



76th International Congress of FIP from a community pharmacy perspective

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The 76th International Congress of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 28 August to 1 September 2016. The event was attended by more than 2231 pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists from 101 different countries. The theme for the Congress 2016 was "Reducing the global burden of disease – Rising to the challenge". The delegation from South Africa consisted of 18 persons and included representatives from the Professional Associations, South African Pharmacy Council, Pharmacy Schools, the Young Pharmacists Group and Corporate Pharmacy.

The programme for the Congress was, as always, packed with worthwhile presentations and parallel sessions to provide something for everyone, depending on your field of expertise or interest. Presentations were complemented with a wide variety of (mostly) academic posters as part of the Exhibition at the Congress.

Overview of sessions

The Congress consisted of 39 sessions. Although most sessions focused on the overall theme of the Congress, providing a general overview of sessions is a daunting task due to the many presentations per session and the need to pre-select those topics which could contribute to community pharmacy in South Africa, including the strategic objectives of the South African Association of Community Pharmacists (SAACP).

During previous Congresses much emphasis was placed on matters such as pharmaceutical care and/or medicine optimisation. This year (2016), and this is a personal observation, there was a shift in emphasis to health literacy and the better use of technology in community pharmacies to improve health outcomes. Some of the sessions (which included various presentations) to support this viewpoint were the following:

- Technology to engage patients
- IT solutions for better care
- E-Health, M-Health, Smart health: Our health?
- The pharmacist is online: Social media for beginners

The learning objectives of these sessions were amongst others to¹:



- describe the role of pharmacy and pharmacist-delivered patient care services in (the) evolving e-health, m-health and social media environment to improve health outcomes for patients;
- describe how consumers will use e-health, m-health and social media for health and chronic disease management;
- describe how use of technology may improve access of service and patient care;
- explain the advantages and potential pitfalls of using information technology to advise patients and monitor their use of medicines; and
- explain the educational challenges that pharmacists and other healthcare professionals face if they are to be able to use emerging technologies effectively.

The involvement of community pharmacists in South Africa in primary health care and the provision of screening tests as preventative healthcare are well known. The same trend applies world-wide, which was illustrated by some of the following sessions, which included various presentations:

- Rapid diagnostic testing by pharmacists: Expand your horizon
- Essential tools to improve patient adherence
- Testing, screening and advising (hands-on practice workshop)

The learning objectives of these sessions were amongst others to¹:

- describe the value of rapid diagnostic testing in influencing patient outcomes;
- describe limitations of rapid diagnostic testing performed by pharmacists;
- identify potential sources of patient non-adherence and their implications for pharmacotherapy and medication management; and
- describe several approaches using new devices and counselling to monitor and influence patient adherence.

These presentations and many others will be available on FIP's website during October 2016. It would be advisable for community pharmacists in South Africa to take note of international trends in service delivery, also bearing the envisaged NHI system in mind.

Marketing of community pharmacy

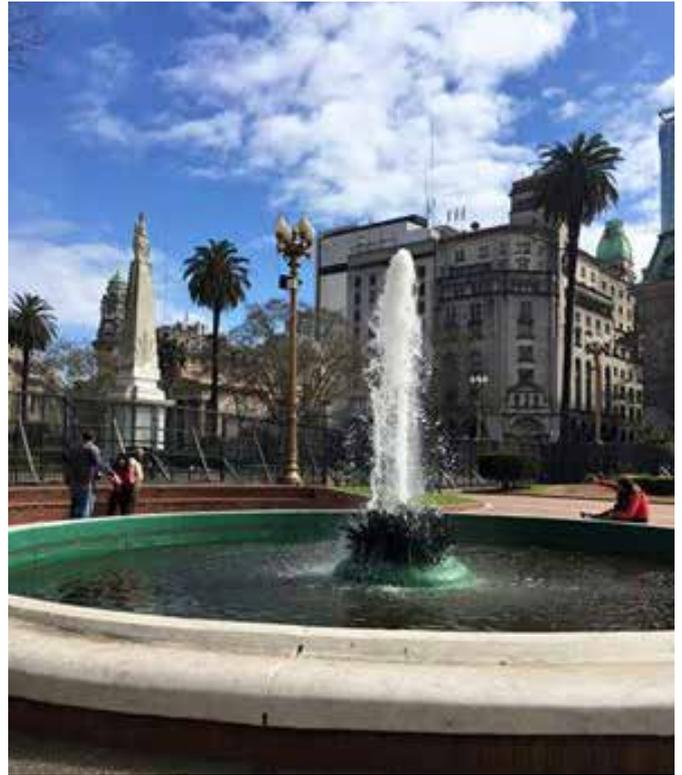
In one of the presentations the following words of wisdom were noted, namely: "when all is said and done, more is said than done" – this may be extremely applicable to the marketing of community pharmacy. Although some discussion took place around a CPAC (Community Pharmacist Awareness Campaign) initiative to promote community pharmacy in South Africa, more was said than done!

It was, therefore refreshing to hear about a similar, successfully implemented initiative by the Pharmacy Guild (Australia) during the session on "Strengthening the profession through great promotional campaigns". Two of the learning objectives were to demonstrate the impact of such campaigns and which messages used in different contexts have been more successful.

The importance of awareness campaigns was emphasised, in particular, during negotiations for new remuneration models with government or other payers. The intention is to invite a speaker from the Pharmacy Guild on its successes / challenges with the implementation of a community pharmacy awareness campaign to SAACP's 2nd National Symposium in 2017.

Community Pharmacy Section of FIP

SAACP is a member of the Community Pharmacy Section of FIP and attends its Steering Committee meetings during the Congress. The Steering Committee announced four webinars to take place towards the end of 2016, and which will be of great value to community pharmacists. The theme for the webinars is: "Take a breath: Caring for patients with respiratory disease".



Christine Venter, President of SAACP, with Mariet Eksteen, co-ordinator of the Young Pharmacists' Group

International liaison

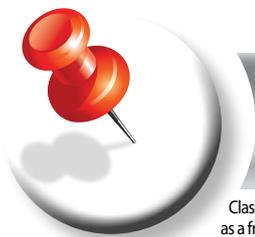
The 76th World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 2016 provided another excellent opportunity to meet up with old acquaintances but also to meet new leaders of community pharmacy in their respective countries. Information and trends could be shared and most important of all, benchmarking could be done.

It is in the informal (social) sessions where invaluable information gets shared and cross-pollination takes place, which could not be obtained from the printed or social media. Community pharmacy in South Africa is not practicing in isolation but is part and parcel of, and sometimes leading, international trends. It is therefore of the utmost importance to remain part of the international pharmacy environment, understand the global burden of disease, and support changes required to move from a "sickness care model to a health model".¹

The Congress ended with a closing dinner and Tango show. The 77th Congress of FIP will be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 10-14 September 2017. The theme of the 77th Congress will be: "Medicine and beyond! The soul of pharmacy" The 77th Congress will focus on new ways for pharmacy to provide more than just medicine – to consider ways of extending the role of pharmacists so that they are seen as much more than simply medicine providers.³ It is surely an event not to be missed, and in particular, for purposes of defining the role of community pharmacists in a NHI system in South Africa.

References:

1. FIP Congress programme, 2016
2. FIP Webinars: Information Brochure by the Community Pharmacy Section of FIP, 2016
3. Information Brochure by the Korean Pharmaceutical Association and the Pharmaceutical Society of Korea



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