

OPINION

PHARMACY STUDENTS GET DENTAL INSIGHTS

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Western Australian Pharmacy Students unite to bridge the gap between the field of dentistry and pharmacy

by Sarah Ho, Danielle Lim, Rachel Loh and Antoni Zeidan (Master of Pharmacy, School of Allied Health, UWA)

On 22nd of March 2023, the Master of Pharmacy students Sarah Ho, Rachel Loh, Danielle Lim and Antoni Zeidan from the University of Western Australia's School of Allied Health conducted an interprofessional workshop: *Dental Products in the Community Pharmacy*.

In collaboration with Dr Alex Park (Senior Lecturer, General Dental Practice/Pharmacology) and Dr Manorika Ratnaweera (Senior Lecturer, General Dental Practice), together with the UWA Dental Students Society (UDSS), they worked to create an educational event that would promote interdisciplinary learning between both Pharmacy and Dentistry disciplines.

This event was created as part of the "Professionalism in Action" unit (PHCY5631/2), which encouraged students to collaborate outside the pharmacy sector.

The sponsorship given by OzDent allowed students to have a practical means of learning by providing dental products and samples and food and refreshments throughout the night.

ADAWA's sponsorship allowed students to have the relevant resources used by both professions, including the Therapeutic Guidelines, the Australian Medicines Handbook, the Australian Pharmaceutical Formulary and MIMS online.

The cases presented were reviewed by Dr Janina Christoforou (Oral Medicine Specialist) from the Australian Dental Association WA (ADAWA).

The event took place in the evening at The University of Western Australia. Before the workshop, there was a networking component that provided opportunities for students from both fields to interact.

There were around 150 attendees consisting of students and professionals across different allied health sectors. The workshop comprised lecture-based materials and guided case studies presenting common dental conditions seen in both fields and promoted collaboration amongst the attendees.

Interactive quizzes took place throughout the workshop, titled "Dental Mythbusters", and a final quiz tested the content covered in the workshop. The workshop was split into common extraoral conditions, including herpes simplex virus, and intraoral conditions, such as oral candidiasis and mouth ulcers.

Case studies were integrated throughout to offer insight into clinical practice at the dentist and the pharmacy. These cases demonstrated the need for and importance of ongoing patient care as they transition from a dentist's clinic to a pharmacy.

Throughout the workshop, the participants were asked to collaborate and discuss with each other to solve the case study questions. The questions required a perspective from the pharmacy and dentistry fields, thus further exhibiting interdisciplinary partnerships.

The role of a pharmacist as a healthcare provider was especially emphasised when a dental script was showcased, and attendees were asked to discuss the medication's legalities, validity and appropriateness for the patient. The workshop was successful, with excellent feedback and good attendance from pharmacy and dentistry cohorts.

In the pharmacy field, it is essential to solidify professional relationships with other allied health fields to provide best practices, quality use of medicines and patient-centred care.

If these connections are not formed, it will create isolation and a lack of communication, thereby decreasing the patient's health outcomes. This workshop provided unity between the Dentistry and Pharmacy professions to build a bridge and catalyse further collaboration between healthcare professions.

We hope to see more of these interdisciplinary events in the future.

Sarah Ho, Danielle Lim, Rachel Loh and Antoni Zeidan are undergoing their Master of Pharmacy at the School of Allied Health, UWA.

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