

PHARMACYCONNECT

NEWSLETTER



July 2020

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DEAN'S MESSAGE



Associate Professor Dr. Mogana Sundari Rajagopal, Dean

Pharmacists are scientists. Pharmacy, with its heritage of fifty centuries of service to mankind, has come to be recognised as one of the great professions. Like Medicine, it has come through many revolutions, has acquired many new practices, and has had to discard many of its older ways. Pharmacists are among the community's finest educated people.

Pharmacists provide professional services incorporating the benefits of their work in all branches of the profession - education, research, development, standards, production, and distribution.

Pharmacy's professional stature will continue to grow in the future as this great heritage and tradition of service is passed on from preceptor to apprentice, from teacher to student. The future of the world now lies in technology innovation and the field of translational medicine th-

irsting for new and innovative medication and delivery routes. Pharmacists play a vital role by leveraging technology to provide new drug development, patient care services and medication therapy management. Incorporation of technological advancements such as blockchain technology, big data application in pharmacy, digiceuticals, IOT for pharmaceutical industry, smart tags, sensor pills, etc. are concepts in pharmacy education. Training and skills of pharmacist lie not only in drug therapy but extends to herbaceuticals, cosmeceuticals, nutraceuticals, etc.

At the Faculty, we continue to see examples of what keeps us so strong and so well prepared to shape the future through the excellent work of members of academic and alumni communities. Indeed, our students are securing positions across the country and around the world, and all are having powerful and transformational experiences as they develop new perspectives and find their places within the workplace and in diverse communities. We continue and strive to be the best and all the academics and researchers in the faculty are empowered to provide the most latest and advanced training to our graduands.

In the newsletter that follows, please enjoy the various faculty updates. We welcome you to write, offer suggestions, share good stories, attend our complementary competency programmes, or come to campus for a visit. Our door is always open!

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Editorial Team:

- Assistant Professor Dr Anand Gaurav
- Assistant Professor Dr BVS Lokesh
- Osama Helweh



PHARMACYCONNECT newsletter is a bimonthly publication of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (FPS), UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur.



COMPLEMENTARY COMPETENCY PROGRAMMES @ FPS

With COVID-19 having been declared a global pandemic, social distancing requirements and movement control order were quickly put into place as preventive measures to stop the spread of virus. How does information continue to be exchanged effectively despite everyone being told to stay at home? The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UCSI University actively organised Complementary Competency Programmes (CCP) for the public, students, and the scientific community even during this pandemic.

The CCPs included, “How Safe Are Your Medicines?” by Por Choo Shuan, “COVID-19 and Special Access to Personal Protective Equipment and Diagnostic Kit – A View on Regulatory Requirement in Malaysia” by Dr Ashok Kumar Balaraman, “Pharmaceutical Care for Cancer patients during COVID-19 pa-

ndemic” by Muhammad Ahsan Iftikhar Baig, “Oral Peptide Delivery to the Lymphatic System Using Mucoadhesive Nanoparticles” by Dr Palanirajan Vijayaraj Kumar and “Computational Molecular Modelling for Drug Designing” by Dr Anand Gaurav.

A total of 346 participants benefitted from these 5 CCP sessions. Online platforms such as Microsoft teams, Skype, and Zoom were used for these sessions.

Participants found these sessions helpful in their understanding and learning on certain topics related to medication safety, pharmaceutical regulation and artificial intelligence-based drug design and development. FPS will continue its endeavour to spread knowledge during the pandemic as well as the good times!



SEMBANG-SEMBANG SESSION @ UCSI



UCSI University organised a live online chat session for teachers with the theme “Teachers can make a difference: The Well-Being of the New Norm” on 20 June 2020. Associate Professor Ir Dr Jimmy Mok, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Student and Alumni Affairs, UCSI University and Associate Professor Dr Mogana Sundari Rajagopal, Dean, FPS, UCSI University, shared their experiences in traditional and contemporary pedagogy with the participating teachers.

