Message from the Director

It has been another very exciting and busy academic year at the School of Pharmacy as we recently started another new P4 class with their first Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs) for 2006-2007. Currently APPEs represent 25% of the curriculum for the Doctor of Pharmacy degree and we try to offer a diversity of practice settings for our students throughout New England and across the nation. Pharmacy as a profession has many unique practice opportunities that APPEs allow our students to experience. I would like to use this edition of the Preceptor News to highlight just a couple of these unique experiences.

This past spring, we welcomed two visiting French pharmacy students, Morgane Tiffaine and Melina Jaffre, from the Universite De Rennes in France. They were here to study and contrast the French and U.S. systems of pharmacy practice in the institutional setting. Lisa Stump, Director of Pharmacy at Yale-New Haven Hospital, graciously offered their institution as a learning site for these two students. Morgane and Melina were able to rotate throughout the hospital with their clinical pharmacists to experience pharmacy practice within the U.S. Both students had a positive experience and we hope that this can develop into an exchange program between our respective universities. Expanding the health care experiences of our pharmacy students in the global community better prepares them to meet the future challenges of our profession.

This edition of the Preceptor News also highlights some of the diversity incorporated into our experiential program. I would like to thank all of you who are actively supporting our experiential programs. Your dedication...
The French Connection: Visiting Students Morgane & Melina Enjoy their Stay in the States

Morgane Tefaine and Melina Jaffre are pharmacy students from Université de Rennes, a university located west of Paris in France. These students completed rotations at Yale-New Haven Hospital while living in Middletown, Connecticut and studying under the University of Connecticut’s School of Pharmacy. Morgane and Melina are interested in learning about the American culture and examining the differences between clinical pharmacy practice in the United States and in France.

Athough Morgane and Melina had a dream of spending one of their rotations in the United States, there were no study abroad programs at their university. Morgane recounts that she and Melina contacted over 40 different pharmacy schools in the U.S. in an attempt to find a university that would consider allowing them to complete rotations through their program. Morgane says, “Dr. Hritcko’s was the only positive response we received; all other universities ignored our request.” Their persistence paid off when director of experiential education, Dr. Hritcko, recognized the possibility of a future partnership between Université de Rennes in France and the University of Connecticut. Dr. Hritcko coordinated the students’ rotations with Yale-New Haven Hospital, and also organized their accommodations with two other UConn students in Middletown.

“We owe a debt of gratitude to the pharmacy team at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Without their cooperation and assistance, we would never have been able to provide a meaningful experience for the French students.” Lisa Stump and her staff pitched in and put together rotations in seven different areas, including cardiology, intensive care and drug information.

Morgane and Melina were surprised by the amount of interaction pharmacists have with patients in the U.S. “In France, the clinical pharmacists have little interaction with the patients; most times they are just involved in drug development and stay downstairs in a basement all day.” They were also impressed by the responsibilities pharmacists had in the hospital. Both found that the pharmacists at Yale-New Haven were happy to answer any questions. In France, pharmacy students have little interaction with patients and are solely responsible for drug development, as opposed to America where pharmacists make recommendations and offer advice to patients. Morgane and Melina both agree that this was a great experience to see how pharmacy is practiced outside their country.

When asked if they enjoyed their time here, they both quickly responded “Yes!” The students went on to describe how everyone here helped their experience to be more enjoyable. From the pharmacists at Yale-New Haven, to Dr. Hritcko and the UConn students, everyone made them feel at home in Connecticut. Morgane and Melina returned to Université de Rennes with a new outlook on clinical pharmacy practice. They also bring home with them a new friendship between the University of Connecticut and Université de Rennes that will hopefully continue to expand and allow UConn students to experience rotations in France.

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assisting in the dispensing room. Several of UConn’s own P4 students, including Angelique Rovaldi, handed out prescriptions and answered participants’ questions. Other pharmacy roles in a POD include: clinical screening support; triage; dispensing and/or dosage form preparation; patient counseling; hip pocket training of lay volunteers; and staff coordination and supervision. Students had the opportunity to work alongside pharmacists and healthcare technicians as they participated in roles that required communication and pharmacy practice skills in a simulated emergency situation.

