

IN VIRTUTE

DEI

SAPIENTIAM

the power of wisdom

PHARMNOTTS ISSUE

19/20



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S FOREWORD

Hello readers!

It's that time of the year where we release the long-awaited issue of our PharmNotts newsletter! Strenuous effort and a lot of time have gone through in writing articles, combining them together and designing the newsletter itself, therefore we hope that you enjoy this newsletter as much as we enjoyed preparing it for all of you.

For this year's issue, we decided to retain the tradition of assigning an overall theme. Similar to the previous issue, the importance of knowledge is highlighted.



Inspired by Greek mythology, especially Athena the Goddess of Wisdom and War, we decided to show how power manifests within knowledge itself. Power is often associated with strength, bravery, wealth and authority - but we feel that knowledge should be connotated with the idea of power too. If knowledge is cultivated and used in the right, moral way, you too could be as marvelous as the Goddess of Wisdom and War (however please don't start a war - we don't need to make a thrilling trilogy). Therefore, we decided to name this issue **'In Virtute Dei Sapientiam'**, meaning **'the power of wisdom'**. Hopefully, our readers would be inspired to harness their wisdom as well!

A plethora of fresh new articles is included in this issue. Various students ranging from foundation to Year 3 from the School of Pharmacy have put their wonderful experiences and fascinating informative articles all in the form of words so that you too, could have a taste of their stories.

This year, our students also had the opportunity to participate in events that previous students didn't take part in before, and these anecdotes have been included in this issue. Moreover, we also had the chance to conduct interviews this time, so do look forward to reading them too.



This newsletter couldn't have been completed without the help of our graphic designer, Nazia. The aesthetically pleasing aspects of this issue have been put together by Nazia's creative potential. We are also grateful for all the contribution that has been done by the writers involved with this issue - all the captivating stories and articles you're about to read are provided by them.

Last but not least, we'd like to thank our readers for being the reason we produce these newsletters in the first place. We hope that we'd leave a positive imprint in your thoughts in every word and every letter that you read throughout this newsletter.

Happy reading, and remember that wisdom is powerful!

Kind regards,

Sarah Yasmin Sharuddin
Editor-in-Chief
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MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND PHARMNOTTS

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LAYANE ELBEHAIRY

PIZZA AND CHILL NIGHT 2018

What type of person doesn't love pizza?

A weirDOUGH of course! One definitely cannot deny the accuracy it holds, especially when one needs to pay a mere RM3 for 3 slices of pizza!

It was on the 28th October 2018 when PharmNotts had continued its legacy of imparting change for the best by organising the first-ever bonding night that was not limited to its members, but also to non-members who are students of the School of Pharmacy.

The event aimed to strengthen bonds between the members whilst giving them the opportunity to unwind from the hectic student lives.

It delighted me as to how Pizza and Chill Night managed to get an overwhelming response within a few days after registration was open, and for that, I would like to applaud the participants for being topped-full pizza lovers!



The night started off with 'Human Bingo', where each participant was given a paper with 5x5 boxes and required to seek out others whose trait matches with a description written on one of the boxes. The person is then asked to pen down their name to mark that they acquire the particular trait, and the winner of this game would be the first person who managed to collect signatures on 5 consecutive boxes - either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. This night was meant for joy and laughter; thus a mere announcement would be rather mundane right? The catch is, the person who signed on the winner's paper would need to exhibit these amusing descriptions in front of everyone!



And that's how you know the superbly talented rapper, Ashley - spitting to Superbass, the amazing combination of Aaron and Chloe flexing their dance moves to BlackPink's Boombayah, and not to mention aunty Jia Wei's infamous rendition of the dance, which you can find on **PharmNotts' Instagram**.

WORDS BY NABIHAH HAMZAH



After the chucklesome moment, it was finally pizza time! I am proud to announce that a total of 23 boxes of large pizzas were completely devoured. Hype songs, good food, diabetic-induced beverages, and chill ambiance really keep the party going!

