or value-added services; smart pharmacy and how technologies improve pharmacy; and will delve into the properties of natural medicines and their regulation. Professor Chaar notes: “This congress is unique due to the exceptional and inimitable gathering of pharmacists from around the world that come together as attendees, speakers and workshop leaders. The knowledge shared is cutting edge and of the highest quality. Each session has been chosen after meticulous analysis and screening. The people you will meet and networks you will set up are invaluable.”
United against the stigma of depression

The EPSA and IPSF Mental Health Campaign 2016

Depression is a common illness worldwide, with an estimated 350 million people affected. It is different from usual mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to challenges in everyday life. Depression is not a weakness, it is a serious mental health condition.

In May, IPSF EuRO and EPSA joined forces in order to spread awareness and fight against the stigma of depression. It was the second year that EPSA and IPSF organised a mental health campaign together. During a week-long awareness campaign, there were different posts and materials to be shared with our members and on social media aiming to educate people about symptoms, treatment and debunking myths about depression. Depression can cause the affected person to suffer greatly and function poorly at work, at school and in the family. Two testimonies of pharmacy students were describing how it feels to live with and suffering from depression. As a special highlight of this week EPSA and IPSF hosted a webinar, inviting Mr. Hadar Zaman, mental health pharmacist from the United Kingdom as a speaker who gave participants an insight about the crucial role a pharmacist can play in mental health. We had about 45 participants and received great feedback.

Many people live with depression, often silently as they are ashamed or afraid of the reaction of others around them. With our photo challenge, we aimed to spread awareness and fight against the stigma surrounding depression and its true origin that incorrectly defined this serious mental health condition for too long. More than 200 individuals and several associations joined our call sharing pictures and videos under the Hashtag #UnitedAgainstDepression stating that depression is not a weakness, but a disease.

I would like to thank Ms. Elena Popa, EPSA Public Health and Social Services Coordinator for the great collaboration and everyone else who joined our challenge and contributed to a successful Mental Health Awareness Campaign. Mental health is a growing concern, by the year 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that depression will be the number two cause of ‘lost years of healthy life’ worldwide. As future pharmacists, it is on us to create a change of mindset about depression and people who suffer from it. Let us stand up united for the people who need it the most, creating a change for our patients.

NYABHUSAGWE RIZIKI MULIMBA

IPSF AfRO Regional Projects Officer 2015–2016

HEALTH IN MEN

I recently worked on a project proposal to create awareness and promote the screening of prostate cancer in the South Coast of Kenya due to an increased number of deaths caused by late diagnosis of end stage prostate cancer. During attempts to get men as members of the audience, it was observed that men have poorer attendance in health campaigns and counselling sessions compared to women. This led to one big question, are men poor health seekers?

Well yes, men have poor health-seeking behaviour.

It is about acknowledging and accepting the problem that is where the big bottleneck is. Most of them are often in denial and believe that it is nothing serious whenever they notice anything wrong about their health condition. Research shows that men are often slow in noticing signs of illness, and when they do, they are less likely to consult their physician. Forty percent of male respondents will only seek medical consultations when being prompted by their female partner.

So, what does it mean for the male species, will they continue to present cases of late chronic diseases on our watch? It’s time we stepped up our health services and seek to create an environment that will encourage men to seek health services more often. Some of the reasons they do not include lack of awareness of common diseases affecting them, lack of sufficient and efficient preventive healthcare ethos in the current delivery of general practice, a belief that men are not socialized into health culture from an early age like their female counterparts and thus less likely to develop the confidence to seek preventative help, as well as the fact that men are less likely to interpret disease symptoms arising from physical symptoms which may be a form of denial.

As pharmacists who are part of the healthcare team, we need to be innovative and initiate health awareness campaigns tailored for male patients. Such may include the distribution of fliers in areas where men often visit such as malls, bars/restaurants, sports arenas and workplaces (mines for example, where most of the workforce is composed of men) Another approach would be to encourage women to remind their male friends/family members to go for check-ups or establishing clinics for men, set up adjacent to antenatal clinics in our health facilities where they can receive services as their wives come in for their monthly clinics during pregnancy.

Men also need to make personal health a priority, so it is important to make personal health awareness a priority for both men and women to allow for a healthier world.

Lara-Turiya Seitz

IPSF EuRO Regional Projects Officer 2015–16
Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious bacterial disease caused by the bacillus *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mt). It belongs to a group of closely related organisms including *M. africanum, M. bovis* and *M. microti*. The bacteria typically affect the lungs (pulmonary TB), accounting for over 85% of the infections. However, it can also attack other parts of the body, such as the kidneys, spine, and brain (extrapulmonary TB). If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal. Consequently, the frequency of TB deaths is unacceptably high. With a timely diagnosis and correct treatment, almost all people with TB can be cured.

TB is a major global health problem. It causes ill-health among millions of people each year and ranks alongside the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as a leading cause of death worldwide. Overall, a relatively small proportion (5-15%) of the estimated two to three billion people infected with *M. tuberculosis* will develop the TB disease during their lifetime. Globally in 2014, there were an estimated 9.6 million incident cases of TB: 5.4 million among men, 3.2 million among women and 1.0 million among children. In the same year, 1.5 million deaths were reported globally: 1.1 million deaths among people who were HIV-negative, and 390,000 deaths among people who were HIV-positive. TB is usually treated with a regimen of drugs taken for 6 months to 2 years, depending on the type of infection.

It’s in this regard that Rwanda Pharmaceutical Students Association (RPSA) targeted one of the most vulnerable group of people, prisoners, and educated them about the preventive measures for TB. RPSA worked with the correctional services (prisons) in the entire southern province, but also added presentations on blood pressure, irrational medicine use and homosexuality. The targeted correctional services were in Nyanza, Nyamagabe, Huye and Muhanga.

Dear IPSFers,

It’s been more than a half of year since I was elected as Chairperson of Student Exchange, and I can proudly say that we have managed to achieve real progress concerning the Student Exchange Programme.

This period has been a very stressful one, but yet challenging and productive, as together with the Student Exchange Committee (SEC) Dream Team and the Student Exchange Officers (SEO), we tried to tackle different issues about SEP that required our immediate attention. From promotion to online meetings and trainings, updates of the existing documents, discussions and debates on how to make SEP a better programme, we all focused on finding realistic and efficient solutions, so that students can enjoy a well-structured programme and can benefit from all of the opportunities offered by SEP.