The SNS exercise is a critical part of the education of pharmacy students and professionals because it provides a simulation of a possible real-life event. Although Tyczkowski hopes that the training never needs to be put to use, the bottom line is “if something were to happen, it is good to have a number of trained people to help address the needs of the population.” After surviving an outbreak of the bubonic plague, UConn pharmacy students and healthcare professionals are prepared to deal with future community healthcare crises.
An Atypical Alaskan Rotation: Opportunity in Dillingham Amidst Yup’ik Culture

Sixth (P4) year pharmacy rotations provide students with tangible experience and act as a bridge, linking classroom knowledge to real world experience. Students are able to select their rotations; some are close to home, some take the student around the country providing new and exciting experiences in pharmacy. The rotations allow students to venture out, experience new cultures, and more importantly provide students with new ideas and methods of practicing pharmacy. In October 2005, Sarah McCabe chose a less typical rotation, at the Indian Health Services (IHS) in the town of Dillingham, Alaska.

Dillingham’s population is 2,500 people; the town boasts 26 miles of paved roads and one pharmacy. The chief economy is fishing, mainly in the summer, leaving many locals unemployed through the winter. The population is comprised of white people and natives who belong to the Yup’ik Tribe. Sarah found herself working side by side with local doctors who encouraged her learning and valued her opinions. They were happy to answer her questions, about why a patient was on a particular drug or dose, and they also took her view into consideration. This rotation gave Sarah the opportunity to experience all aspects of pharmacy. The pharmacy in Dillingham is designed with an over the counter area. Pharmacy services for all of the patients because in rounds I was able to get a clear understanding of where each patient was coming from.”

In reminiscing about her experience in Dillingham, Sarah recalls that she also learned how to immunize. She declares that her very brave preceptor was the first person she immunized. Although now a part of the pharmacy education, immunization training was not part of Sarah’s education at UConn. Sarah explains that she was able, and very happy, to take part in the flu vaccination clinic that the hospital was offering to staff and to people in the community.

Sarah thinks fondly of the simpler way of life in Dillingham, Alaska where, she says, people are willing to pay much more for a snow mobile than a car. Sarah will take her new experiences with her as she moves on to a job in drug development at the University of Buffalo, where she just might need one of those snow mobiles.

Sarah said, “as a pharmacy student there, it was easy to coordinate the pharmacy services for all of the patients because in rounds I was able to get a clear understanding of where each patient was coming from.”

Local police and security teams patrolled the campus, highlighting the importance and seriousness of the drill. The event is meant to be enacted as realistically as possible, ensuring that participants from the healthcare fields will better understand the demands of such a crisis. When volunteers arrived on the scene, they were handed a consent form. Next, the “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station. For “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station. For serious, the “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station. For serious, the “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station. For serious, the “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station. For serious, the “victim” was sent to a station where they were diagnosed and assigned a color (red, yellow, or green) that corresponded to which path they were to follow to the next station.
What is Nuclear Pharmacy?

Nuclear pharmacy is a specialty area of pharmacy practice dedicated to the compounding and dispensing of radioactive materials for use in nuclear medicine procedures. Because the term radiation evokes dire images of danger, it is important to understand that radiation is found in many different forms in ordinary settings. Electromagnetic radiation is emitted from the sun, from signals sent from radio and TV stations, from radar used to track airplanes, and even visible light. Nuclear pharmacy involves a type of radiation termed radionuclides. A radionuclide atom has an unstable nucleus. Recalling chemistry, the nucleus of an atom consists of protons and neutrons. If a nucleus, for whatever reason, has an excess of either one of these constituents, it will try to “give off” the excess component and return to a stable state. By doing so, the atom gives off this energy in the form of radiation. There are many naturally occurring radionuclides. Any nuclide with an atomic number greater than 83 is radioactive. An atom’s atomic number is simply the total number of protons found in the nucleus. There are also many naturally occurring radionuclides with lower atomic numbers. While some radionuclides occur naturally in the environment, there is another class of man-made or artificial radionuclides. Artificial radionuclides are generally produced in a cyclotron or some other particle accelerator, in which a stable nucleus is bombarded with specific particles (neutrons, protons, electrons or some combination of these). This makes the nucleus of the starting material unstable, and causes the nucleus to try to become stable by emitting radioactivity.