Over 200 teachers nationwide attended the session. Highlights of topics included:

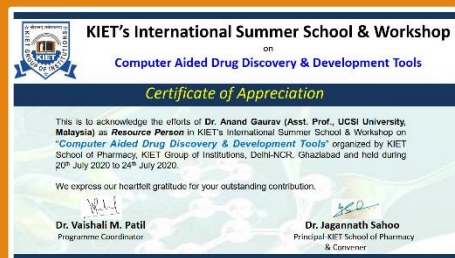
- Importance of well-being in the ‘New Normal’
- Recommendations and precautions from Health Science Perspective
- Tips to help you to adjust to the “New Normal”
- How to boost your well-being and to live in a different way?

The event received enormous positive feedback from the participants. Each participant received a certificate of attendance.

STAFF ACHIEVEMENT : INVITED TALKS

Assistant Professor Dr Anand Gaurav from FPS was invited to deliver a talk on "In Silico Methods for Accelerated Drug Discovery" in the web lecture series on Biological Sciences organised by VBSP University, Jaunpur, India on 26 June 2020. In another invited talk during KIET's International Summer School & Workshop on "Computer Aided Drug Discovery & Development Tools" organised by KIET Group of Institutions, Ghaziabad, India, on 20 July 2020, he spoke about the role of Ligand Based Drug Design in the discovery of new drug molecules.

Dr Anand was also an invited panellist in the Panel Discussion on the topic "Pharmacy as the Backbone of Healthcare System: Brainstorming to restore its glory" organised by Amity University, Noida, India on 3 May 2020. He talked about the role of NGO pharmacists in healthcare.



R&D PRP @ FPS

Fully Registered Pharmacists (FRP) are recognised by the Ministry of Health Malaysia as the custodians of drugs in the nation. To attain the FRP status, graduates from the Bachelor of Pharmacy programmes are required to undergo a 52-week Provisionally Registered Pharmacist (PRP) training at recognised premises. Although many graduates select the traditional PRP pathways of hospital, community, and industry pharmacy, the research and development (R&D) pathway is now getting more and more attention.

Under the R&D pathway, PRPs will be equipped with the experience of both research and the fundamentals of hospital pharmacy practice. The 52-week R&D PRP training is split into two compulsory modules: a 40-week research training with their respective research supervisor, and a 12-week attachment at a hospital pharmacy to learn both inpatient and outpatient pharmacy practices.

FPS, UCSI University is recognised by

the Pharmacy Board Malaysia as a qualified PRP training facility. PRPs may opt for their PRP training alongside their preferred postgraduate programme, gaining both postgraduate and FRP qualification at the same time. PRPs may select varying disciplines to suit their interest, including clinical pharmacy, pharmaceutical technology, and pharmaceutical chemistry. Those who qualify may even enrol directly into the PhD programme. Throughout the PRP training, the preceptors from UCSI University and hospitals will guide PRPs through the various learning experiences at the premise.

With the advantage of gaining postgraduate qualification and FRP status at the same time, R&D PRP is an exciting pathway which many pharmacists should explore!

Please contact Yap Chuan Sheng (YapCS@ucsiuniversity.edu.my/0129807488) for more information.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: GABRIEL A. AKOWUAH



Dr Akowuah has regularly supervised postgraduate research projects and acquired several research grants. He is the author of over 60 publications in journals of international reputation and has conducted 30 presentations at national and international conferences.

Dr Akowuah has served as an external examiner to evaluate PhD theses of several local and international universities. He is the editorial board member of several journals of international reputation such as Journal of Medicinal Chemistry and Toxicology, The Natural Product Journal, Journal of Diabetes Mellitus and Metabolic Syndrome.

Dr Akowuah has also received many awards during his career including the Bronze Medal at the International Inventions, Innovation, Industrial Design & Technology Exhibition (ITEX) 2005.

Associate Professor Dr Gabriel Akyirem Akowuah is the Head of the Pharmaceutical Chemistry Department at FPS. He has been associated with FPS for more than 15 years.

His areas of research interest include pharmaceutical, phytochemical and biomedical analyses, toxicology, pharmacokinetic and bioavailability studies.

PUBLIC TALKS @ FPS

FPS conducted an open online public forum titled “Drug Discovery & Strategies to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic” on 19 May 2020 via Zoom. The speakers were Associate Professor Dr Mogana Sundari Rajagopal (Dean, FPS), Anabelle Rose Joykin (Lecturer, Clinical Pharmacy, FPS) and Lim Huei Wern (Community Pharmacy Manager, Juzcare Pharmacy and FPS Alumni). The session was moderated by Mari Yanthi Daud Parinding (Senior Executive, International Marketing, Student Enrolment Centre, UCSI University).