Until the end of the mandate, many things are still needed to be accomplished, but I am positive that with the support of such great SEOs, SEC members and Executive Committee, all of our objectives will be met and a bright new SEP, with a fully redesigned concept will be ready to start in October 2016.

Being in IPSF on the Executive Committee, working together in representing the students worldwide, and having by my side my SEC Dream Team is a remarkable and an unforgettable experience as I have encountered wonderful, dedicated and inspiring people, willing to go the extra mile to reach their goals. It is indeed an experience that you get to enjoy once in a lifetime!

Viva la pharmacie! Viva l’IPSF! 
#1 SEC Meeting in person in Slovenia, March 2016
Katharina Wien, Germany.
Student Exchange Committee member 2015-16.

Having already worked together on the SEC for six months, we decided to finally meet in person and to spend some time to bond with the other team members for one week in March. With SEC members from Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, we picked Ljubljana in Slovenia as our destination to meet with each other.

We put a lot of effort into organizing the meeting in Ljubljana beforehand, so we would all benefit from it in the most possible way. From the moment of our arrivals until the very last day, our week was an adventure. On our first day, we (Bianca, Martin, Danielle, and Katharina) started bonding through some games and had our first discussions about SEP before Petra and Ryad joined two and three days later and completed the group of SEC members who were present at the meeting. By renting an apartment with a kitchen a little outside the city centre, we did not only work on current projects and discuss ideas about SEP, but we also cooked our meals together. This way, we tasted a variety of dishes, fruit and sweets during the week to complement our own SEP experience.

We could not have picked a more suitable place for our meeting; not only was it easy to reach for most of the team, but the name of the city itself can almost be seen as a symbol of our meeting. “Ljubljana” means “the loved one”. And that describes our week together in #LOVEnia very well. We got to know each other in a much more personal way. We became friends while working, discussing, and enjoying our spare time together. Martin, who is originally from the region near Ljubljana, and the Slovenian SEO Nejc showed us around in their university city and we all fell in love with the place, walking along the river at sunset, enjoying the view at the city from the beautiful castle at night, and eating some of the best ice cream we ever tasted. In one of our little breaks, we drove to Lake Bled for one day where we had the famous original Kremsnitta- a typical cake with a lot of cream in it- and visited the castle above the lake.

Our nights were as long as the agenda that we created together before the meeting and some of us were more than thankful for the invention of coffee. However, after six long days with many discussions and a few nice breaks in the city centre, we realized that it had been a very productive meeting overall.

Mainly we focused on improving the structure of SEP by discussing changes to the SEP regulations and creating a detailed document about the new SEP database. In addition to this, we evaluated the work within our team together, discussed about already completed projects and came up with a strategy to continue our mandate in SEC together. We are excited to see which projects and ideas will be realized and implemented in SEP during our mandate and any future SEP years!

On our last night in Ljubljana, we also got the chance to talk about SEP to some local pharmacy students. Nejc organized this event together with our Martin and invited us to present the programme, including its advantages and the possibility to get actively involved in SEP as a Local Exchange Officer (LEO), to the attending students.

To all future SEC and other IPSF teams, we can only advise to do the same and have a meeting in person during your work mandate, preferably soon after the start of the year. Knowing each other in person, knowing each other’s senses of humour, strengths, weaknesses, and ways of working helps to optimize the distribution of tasks, to motivate each other and to make the most of the mandate together.

Thank you for an unforgettable week, Ljubljana! Thank you for not only making us fall in love with you, but also for helping us fall in love with SEP over and over again! And most of all, thank you for giving us a place to grow even more together as the SEC Dream Team 2015-16!

#2 How to prepare for a SEP exchange?
Mr. Martin Koprivnikar Krajnc
Mr. Alvin Edem Kobla Akpalu
SEC 2014-15
SEC 2015-16

After you finally got all the details about the exchange (the host, dates, accommodation, social programme etc.) and are ready to go for this amazing experience abroad, there are still some things that you need to take into consideration. To make sure you won’t forget anything follow this guideline which shows you how to prepare for the exchange step by step.

Research about the place you’re going
First things first, check if you need visa for the country you are going to. The host SEO will be glad to provide you with an invitation letter or any other documentation that you might need. Don’t forget that the embassy might take quite long to process your application so don’t do it too late!

After you have all documents you need to enter the country of your exchange you should make sure that you have all your important documentation
prepared in advance and that you have checked their validity (passport, health insurance, student card for discounts etc.). Before leaving scan these documents, so the replacement procedure would be easy in case you lose them. Also, you can ask the host SEO/LEO to help you make a checklist of things you need for your SEP.

Check:
☑ The currency of the country;
☑ Types of transportation you use and their schedule;
☑ If you need any vaccinations;
☑ Where your embassy is located in case you need it;
☑ The SEP Cultural Awareness Guide to find out some things about the culture of the host country to avoid any awkward situations.
☑ Pack your luggage

When you are packing check with the host SEO to see if you need to bring items like hangers, bed linens, towels etc. Make sure to pack everything that is comfortable for every situation you can get in. Don’t forget to check about the weather and if there are any laws about how you have to dress. Don’t forget your lab coat! Also, be aware how you should dress at your working place. Pack some clothes in your hand baggage in case your checked baggage gets lost or delayed. Pack at least two days before leaving. That way you have an extra day to figure out everything you might forget.

Things you need to be aware of

When your guidebook specifies that it is preferable not to drink tap water, do not drink water from the tap. Ice cubes are also made from tap water so ask for drinks without ice.

Don’t keep all your cards and cash together. Use multiple pockets so if cash gets stolen, your ATM card does not have to go with it.

You will be meeting students from all over the world and exchanging your culture, so don’t forget to bring an important part of you culture - food and drinks from your country.

11 tips for an unforgettable exchange

1. Bring an extra bag or backpack. It will be useful for day or weekend trips
2. Bring an unlocked phone. It will be much easier to communicate with the host and other SEP students via phone calls and messages
3. Bring your camera, video recorder to make sure you capture all the exciting moments. Don’t forget to bring your laptop/tablet and phone chargers!
4. Bring a travel first aid kit. If you are under a certain medication, don’t forget to include them in your luggage and make sure you will not run out while you are on exchange
5. Check the electronic standards of your destination country and make sure you pack your luggage accordingly.
6. Don’t forget to stay in touch with your parents/friends! However, do not be too addicted to the internet, remember to immerse yourself in the experience.
7. Check how much alcohol and cigarettes you are allowed to bring with you in the host country before renewing your supply at the duty-free shop
8. Download useful apps: an offline map application, specific apps for public transportation or transportation in general, camera apps etc.
9. Bring useful things: beer/wine opener, lighter, padlock, clear tape
10. Read about the country you are supposed to go and see which places you can visit and explore
11. And in the end, when you are in the country you are doing your exchange enjoy the nature, try sports and activities that you haven’t done before, try to learn something traditional, try the local food and also don’t forget to share you experience with other students who want to do SEP by posting your photos on social media and hash tagging them with #IPSFSEP and #mySEPadventure!