Nuclear medicine uses small quantities of radioactive materials with a known type of emission. By tagging the radioactive source to some compound that is known to localize in a specific area of the body, the compound will carry the radioactive material to the desired site. By using a specific detection device called a gamma camera, it is possible to detect the emissions given off by the radioactive material and create images of the relative distribution of the radioactive source in the body.

A nuclear medicine began to develop in the early 1970s, the concept of centralized nuclear pharmacies evolved to meet the growing demand. The centralized nuclear pharmacy serves as a “drugstore” for the nuclear medicine department of many hospitals. When a particular radioactive material was needed, a trained nuclear pharmacist was available to prepare the product and dispense it to the end user. The operation of a

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Dr. Smith Leads Pharmacy Practice

Marie Smith, Pharm.D., has been appointed as the new Department Head of Pharmacy Practice and Clinical Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy. As an exceptionally educated and innovative leader, she brings a wealth of academic and business acumen to this position, along with energy, enthusiasm, and a strong commitment to enhancing the appropriate use of medications in society.

Dr. Smith is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and the Medical College of Virginia (Pharm.D). She completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency Program at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA and has completed post graduate work in global leadership executive education at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and INSEAD (France), in addition to a one-year fellowship in change management at Johns Hopkins University.

In returning to UConn, where it all began for her, Dr. Smith envisions a bright future for the School of Pharmacy. Thorough collaboration and innovative leadership, Dr. Smith plans to build on the success of the school in bringing it to the next level of national and international recognition.

The University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy offers fourth year professional program students a variety of experiential rotations designed to link their didactic education to hands-on clinical experience. During their third year, pharmacy students select from 900 rotations offering experience in every facet of pharmacy practice. One rotation that is fast becoming popular is Cardinal Health, a nuclear pharmacy responsible for the distribution of radioactive products to hospitals in Connecticut.

One of only three nuclear pharmacies in Connecticut, Cardinal Health is an off-site pharmacy, therefore, there is no patient interaction. The nuclear pharmacy at Cardinal Health involves radioactive products that are used in imaging to detect tumors, aneurysms, irregular or inadequate blood flow and blood cell disorders typically found in the thyroid gland and the pulmonary system.

At first glance it is difficult to differentiate the Cardinal Health building from the medical and business offices in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Upon entering the Cardinal Health building it becomes clear that this is no typical medical office. A transparent glass wall occupies the back of the reception area and allows visitors to view inside the Cardinal Health lab. The doors into the restricted pharmacy area have signs on them that read “Caution: Radiation Area, Radioactive Materials, Authorized Personnel Only”. This place is obviously only for highly qualified pharmacists.

“Spotlight” on Professional Experience Sites

Cardinal Health

By Arielle Begin

“An outsider, the lab seems like a high tech location found on the science channel, but to the Cardinal Health pharmacist this is their everyday environment,”

Karen Hoang, Pharm.D., a friendly UConn alumna and pharmacist at Cardinal Health describes her daily routine. Her responsibility is compounding the drugs to add functionality. Since radioactive products have half-lives, timeliness is essential. Since radioactive medicine is very time sensitive many of the prescriptions must be filled overnight and distributed to the different hospitals during the day.

Karen Hoang is responsible for organizing the interns at Cardinal Health and providing the students with an accurate description of what the rotation entails. Students work hands-on to learn about products offered and the different ways to prepare them. The highlight of the rotation for students is the night shift they are required to work that gives the students a glimpse into the work of a nuclear pharmacist. Karen said that she first became interested in nuclear pharmacy when she chose her rotation at Cardinal Health. “I knew almost nothing about nuclear pharmacy until my fourth year rotation. Now I stay involved in UConn’s rotations to encourage students to get into the exciting field of nuclear pharmacy.”