The hour-long session was conducted to shed light on the virus, ongoing treatments, and updates on research, along with the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists and the challenges faced in combating the pandemic.

The constant evolution of the information regarding the pandemic and its treatment has spurred the Faculty to conduct the forum to clarify any misinformation among the public.

The forum was broadcasted live on Facebook with overwhelming success, whereby it was well-received with over two thousand views.



FPS LAB STAFF EXCELLED DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO), FPS staff continued its academic duties with full vigor. This included the online lab sessions.

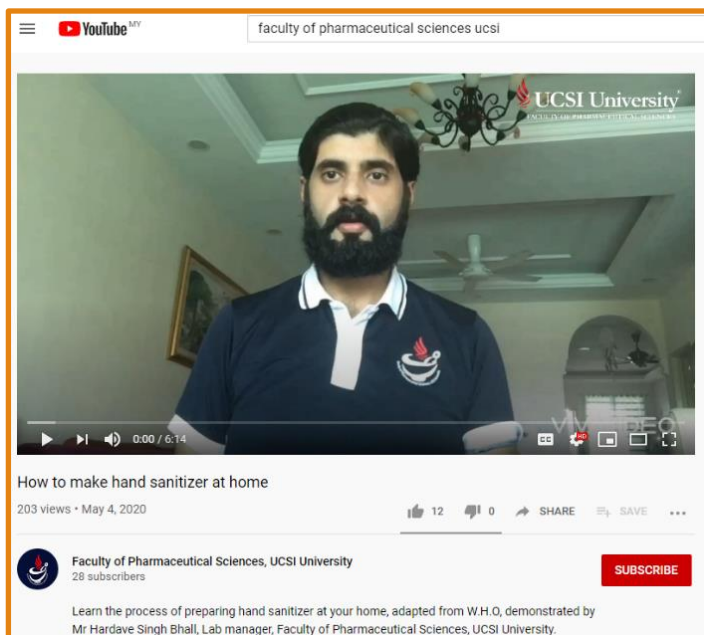
Online lab sessions were implemented to ensure students can experience the live practical sessions conducted by the lecturers and lab te-

chnologists, aided with videos and presentations for a better understanding.

FPS staff also ensured that they fulfil their social obligations. FPS lab manager, Hardave, shot a video on how to make hand sanitisers at home. The purpose of the video is to alert everyone that hand sanitiser can be prepared by themselves as the avilabi-

lity and the cost of getting it became a problem globally.

The team of researchers and lab technologists of FPS also worked together with Laurent Bleu in producing advanced hand sanitisers. The hand sanitisers were prepared, packed and labelled in the Faculty labs.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: NG YI LIN



Ng Yi Lin graduated with a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) from UCSI University in 2012. She started like any other pharmacy graduates and performed her provisional registration years in Hospital Putrajaya. She then adventurously chose to embark on a new journey to relatively remote location of Sabah (Hospital Lahad Datu).

She believes that her graduation ceremony marks the beginning of a self-motivated lifelong learning cycle, which enabled her to contribute continuously to healthcare.

She served as a clinical pharmacist in pediatric and neonatal wards, working closely with pediatric specialists, medical officers, and other healthcare professionals in ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines for patients.

After many years of service in the clinical field, she challenged herself with a new role in the pharmaceutical industry as a member of drug safety team, focusing on pharmacovigilance of various medicines.

Yi Lin actively shares her knowledge and experience with other healthcare professionals, public, and students to improve nationwide awareness on pharmacovigilance.

Yi Lin is now the Drug Safety Lead of her team and they are in the quest for advancing patient's safety in Malaysia.

Did you know...

Malaysia has been recognised as among the top five nations in the world to have succeeded in controlling the spread of COVID-19

HIGH IMPACT PUBLICATIONS @ FPS

2020 has been a great year for FPS in terms of research output, whether it is grants or publications.

Here are some of the high-impact publications by FPS staff. Many more to follow in upcoming issues!