Enjoy your SEP experience!

#3 SEOs corner. What is like to be a SEO? How hard is the job of a SEO? Let’s find out from the ones of the best SEO newbies.

#3.1

Safiye Çağansel
SEO of EMUPSS 2015-16

“A dream doesn’t become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.” – Colin Powell.

My name is Safiye Çağansel, a 5th year pharmacy student at Eastern Mediterranean University and the IPSF Student Exchange Officer of Eastern Mediterranean University Pharmacy Students Society (EMUPSS), Two years ago, after founding EMUPSS in 2014, we found out about IPSF in 2015 when, we dreamt of becoming a part of this amazing Federation and having the Student Exchange Program to broaden the pharmacy vision.
Mr. Bilal Al-Araag, Jordan
SEO of JPSA 2015-16

The first step is always the hardest, but it's the only way to make the second one. I never thought that becoming a SEO is an easy task, since it has been years since my association - JPSA has participated in the SEP. New members were unaware of the programme, and many institutions are not easy to be dealt with. Yet, I thought we must be a part of this to represent pharmacy and Jordanian culture. So, I just felt a big challenge is awaiting me and from here my lovely journey has started.

Everyone starts from point zero, and so did I. The first building block I took was creating a subcommittee to help me in getting the work done. Also, we started promoting our country and programme heavily on both the local and international level. Then we organized a SEP workshop in order for the students to become more familiar with the programme. Afterwards, I started contacting pharmaceutical companies to provide placements for the incoming students, and mainly this was the biggest challenge but we managed to overcome it. A lot of work maybe, but believe it or not, I have enjoyed it.

The best part about being a SEO is its interactive work style, in which you deal with lots of people starting from the volunteering team, other SEOs, incoming and outgoing students. Moreover, online SEO meetings and training sessions were very helpful and productive. What I also find special about this job is that it helped in improving my creative side through planning new ideas and events to get the work done in a unique way.

Despite the difficulties at the beginning and the fear of failure, I have always found the support from the chairperson, SEC, SEO’s and my association. I have never regretted being a SEO, and I highly encourage all countries to appoint SEO’s and to be a part of the enriching experience called Student Exchange Programme.

Viva la farmacia!

“If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don’t have to be pushed. The vision pulls you.” – Steve Jobs

Ms. Ana-Katharina Elsa Gehrke, Argentina
SEO of AEFRA 2015-16

Dear all,

My name is Ana and I am the current SEO of AEFRA, Argentina. I became part of my association one year ago, and started working as SEO in December 2015, so I am new in the IPSF world.

When I started as SEO I really didn’t know a lot about SEP and how it worked because my association is relatively new, therefore there was never a person dedicated only to SEP. You could say that the position chose me and not the other way around, but when I saw the necessity my association had, I decided to take charge of the work with responsibility. I think that what made me decide to be part was the idea that students can get this once on a lifetime opportunity to grow and to be a better professional and person, and hopefully to learn ways to contribute to the society through the practice of pharmacy. I strongly believe that trips can change you, they make you see things from a different perspective, so if you combine that with the chance to experience pharmacy in a different country, what better than this?

So far, this has been an awesome experience, but to be honest with myself and with you, I think this journey is like a rollercoaster. It has a lot of ups and downs, hard work and dedication, and a charge of mixed emotions (happiness, stress, excitement, worries, joy, confusion, uncertainties), basically a little bit of everything.

I have encountered some difficulties, especially at the beginning. How to get pharmacy students in Argentina to learn about SEP? How to make them interested and consider the opportunity? And also, how to make the associations of the rest of the world to notice our country? With a lot of active work, social media, promotional materials, information, the help of the Contact Person and other members of my association, and also all the help and support from the IPSF SEP group; today I can proudly say that I have overcome them: this year my association is having our first outgoing student and also, we are receiving two incoming students.

Being SEO is more than what you can see on the surface: it is participating in the redaction of official documents that are necessary for the correct work and management of SEP; the creation and use of social media for promotion; the elaboration of promotional materials, posters and informative images; continuously promoting SEP to the students and promoting Argentina to the rest of the world; working together with different members of my
association; be in a permanent contact and work with the SEP group; participate in meetings, contests and activities; arrange everything for incoming and outgoing students; try to find new host sites; and finally, always try to propose new things and ideas to improve the programme and keep growing.

Nothing of this could be possible without the endless work and collaboration from Chairperson, SEC team and all SEOs, it is hard to explain, but although not knowing them in person, you can feel how all share the same spirit, the "SEP spirit". So, it doesn’t matter the differences that may exist in culture and language, everyone is working together to create the ultimate SEP experience for the students.

To conclude, let me say that all of this is worth it. I hope that from now on, SEP in my country keeps growing and growing, and to accomplish that I have to continue working and my next step is to obtain more host sites.

Yours sincerely,

#4 How to enjoy a SEP exchange
Mr. Martin Koprivnikar Krajnc
Ms. Petra Orlić
Mr. Alvin Edem Kobla Akpalu
SEC 2015-16

SEP is one of the best experiences you can do in your student life. There you can enjoy to your fullest only if you are open-minded and if you expect the unexpectable. SEP represents sharing pharmacy knowledge, exchanging of cultures and customs and meeting new friends and professionals from all around the world.

In every country, there is a different development of the pharmacy profession and the way in which pharmacists learn and work. It can be different from your own country and you can take advantage of that by learning new things about the field of pharmacy that you are most interested in. This is your opportunity to learn; it’s your exchange, not anyone else’s. To break it down, people have no obligation towards you, which means that your experience is entirely up to you. So, volunteer to give a hand and ask for help when you need it. Take initiative and stay curious. It is important that you ask questions about everything that you want to know and to listen carefully to all the information your mentor is going to share with you.

If you are doing your practice in a community pharmacy, it might be difficult to interact with the patients due to the language barrier, and thus you can focus more on:
» the pharmaceutical legislation of the country;
» finding out how the health insurance system works;
» the different particularities of several types of prescriptions;
» the relationship between the pharmacist and the doctors/patients/medical sales representatives;
» different systems that pharmacists use to report adverse reactions;
» the pharmaceutical computer systems used in the pharmacy;
» other activities that can be done in the pharmacy (weight, blood pressure measurements, vaccinations, etc.)

