

From Michael Jackson to the Beatles: how pop and rock idols are changing training and education

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) explains why attending the World Pharmacy Congress is a must for trainers and educators, as well as for those in practice

This is the last in a series of four articles highlighting what the 2014 World Pharmacy Congress, “Access to medicines and pharmacists today, better outcomes tomorrow”, has to offer.

Next time you want to convince someone to stop smoking, you could try working George Harrison into the conversation. Whether or not the former Beatle’s story of dying from metastatic non-small cell lung cancer at the age of 58 could be that special something needed to persuade a patient to change his or her habit for good is open to debate, but this approach does seem to be striking a chord with pharmacy students in Germany. Two professors at Goethe University, Frankfurt, have been teaching pharmacology, diseases and treatment options through the biographies of stars such as Michael Jackson (sleep hygiene problems) and Elvis Presley (metabolic syndrome).

“Our motivation for such type of lectures originated when we realised that people tend to be fairly irresponsible with their health. Medicine and pharmacy [have] made great progress in treating diseases but we still have a communication problem in reaching people and convincing them to be much more responsible with their personal health,” explains Theo Dingermann.

Learn from Freddie and Bob

“We wanted to create consternation by telling the stories of fantastic artists who died from diseases because they drastically ignored well known safety precautions,” he adds. The lectures are peppered with video and music, resulting in a package of educational entertainment or “edutainment”. The concept of edutainment has been around for a number of years, being used to address health issues, such as immunisation, and social issues such as teenage pregnancy, but its use in pharmacy schools is relatively new. It is now also being used to support pharmacists with their continuing professional development: “We get great feedback, and we are encouraged to continue preparing such lectures. . . . We know that everyone can learn from [them]. During the year we are frequently invited [to lecture] by the Federal Chambers of Pharmacists in Germany. Furthermore we also lecture in schools or lay organisations, with slightly modified scientific parts,” Professor Dingermann says. For those interested in experiencing pharmacy edutainment first hand, the professor will be giving two lectures at this year’s World Pharmacy Congress in Bangkok, Thailand; the first entitled “Freddie Mercury — living with AIDS” and the

second “Bob Marley and black skin cancer”. Whether you are a practising pharmacist or an academic, and whether you are interested in the topic or the demonstration of the teaching strategy, these lectures promise to entertain.

The theme of the World Pharmacy Congress is “Access to medicines and pharmacists today, better outcomes tomorrow” and Professor Dingermann’s lectures are part of its education stream. Education is undoubtedly key to improving access to health and delegates can look forward to other sessions, including “Learning from patients: experiential training” and “Is there a need to harmonise the training of industrial pharmacists?”.

Transform, scale up and create leaders

Participants will also be able to find out more about the important changes needed to pharmacy education through a session related to the recently published World Health Organization guidelines for “transforming and scaling up health professionals’ education and training”. “The guidelines highlight evidence of areas where transformative change is needed in education to produce a more relevant and quality health workforce,” explains Ian Bates, educational lead for the vision and competency project of the FIP Educational Development Team.

Professor Bates will be presenting the case for transformation of pharmacy education at the congress. “FIP has made a public statement of support for the WHO agenda for capacity building, linked with transformative education practices in healthcare. Bangkok will provide a platform for further discussion and debate with delegates, particularly focused on sharing best practices and innovations; collecting and publishing workforce data and country case studies; and plans to create up to four centres of excellence to stimulate further research, evidence generation and delivering of education programmes,” he says.

It is clear that a commitment to change and innovation is critical if pharmacists are to be equipped to expand their scope of practice and advance direct patient services that meet society’s needs. The session will also look at the important role of academics in creating leaders who can

lead transformative change in practice.

In addition, the education stream will see the launch of FIP's "Quality assurance framework for pharmacy education" (version 2). "A primary focus [of enabling the expanding role of pharmacy] is the development of an adequate and appropriate workforce, along with the academic and institutional infrastructure to deliver the required competency-based education and training. Such developments must be accompanied by robust systems to assure the quality of the educational processes and outcomes; the latter primarily being graduates who are competent," says Mike Rouse, lead for the quality assurance project of the FIP Educational Development Team.

Mr Rouse explains that in many countries quality assurance systems for education are well developed whereas in others they are still emerging. The FIP framework provides a globally-validated point-of-reference for establishing systems and defining standards at local, national, regional and international levels. "Participants at the session will learn that the quality of pharmacy education is not always what it should be but they will learn also about global initiatives designed to foster information exchange and collaboration in the area of quality assurance and quality advancement of education," he adds.

Implement strategies

Access to non-prescription medicines varies widely around the world. "Pharmacists play a key role in providing access to safe and effective non-prescription medicines. The delivery of non-prescription medicine [teaching] in the curriculum also varies in different pharmacy schools and colleges," says Seena Haines, associate professor of pharmacy practice at Palm Beach Atlantic University, Florida, US.

Dr Haines is co-chairing a session that will explore pharmacy practice in three diverse settings, discuss the classification and accessibility of non-prescription medicines, and highlight the differences and similarities of the pharmacist's roles in these settings.

Delegates will be able to hear about active learning methods and strategies for improving access to non-prescription medicines, including problem-based learning, team-based learning and gaming. "Participants will have strategies to implement upon their return from the congress for use in their practice setting or in the educational development of students or new graduates," she promises.

For those particularly interested in postgraduate education, there will also be a session on approaches to professional recognition, credentialing, advancement and development of expertise, with examples from around the world.

Whether you are a practising pharmacist, a postgraduate trainer or responsible for developing the future generation, the World Pharmacy Congress is set to provide you with new inspiration.

Find out more

The World Pharmacy Congress will be held in Bangkok from 31 August to 4 September. The programme is made up of six streams (Access to medicines; Access to pharmacists and pharmacy services; Access to information; Realising better outcomes tomorrow; Education, education, education; and Special interest symposia) all associated with access to good health. For further details visit www.fip.org/bangkok2014.

This is the last in a series of four articles highlighting what pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists will find at the congress.



Photo gallery



Learning through the biographies of stars – Beatles

Credit: Photo by [drinksmachine](#)



Learning through the biographies of stars – Michael Jackson

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