Lee et al. *Journal of Biomedical Science* (2020) 27:7
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12629-019-0590-1>
 Journal of Biomedical Science

RESEARCH Open Access

Neuropeptide S-initiated sequential cascade mediated by OX₁, NK₁, mGlu₅ and CB₁ receptors: a pivotal role in stress-induced analgesia

Ming Tan Lee^{1,2,3,4}, Yu Ting Chai¹, Yu Chen Chiu², Chia Chen Hsu², Hsin-Jung Lee⁵, Rimo Gunstani¹, Giuliano Calò⁶ and Jih-Chau Chiu^{2,6*}

Bulletin of the World Health Organization

Perspectives World Health Organization

Fostering local production of essential medicines in Nigeria

Omotayo Fatunmi^{1*}

¹ Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UCSI University, No. 1, Jalan Menara Gading, UCSI Heights, Cheras 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Correspondence to: Omotayo Fatunmi (email: kayifabolu@gmail.com)

(Accepted: 10 December 2019; Revised version received: 09 May 2020; Accepted: 12 May 2020) (Published online: 02 June 2020)

Bulletin of the World Health Organization (2020) 98:607–608. doi: [10.2471/BLT.19.235808](https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.19.235808)

Mogana et al. *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies* (2020) 20:155
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-020-01927-5>
 BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies

RESEARCH ARTICLE Open Access

Antibacterial activities of the extracts, fractions and isolated compounds from *Canarium patentinervium* Miq. against bacterial clinical isolates

R. Vignani¹, A. Alifkhan¹, M. N. Tazir¹, R. Ramliza¹ and C. Wasi^{1*}

Heliyon (2020) 6:15982 | doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.15982

Check for updates

CellPress Heliyon

Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/heliyon

Research article

Beneficial effect of standardized extracts of *Amorphophallus paeonifolius* tuber and its active constituents on experimental constipation in rats

Yadu Nandan Dey^{1,2,3,4*}, Manish M. Wanjari⁵, Bhavana Srivastava¹, Dharmendra Kumar^{6,7}, Deepali Sharma⁸, Jyoti Sharma⁹, Sudeeshi Gaidhadi¹⁰

¹ School of Pharmaceutical Technology, Aditya Education Services, Kharaj, New Prasad, Delhi
² National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Deemed to be University, Sector-25, Gurgaon, Haryana
³ Centre for Advanced Research in Pharmaceutical Sciences, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
⁴ Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, O.P.J.S. Group of Institutions, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh
⁵ Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi, India

STUDENT EVENT: UCSIPharmCare



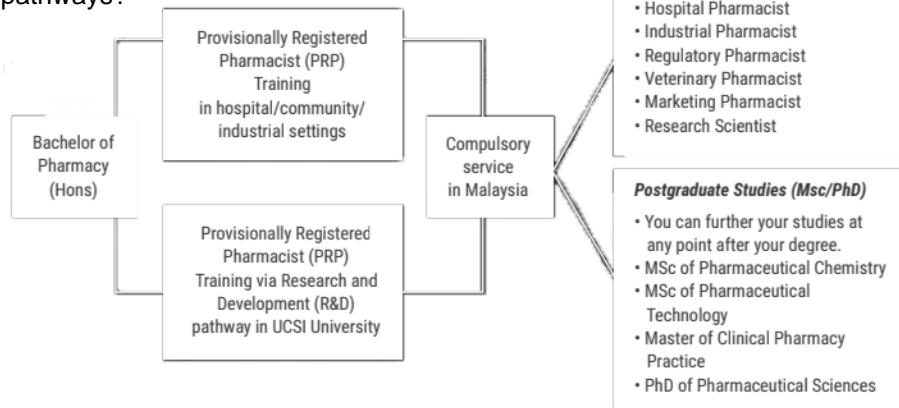
The COVID-19 outbreak has affected almost everything and UCSIPharmCare was no exception. However, this did not defeat the passionate spirit of the team to help the needy. Recognising that it will be a hard time for non-government aided homes, the UCSIPharmCare team decided to use all the funds raised by them to buy basic necessities and distribute sponsored items from Julie's Biscuits as well as Eagle & Pagoda Brand Teck Aun Medical Factory to the orphanage homes. Though the amount was small, the team believes that they can at least help in small way at this difficult time. They believed that a small action would make a big difference, and this was proved by the welcoming smiling faces of the orphans.