If you are doing your practice in a hospital or a clinical pharmacy, you can also try to focus on the tasks that are mentioned above, but you can see in more detail the relationship between the pharmacist and the doctors/patients, you can find out if the pharmacist has rounds/shifts and how frequently the interaction with the patients is. Depending on the profile of the hospital, you will be able to learn about medical procedures or clinical trials.

If your placement is in the field of research, either if it is at a company/institute or at a university, you can learn many things, from the topic of research of the group/department you will be working with,
to the organisational part of this field. If you are
tempted to follow on this path once you graduate,
take advantage of this opportunity to find out
more information about the life of a researcher,
about his/her duties and responsibilities, about
the types and structure of PhDs in that specific
country, about the opportunities that are offered
to the doctoral and post-doctoral students, and
you can even ask for permission to attend a lecture
or visit a laboratory if you have this chance.

And lastly, if you are having a practice at a
pharmaceutical company, basically you will have
the opportunity to find out basic information
about all the different stages that a medical
product has to go through to be released on
the market. Read in advance and also during
your practice about the profile of the company,
about its policy, its structure, its main objectives
and missions. Be aware that you might not have
access to all of the information that you would
like to know, but also have in mind that the basic
information that can trigger your further interest
for this field would be given to you.

With this thought, try to make the most of the
hours you will be spending at your practice, as it is
an opportunity that puts you in the middle of the
action and thus, you are able to find by yourself
how things work for a pharmacist in that specific
country. Don't be afraid to ask questions, try to
use this opportunity to the maximum!

While you are gaining new professional
experience abroad in a pharmacy, faculty or any
other institution in pharmaceutical field you also
have time and the opportunity to do sightseeing,
try local food, meet the people that call that
country home. But this is not the only way to
enjoy your SEP exchange. First and foremost, you
have to loosen up and take the SEP exchange as
an experience of your life. When you will really
make the most of any new opportunity or complete
any challenge that you might face, it will make you
enjoy the whole experience even better.

When you loosen up then you won't have a
problem talking to the locals. Approach the
locals and start making friends. You are after all,
travelling in their country and this may open up a
window for you to see the local life that others will
rarely experience.

Don't forget about your fellow travellers and also
talk to them. The key is to look for someone who
travels alone, or maybe a couple and start smiling
and say “Hi” as you walk by. If they say “Hi” back,
then you could start by asking common questions
like “Where are you guys from?” or “Are you
traveling alone as well?”. If they answer you and ask
you more questions, it means that they are open
to talk to you. You will know it right away whether
they are interested in talking to you or not when
both parties are trying to move the conversation
forward by asking questions. If you are the only one
asking questions, then you might be bothering the
other party so end the conversation and let them
be in peace.

It is daunting to travel to a country and have no
photos of you in your camera. The problem with
traveling alone is that you will have to ask someone
to take it for you or put it down somewhere, set a
timer and be goofy in front of the camera like a
crazy person. That can turn out to be something
you will really enjoy, having fun with yourself and
entertaining others in the process. It may also
become a conversation starter to other travellers
as well. You can ask others to take a photo for you
and offer to take a photo for them in exchange. Not
to mention, you will also get awesome photos of
yourself for your friends and family to see.

Just have fun and play with the pictures you take.
Maybe do a jump shot, or a perspective shot that
is worthy of your Facebook profile photo. The
trick is to be comfortable in your own skin. There
are no people around to judge you after all and
don't forget that you might not be able to see that
place again, so try and take as many photos, but
still enjoy the places you see.

Say “Yes” more! If not all the time. Try to accept
offers to try new things as often as possible, even
though it may seem uncomfortable or scary at
first. Chances are, you’ll have a good story to tell
afterwards and end up making pretty priceless
memories. Visit historical sites or monuments,
go for trips and hikes, say yes to new friends. The
exchange is only for a short time; you want to be
sure you get the most out of your host country as
exhaustively as possible (of course your finances
will count too).

Make an effort to understand the people’s way of
life, from their perspective. You may be tempted
to judge certain behaviours or beliefs, particularly
if they don’t match your own. But really, it’s what
you’re there for: the differences. Try to immerse
yourself in these people’s lifestyle, and cross that
cultural barrier without judging. Also, if possible
and allowed attend a service at their church/
mosque/other place of worship. For many people,
religion forms a huge part of their culture. You
may want to get a feel of the culture’s vibe.

When traveling, there will be down time like
waiting for a flight or while on a bus or on a train.
You will be bored out of your mind if you do not
have anything to do. Bring a book that will let
you sink in and amplify your moments. A book
that will engage you into thinking about your
surroundings. Your mind is expanded through
experiences of other cultures. You will be surprised
how creative you can be especially when you are
in such unusual surroundings.

You’ll be surprised how different food can be in
a new country. The cuisine variation is for real!
But, if you live with them, you’ll have to eat like
them. Of course, you might need to take it slow at
first- for your system to adapt- but don’t be afraid
to dig in. Accept to eating “weird” food! The fun is
in being able to appreciate their food, as much as
they do.

And finally, get lost! Don’t get stress out when you
are lost. That will do you more harm than good.
Start by realising which way you should be heading.
Use a compass if you must and start moving in that
direction. Or just carry a map with you so that you
can easily find where you are and where you should
be going. Remember to enjoy the beauty along the
way as well and keep in mind that you will not find
this kind of excitement and adventure if you follow
the common routes.

These are the most important things you should do
to enjoy the whole SEP experience. Next you will
find some tricks that can save you some money,
time or nerves when travelling. Of course, you
should be able to pay more or negotiate more
sometimes, but as long as the whole experience is
not getting worse because of it.

First trick is that you should avoid eating at scenic
overlooks. Food there is usually more expensive
and really not that good. You should go there
and enjoy for some time and then go for a meal
in a place where locals eat. That’s how you will
experience the food and scenery to the fullest.

Dress fancy for a dinner just because you feel like it.
You don’t need a reason why.

If you get a recommendation to see some place,
park, attraction etc. just go for it. It must be worth it
if many people advise it.

Enjoy “normal people luxuries” like going to the
cinema, going to the gym, going to the water park
etc. You will definitely have some fun.

Learn some language of the country you are in.
This exercise can be the cheapest way to learn
some basic phrases or to improve the language if
you already have some speaking skills. People that
you will meet on the trip in most cases will be glad
to share the knowledge of their native language
with you. They speak that language the best. They
Cars are worthless and costly headaches in big cities. Pick up your rental car after the first big city and drop it off before the final big city of your trip. Paying 20 euros a day to store 40 euros a day car while touring a city is an expensive mistake.

Use the metro, buses, train and other public transportation. It is cheap and it can get you to most places in short time.

If you follow most of the things that are written in this article you should have an amazing SEP experience. You will get to experience the culture, the people, the scenery and most important of all you will have these memories for the rest of your life.

Don't be afraid to take risks. If you do not risk, then you won't get reward from it in form of the memories. Or as they say: "You gotta risk it to get the biscuit."

### #5 SEP through the eyes of IPSF Student Exchange Committee members and Executive Board

#### #5.1

**Ms. Petra Orlić, Croatia.**

SEPer in Indonesia 2013-14

SEC 2015-16

SEP is a great opportunity to experience new cultures, meet new friends and learn new things about pharmacy in the world. I applied, I was accepted and the journey began!

After a long flight through six time zones, I finally arrived to Jakarta, Indonesia. I have to admit that I was a little bit scared at the beginning because I was alone and didn’t speak Bahasa, but that changed when I saw smiles on the faces of my new friends. I stayed in Jakarta for a few days sightseeing, adapting to the new climate and learning new rules before moving to Jatinangor where I did my practice. I completed a research project predicting antihyperuricemic activity of compounds of a plant Sida rhombifolia L. at the University Padjadjaran with my dear new SEP friends. This was the first time I was able to use my chemistry knowledge in the research on my own and see how it applies in the real world.

Apart from working, we also had enough time to travel around and have some fun. It’s hard to express just how much I enjoyed everything I saw: forests, waterfalls, art galleries, islands, volcanoes, mountains, treetop outbound, various monuments, Bali and many other famous sites. I can say in all confidence that you can experience the spirit of the country and learn many things about their way of life such as how they think, what they eat, how they feel or what young people love to do on their free time. I made many life-long friendships with kind and genuine students while studying, sharing knowledge and comparing pharmacy practice in different countries around the world. I was exposed to more of the local culture, customs and secrets that I would ever have been able to find on my own.

To all of you, who are still thinking about going to SEP, just apply and I promise you won’t regret it! It is such a unique opportunity to experience something so memorable and useful in life.

#### #5.2

**Mr. Alvin Edem Kobla Akpalu, Ghana.**

SEPer in Kenya 2014-15

SEC 2015-16

One of my most thrilling experiences has been in getting to travel the world, as much as I can.

I must admit I experienced a real culture shock. Drivers using the ‘wrong’ side of the road, people relaxing in open parks (You’d never see that in Ghana). I found it interesting to use the ‘matatus’ as a means of transport; and it was interesting to find out why their name stemmed from- Matatu is Swahili for ‘threes’; these vehicles have rows of three seats each.

The most outstanding difference for me was the food! You see, West African taste buds are used to sweating a little from the hot spices in our cuisine. It was interesting to try out different foods; particularly ugali, samosas and nyama choma! And the time zone! It took some getting used to. Being three hours ahead, early mornings were the hardest. 8 am in Kenya was 5 am Ghanaian Man Time (GMT) for instance.

I had the most amazing internship experience in one of the best pharmaceutical industry companies and a community pharmacy. A language barrier was imminent, especially in the community pharmacy where patients would explain their problems in Kiswahili; or start off in English only to break into Swahili mid-sentence. It was eye-opening to note the similarities as well as differences in the problems patients presented with and the healthcare system
started wondering should I even go. But I knew not
going would be a huge mistake.

The summer I spent in Lodz, Poland, was an
amazing and fulfilling summer.

I had my practice in a pharmacy, where the stuff
was amazing! Within daily routine of a pharmacy
downtown in Lodz, I learned a lot more than
expected. Polish students did their best for SEP
students to feel as they were at home. During
weekends, and after SEP, I travelled through Poland,
sO I also got to meet that lovely country.

But for me the best part of the SEP are the people!
The people you work with, the people who came
to do SEP same as you, the local students and
other locals. Also, I got the chance to spend time
with Portuguese, Turkish, and Indonesian students.
Such diversity!

SEP brought many changes in my life, from having
a network of friends and colleagues, to aiding
in developing myself personally. Working with
so many different people made me learn the
importance of teamwork, good communication
and being responsible for much more than just
yourself.

Again, definitely the people I met and the friends
I gained is the best thing about my SEP journey! If
you are still thinking of going to SEP, stop thinking!
Apply for SEP and go! You won’t regret it, I promise! :)

Ms. Ana Pantovic, Serbia
SEP in Poland in 2012-13
SEC 2015-16

When asked, what is SEP, I like to say SEP is a perfect
combination of pharmacy, travels, meeting new
cultures and people, all of that, while having fun.
I also like to talk about my SEP experience. A few
years ago, I got an opportunity to be a part of
SEP adventure. It didn’t start as I expected, I have
to admit. I didn’t get the country which was my
first choice, I didn’t get the practice I wanted. So, I

visited major landmarks in Kenya was definitely
something to look forward to past the working
hours. Breath-taking sceneries, historic sites and
adventurous trips made my weekends. I got
to share in the youth culture as well; making
unforgettable memories, a myriad of networks
and a couple of lifelong friends!

They say: ‘The best thing about travelling is to
discover something new in your world, and in
yourself” — I think I did just that. From my SEP
experience, I had the opportunity to experience
the world in a way I hadn’t been able to. I now feel
limitless in terms of where in the world I could
practice as a pharmacist, or in what ways I can
make a difference in the world. Well, the bottom
line is, it can be scary to put yourself out there,
But one definitely needs a brave and adventurous
heart, but seriously just do it! It’s worth the risk!

My SEP destination turned out to be Germany
and I can honestly say that it was a dream coming
true. Starting with the practice in a field in which I
was deeply interested, to the social activities, the
city, small yet very beautiful and cozy, the friendly
people, and the relaxing and inspiring atmosphere,
all of these making my stay in Greifswald close to
perfection.