To avoid crowds, few representatives were selected to visit Pertubuhan Kebajikan Rumah Anak Yatim Sri Sai Selangor and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Kanak-Kanak Cacat Permata Hati Kuala Lumpur during the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO). Necessities such as kids' masks, hand sanitisers, vitamins and foods were handed over to the orphanage. Besides, a fund of RM300 was also donated to Pusat Jagaan Beribuan Kasih Kajang.

Anticipating that the visit restrictions may not be lifted soon, the team leader, Tan Xuan Hui, a Year 3 student and her team plans to continue working on several alternative activities. These include games, drug compounding demonstration and carrying out additional fundraisings so that they can reach out and fulfil the mission "Hands to serve, Hearts to love".

A SNEAK PEEK INTO FPS

Did you know that B Pharm (Hons) programme of FPS offers multiple interesting and rewarding career pathways?



FPS offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with the emphasis on serving the community.

Doctoral Programme

- Doctor of Philosophy (Pharmaceutical Sciences)

Masters Programmes

- MSc Pharmaceutical Chemistry
- MSc Pharmaceutical Technology
- Master of Clinical Pharmacy Practice

Degree Programmes

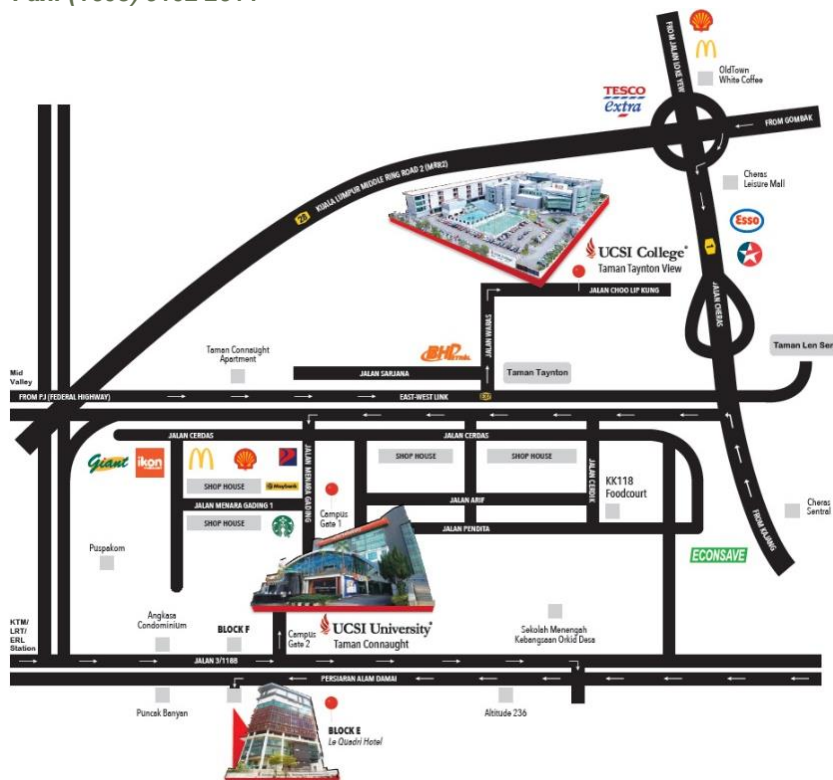
- Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons)

Foundation Programmes

- Foundation in Science (Pharmacy)

We are located at:

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- Assistant Professor Dr Ashok Kumar Janairaman
- Associate Professor Dr Gabriel A. Akowuah
- Yap Chuan Sheng
- Assistant Professor Dr Chew Yik Ling
- Por Choo Shuan
- Assistant Professor Dr Anand Gaurav

UPCOMING EVENTS @ FPS

- Complementary Competency Programme on “Introduction to SPSS” by Haryati Binti Anuar on 24 August 2020
- Complementary Competency Programme on “A Recent Update on Skin Delivery of Small Molecule and Macromolecular Therapeutics” by Professor Wong Tin Wui on 26 August 2020.
- Complementary Competency Programme on “Questionnaire Development and Validation for Research” by Dr Omotayo Oladuntoye Fatokun, Dr Lyna Irawati and Dr Aziz Ur Rehman in September 2020.