During those 4 weeks, I got the chance to learn
so many things, from the theoretical aspects
to several lab techniques and assays, different
alternative programs that can be used in the
research field and that can be of great help to the
researcher on recording the progress of his/her
work. Another thing which I really enjoyed was the
interaction with the new culture and customs that
allowed me to have a glimpse of a different way of
lifestyle. As for the social part, I got to make friends
with students from the University, attend different
parties, festivals and other fun activities that were
organized. How often can you say that you had a
barbeque at the University until morning, dancing
and chatting by the fire all night? I also had the
chance to explore the city, meet with the Erasmus
students that were there and even go for a short
trip to Berlin, as it was very close to Greifswald.

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to admit. I didn’t get the country which was my
first choice, I didn’t get the practice I wanted. So, I

whole new perspective on the programme?

This being said, I truly believe that this experience
was a fascinating one, from all points of view. I
deeply encourage students worldwide to get
out of their comfort zone and experience SEP, as
it is a program which offers multiple occasions
to discover oneself and, nevertheless, it is an
experience which will provide one with amazing
memories and emotions.

Ms. Ana Catarina Duarte, Portugal
SEP in Czech Republic in 2012-13
IPSF Chairperson of Public Health 2015-16

Vive la Pharmacie!

Ms. Bianca Chichiriu, Romania
SEP in Germany in 2014-15
IPSF Chairperson of Student Exchange 2015-2016

My experience with SEP did not follow the
usual path, as I have decided to experience the
excitement of participating of the exchange at the
end of my two-year mandate as a SEO. I told to
myself that what could be better than ending such
a beautiful chapter by going in SEP and gaining a

Mr. Michael McIntyre, Canada
IPSF Treasurer 2015-17

I have been fortunate to have many fulfilling
experiences within IPSF, but sadly I never took
part in the Student Exchange Programme. I was
however, a Local Exchange Officer for several years
during my time studying in Australia. I volunteered
to help with the IPSF committee of NAPSA, Australia
and found a local pharmacy in our city eager to
host international students.

Over two years we had two students complete SEP
in Townsville, one from Canada and another from
the United States of America. It was extremely
rewarding to be able to help each of the girls
make the most of their trips to Australia by giving
them guidance on where to visit and what sights
to see, as well as showing off the local culture and
attractions of the City of Townsville.

For someone who has financial or time restrictions
and is unable to participate in SEP themselves,
being an LEO is the perfect opportunity to catch
the IPSF spirit. You are able to share in the culture
and experiences of a fellow pharmacy student and
spread your local culture to the world through
them all while in your own backyard. I would
strongly encourage anybody interested in hosting
a SEP student to take advantage of the chance.

As I see it, SEP was where it all started, before SEP
I had never thought of going on an adventure of
experiencing pharmacy work outside of Portugal.
The exchange of cultures and backgrounds with the people I met along the way was one of the things that most marked my journey. I find it really curious how the simple interaction with other students from different countries, opens your horizons and makes you dream of things that you never did before. It is interesting to say that I went to a country where very few people speak English and communication is surely a barrier to all knowledge bridges. I did SEP in a small community pharmacy in Olomouc, Czech Republic where I dedicated my time to the distribution of compounded drugs and it was simply amazing! I’m really glad that this was my first contact with IPSF and even happier because it did not end there.

#5.7
Ms. Asma Sellami, Tunisia
SEPer in Lebanon 2014-15
IPSF Chairperson of Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office 2015-2016

To me, the Student Exchange Program is the best way to combine work and fun. Being fond of travelling and discovering new cultures and new countries for a very long time, I have found that SEP is the best opportunity to approach the pharmaceutical field from a different perspective. I am always curious to know more about pharmacy practice elsewhere, not only in community pharmacies but also in the industry and research domains. My previous participation in international events such as the World Congress made me eager to meet more people (and future colleagues-to-be) from different parts of the world and share experiences.

Applying for SEP had always been on my “to-do” list since the SEP program was established in ATEP-Tunisia. I don’t know if it was my lack of courage or my anticipation but I always said to myself that I will apply for it once I have enough knowledge to represent the Tunisian pharmacy skills as well as the association. During my final year, I decided to give it a try. It was my last shot and something I would always regret not doing and I am so happy I overcame my fears!

#5.8
Ms. Stephanie Miller, Canada
SEPer in Australia in 2011-12
IPSF Chairperson of Professional Development 2015-16

In the summer of 2012, I was fortunate enough to be accepted for a placement in the IPSF Student Exchange Programme. This was my first experience with IPSF and definitely lead to my involvement with the Federation in the years following.

I was placed in a small community pharmacy in Perth, Australia for a total of 3 weeks. I was only a second-year pharmacy student at the time so my therapeutic knowledge was limited, however, the pharmacists allowed me to practice my counselling and patient education skills under their supervision. The most interesting aspect of the placement was being able to experience the differences in the health systems between Canada and Australia. Although our pharmacy education curriculums and pharmacist roles were very similar, there were many aspects of the dispensing process and the health care system in general that were completely different. Through the experience, I gained a broader understanding of global pharmacy in general and how every county has its own unique barriers to expanded scope of practice for pharmacists.

The experience wasn’t all work. My first week there, I was invited to attend a gala that was put on by one of NAPSA’s student associations in Perth. There, I was able to network with other pharmacy students like myself. Not only did I learn more about pharmacy practice and education in their country I was also able to teach them about pharmacy practice in Canada. Of course, there was also time to explore the country and learn about Australia’s unique history and culture.

Participating in the SEP definitely opened a lot of doors within IPSF for myself. After learning about the opportunities that IPSF could provide for the members through my SEP, I went on to attend the World Congress, join the PD Committee and eventually the IPSF Executive Committee. But most importantly I gained some amazing friends on my journey that I still keep in contact with today. If you are even slightly considering applying for a future SEP, I would strongly encourage it. It will definitely change your life for the better!

#6 Cultural Awareness – How do I interact with a new culture?
Ms. Bianca Chichirâu, Romania.
IPSF Chairperson of Student Exchange 2015-16

One of the biggest challenges of going on a SEP is the fact that you have to interact with different cultures and perspectives, you have to find a way to step outside of your cultural boundaries and blend in with the new customs and traditions, trying to understand the different ways of lifestyle, behaviour, communication aspects from those around you.

There are no guidelines or instructions that will teach you how to deal with cultural diversity, however certain attitudes and communication tips can help you increase both self and cross-cultural awareness. Remember that you do not have to be afraid of learning about new cultures, on the contrary, it is a very exciting and intriguing process!

How to communicate clearly

Try to understand how and why do you communicate and behave the way you do. You can observe how people respond to you by paying attention to how they react (changes on their facial expressions, posture, voice tonality etc.)

Do your research about the country in which you will have your SEP. You can watch movies and read articles to find out how people from that country communicate; from gestures to greetings and non-verbal communication. Also, do not be afraid to ask questions and admit what you do not know.

Clarify your intentions in advance, by explaining what you really mean when you are expressing yourself.

When you find yourself in an uncomfortable
situation, instead of taking things personally, try to ask yourself; ‘could this be a result of a cultural difference?’ If that is so, you will have a whole new perception about the initial situation.

Try to have an open mind about the others way of communication. Do not rush into making judgements about people based on their preferences or on their way of thinking. Be emphatic and just put yourself in their shoes, trying not to be too much influenced by your own likes and dislikes.

Do not stereotype and instead read each individual. Knowing a person’s cultural background can influence the way you perceive him/her; however, even if some people do share traits of their own culture, do not try to include them in the group, on the contrary think of them as individuals.

**How to behave appropriately**

Always watch what the local people do and where and appropriately mimic what they do. Look for differences in the nonverbal behaviour such as gestures, eye contact, speaking distance, touch etc. and think why the other person may behave in that specific way. For example:

- Do not step forward into someone’s personal space when they seem too far away;
- Do not react if someone seems to stare or look away as this might be a cultural difference in eye contact.

Observe how you are supposed to react when you are meeting for the first time a person (hand shake, hug, kiss on the cheek) by taking examples from those around you.

Also, pay attention to your own behaviour and the reactions that it causes to those around you. If you have ever offended anyone through your behaviour without intention, think about what exactly triggered the negative response and try not to repeat it.

Remember that you do not have to learn all the rules of every culture to communicate and behave efficiently. Also, it is not about changing your whole style of communication, as this might be misinterpreted and confusing. Try to respect and adjust to the way of another person communicating, try to understand and not judge the differences that might be existent.

**How to make yourself clear and avoid misunderstanding**

Try to work on the key areas of speech that can make you deliver a clearer message, such as:

**Speed**: Do not talk too fast, especially with people who are not native English speakers. The same thing applies to you too. If you see that you cannot understand those around you, do not hesitate in asking them to repeat what they were saying or asking questions to make sure you understood the conversation.

**Pronunciation**: When facing with people from different cultures, you will notice that each person will have a specific accent. Try to pronounce words as clearly and as distinctly as possible, without too much accent emphasized on certain words.

**Tone**: Try to speak on a normal voice tone, not too loud, but not too quiet, so that those around you can understand what you are saying. Do not be afraid of the grammar or pronunciation mistakes, no one will fault you because of this.

Words and phrases: Try to use common, everyday language that can be easily understood by people from different parts of the world, avoid using idioms and phrases to express your opinion.

Always check to see if you have understood what the person is telling you. Bear in mind these three aspects when looking for confirmation:

- Read the body language. Some people might say something, but with their body language express something different. Pay attention to how people behave in such situations, look for signs of hesitation in their voice, slightly tilted head or furrowed eyebrows.
- When you are not sure if the person understood your message, you can ask open ended questions that will help you have a correct and clear conversation. Especially at your practice, if you can always ask for confirmation of your message.
- Be open for feedback. People will be more than helpful to let you know what you are doing well, poorly and what you can do to improve your communication and behaviour. Also, stick to their advice, they are the ones who know their culture best, so do not judge or take too personal negative feedback.

Increasing cultural awareness means to see both negative and positive aspects of cultural differences. In SEP, cultural diversity can be the source of many problems, as diversity increases the level of confusion. On the other hand, the biggest advantage is that you are able to assimilate new skills, new behaviours, experience a personal growth, tolerance and capability to understand the others and become in the end a better person.

By becoming culturally aware we realize that we are not all the same, that similarities and differences both matter, and that there are multiple ways to live the same adventures and experience the same feelings.

Feeling anxious about your SEP exchange? Check out the SEP Cultural Awareness Guide to find out more about the country you are going to experience SEP.

**Reference**

***Kwantessential – Cultural Awareness***
- A free manual

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**Testimonials**

Too late to go for Summer SEP 2015-16? Start preparing for the Winter SEP 2016-17. Check out the testimonials to see what can be waiting for you next year!

#7.1 Taste of Japan

Ms. Boni Butir. CPSA, Croatia

My winter SEP experience started with a decision of gaining more practical experience, independency and a taste of international exchange programme since I felt like I lack these things the most as a last-year student. SEP seemed like an ideal student programme to help me improve in those areas. My primary aim was summer SEP in Japan but after my SEO announced there are empty slots left in winter SEP, I decided to take that opportunity and apply to winter SEP. During December 2015, just as I finished my last exam ever, I received the news that I was accepted to winter SEP.

I was placed in Kansai and Kanto area with 3 other exchange students from Indonesia, Taiwan and Turkey. APS-Japan helped us through the entire process of buying the flight tickets and hostel reservations while making sure about necessary stuff/clothes to bring, diet restrictions, potential health issues and visa. I was really moved with their effort and care. The final day approached and my journey started off in Budapest airport as a cheaper alternative than Zagreb’s, and a 15-hour flight to Narita, Japan. After spending 1 day in Tokyo, I took the bus to Kyoto, Kansai where winter SEP took place for the first 2 weeks. The hostel was amazingly cozy with friendly staff, and other exchange students were so nice and kind. That was my first time to experience international exchange.
environment and I was thrilled with it. We received the Kansai SEP schedule and had a warm welcome party on the first day. SEP in Japan is a special case because exchange students aren't able to work in a pharmacy/laboratory/company due to the language barrier. Instead, we were taken to hospital pharmacy visits, university laboratories, companies, hospitals and workshops on various pharmaceutical topics. I learned so much about their health and pharmacy systems and how they differ from Croatia, thanks to visiting so many different facilities. It was also interesting to see that physicians and pharmacists don't speak English so SEP staff had to translate everything they were talking about during each visit. I also got the chance to present my own country's pharmacy system to Japanese students at Osaka University of Pharmaceutical Sciences. We went sightseeing to six temples in Kyoto and Osaka castle. I made friends with many dear Japanese students and I felt sad when I had to transfer to Kanto area for the second part of the SEP but we stayed in contact nevertheless. Kanto area greeted us with a big welcome party with surprisingly lots of Aussies! As always. We also visited many different facilities such as National Cancer Center Hospital, the university pharmacy, Tsumura Kampo Company, workshops and sightseeing.

Every day offered me completely new experiences I never had before in my life and I strongly recommend every pharmacy student out there to take this opportunity and go to SEP in spite of language barriers, long haul flights and fears of training in foreign environment. It is all worth it and it makes you grow more than you could ever imagine. I would like to thank my SEO Petra Orlić and it makes you grow more than you could ever imagine. I went to the Czech Republic for my internship at the pharmacy. Everything could be totally different from Japan, so I had no idea about my stay there. Many people asked me why I had decided to come to the Czech Republic. I just thought that I would have an opportunity to go to United States, Germany or any other popular country, but maybe not to the Czech Republic for the internship. Why not the Czech Republic? I'm pretty certain that I made the best decision. It was really valuable to learn medicine from other countries. We have some similar points but many things are absolutely different. Pharmacy is now taken care of in two places of the pharmacy of the University of Prague (Prague) and Burono (Brno). Ointments, capsules, suppositories, I was allowed to experience a variety of drug-making, such as eye drops. In a simple prescription picking and medication teaching, I had many valuable experiences. I learned about the insurance healthcare system, receipts, awareness of self-medication, the price of prescription drugs, and how to make the like of the pharmacy preparation.

I had an opportunity to think about the health care system of our country. In addition, I really felt that I wanted to learn even with respect to pharmaceutical education and health care systems of countries around the world, not only the Czech Republic. In common terms of pharmacy, I was able to connect with people from various countries, not only the Czech Republic but also Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Kazakhstan. By talking with them about history, culture, technology, art, and so on, I realized that I need to be more proud of being Japanese. If you become a pharmacist in Japan, it is the only national qualification you need. Therefore, the qualification itself will not work across the world. However, I am sure that a connection between such students from different countries will make the pharmaceutical industry or medical care around the world much better!

Traditional Chinese Medicine was one of the most interesting parts of the programme, as I have never been exposed to this field before and it's not something I am likely to experience again. It was super exciting, because it is an important part of the Taiwanese culture! I have also been to the aseptic production unit in the hospital, watched the staff making cytotoxic medicines. They were the kindest people ever, no matter how busy it was they would make sure I was doing okay, and not overworked. I was able to practice something dispensing in the outpatient department under super high pressure, and wow, it was a challenge! But they would still let me finish my part without making me feel bad as I was holding up the queue.

Hello peeps, I am Alice Lin and I am from New Zealand. I am in my fourth and final year of pharmacy! (woop woop) I went on the IPSF exchange to Taiwan and it was one of the best experiences I have ever had. I have always wanted to go on an exchange and have heard so much from our school of pharmacy and finally I was able to be part of the programme!! It was a great opportunity for me to explore my own home country (I am from New Zealand originally) but doing pharmacy internship at the same time. Being able to go back to my home country, and explore something I am always passionate about was an absolute honour and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I was so surprised with how different the pharmacy is as compared to New Zealand. I was working at Wan Fang Teaching Hospital and I have learnt so much from them. They were the kindest people ever, no matter how busy it was they would make sure I was doing okay, and not overworked. I was able to practice something dispensing in the outpatient department under super high pressure, and wow, it was a challenge! But they would still let me finish my part without making me feel bad as I was holding up the queue.

Ms. Annelise Pfahlert, NZAPS-O, New Zealand.

Ms. Maho Urano, APS-Japan.

In January 2016, I flew over to Germany as part of a winter pharmacy exchange. Our placement was in Velbert with Jochen Pfeifer, along with another student from my University, a girl from South Korea, and two boys from Australia.

As Jochen has a PhD in clinical pharmacy, we knew our trip would be mostly surrounding the social side of pharmacy. We were able to visit Jochen’s pharmacy in Velbert, a small town an hour or so from Düsseldorf and see the differences between pharmacies in Germany and our own countries. Jochen also organized for us to meet with many important people such as Mr. Barleben, the Vice President of the Apothekerkrammer Nordrhein, and Prof. Dr. Stark, who specializes in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Düsseldorf.

During our meetings with these people we learned a lot about many different current issues surrounding pharmacy in Germany and compared these to very similar issues occurring in our respective countries. During the exchange programme, we also visited Heidelberg, where our SEO lived. We were hosted by local students and were able to visit the university, go out for a pub dinner with our new friends, and also party.

Together we visited the Heidelberg Schloss where we had a personal tour of the pharmacy museum. The weekend was filled with fun activities and was a chance to experience Heidelberg as a local. At the end of our trip we went separate ways, one student going on a contiki around Europe, one visiting more of Germany, and myself and the other student from New Zealand visiting Italy, Switzerland and France before returning home. We all left Europe with many new special memories and friends, along with knowledge of pharmacy in another country. It was an experience we will all value and are all very pleased we were able to have!
Another favourite part of this journey was being able to explore my motherland. I used the short three weeks visit to explore the capital, Taipei and the food was amazing. I went to the night markets, the zoo and various places with the SEP students. They were all so welcoming and so eager to hear about my studies in NZ and also wanting to share all their stories with me. Being able to hang out with the same age students made me feel more welcomed and accepted! I was so sad that I had to leave this beautiful country, it’s so small but there’s still so much that I haven’t seen!!

What I have gained from this journey is that, I really do appreciate the pharmacists in Taiwan. The amount of work they have to do in the hospital everyday was not what I expected. The tight community and effective communication between themselves, the doctors and the nurses were superb. If one day, I have the opportunity, I would love to work in Taiwan and extend my professionalism in the pharmacy community.

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I thoroughly enjoyed my time here, everyone was very friendly and welcoming, picking me up from the airport, taking me to work on my first day and showing me around the University.

My preceptor pharmacist was lovely, and spoke English so was able to teach me lots of things about what pharmacy is like in Croatia, and also enjoyed hearing about my experiences working in pharmacies in New Zealand. I got to take part in many activities whilst at the pharmacy including helping make up a cream, pricing and putting away new stock, taking blood pressure measurements and testing my skin type.

In my spare time, I got to explore the beautiful coast of Croatia. A highlight for me was Dubrovnik. Being a big Game of Thrones fan, I was very excited to see the filming locations! Other places I visited in Croatia were Split, Zadar and Plitvice Lakes which were breath-taking as they were covered in snow. One weekend I caught a bus to Ljubljana and explored Skocjan caves and Lake Bled, also in the snow with some stunning views.

Another highlight of my time in Zagreb was the advent celebrations leading up to Christmas. A couple of pharmacy students took me to the ice-skating rink that had been set up in the park, which was a lot of fun.

Overall, I had a great time in Croatia, the people were lovely, the food was amazing and the scenery was spectacular. I highly recommend this location to those considering going on IPSF exchange over winter.