Once our tummies were stuffed and happy, we were free to roam around the venue and have some fun playing board games, cards and interactive activities provided with those we had bumped into. Ranging from the classics such as UNO and Monopoly, to the advanced ones like Cards Against Humanity and Pandemics, the participants were absolutely spoilt for choices!

This was all made possible thanks to the Gaming Society (GSoc) for loaning some of their abundance of board games -yes! that was only a few from their collection - to us on that night. The event wouldn't be as lively as we had aimed without their assistance, and for that, we are very grateful.

Just in case if any of you readers are into online gaming and board games, I genuinely recommend going to the GSoc room - just above the cafeteria in the yellow building - for some leisure time.



Since it is currently the middle of the autumn semester, it is understandable that most of us are occupied with assignments, laboratory reports, and not to forget studying. Some might even have other responsibilities on their shoulders to balance off. Noted that diligence is, of course, a virtue, but it is also of essence to know when to take time off and unwind. Life is about doing your best in all things, however, to continually exert yourself without respite would hinder you from achieving your maximum. Have you realise that the decaying and falling of leaves - a trademark of this season (not that Malaysia even have 4 seasons, but you know how autumn looks like), is trying to show us how beautiful it is to let things go sometimes.

BEING PART OF PHARMNOTTS: A SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENTS' SOCIETY

Come step into the life of Kit, a fresh MPharm Year 2 student and the president of PharmNotts at the time of writing.

Hey there! My name is Kit. I am 19 years old and I study at the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus as a Year 2 MPharm 2+2 student.

During my first year at the University of Nottingham Malaysia, I was fortunate enough to be elected onto PharmNotts as an assistant event manager.

I gained so much experience; hosting events, leading a team and I also sharpened my interpersonal skills, which was particularly useful when liaising with committee members and participants of the events I chaired.

With the ending of an academic year signals elections for a new executive committee and I was honoured to be elected as the President of PharmNotts in my second year.

In an instant, my role at PharmNotts changed as the president of a committee I love. I have an amazing team and we collaborate; planning events and activities to improve our student members' experiences.



I'm currently one semester through my tenure and we've rolled out our plan for the academic year. We're working rapidly to our goals and our events so far have been a success. Our very first event of the year was our annual Orientation Day, where we welcomed our Year 1 juniors and Year 2 exchange students to the Malaysia Campus. Various icebreakers, team-bonding activities and a lunch was planned and the Year 2 seniors decided to join in on the fun and participated in our 'Epidemic' session. My personal highlight of the session was how well the teams bonded, there was lots of laughter but some fierce competition which was great to see!



We ended the session with our yearly buddy allocations where the juniors and internationals are paired to a Year 2 senior as a buddy which is more than just a support system but also, hopefully, a lifelong friend!

Nearing the end of semester one, we held a Blood Donation Drive in collaboration with the National Blood Bank Malaysia. Held biannually, this sacred tradition of PharmNotts is where my faith in humanity is reassured. As minuscule as the act may seem it was amazing to see the turnout as countless, selfless individuals came to contribute to the cause and I sincerely hope this tradition remains constant at PharmNotts for future cohorts.



My team and I have been working on a new project as we intended to provide a platform for everyone in the School of Pharmacy to share interesting material. Not only have we revamped the website but also established an annual Pharmnotts magazine where pieces of students' researches,

professors' advice, PharmNotts event updates, etc. are featured.

We are nearing the launch date so keep your eyes peeled!

It has been amazing serving our members this semester, but second semester brings lots of excitement too as we have two industrial visits to two prestigious pharmaceutical manufacturing plants to provide our members insight into industrial pharmacy. In addition, we have our "Fight Cancer: Cancer Awareness Campaign" scheduled to launch mid-March 2019 and lots more.

My involvement in PharmNotts has provided me with so many opportunities and enabled me to improve on myself. My advice would be to ensure you get involved in a society, try your best to put yourself out there, go that extra mile, raise the bars, change the rules and when you can, be of service to those around you too!

“we rise by lifting others
- ROBERT INGERSOLL

"There can be no greater joy than that of saving souls."

With that saying, PharmNotts of The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus organised a Blood Donation Drive. It was held on 26th and 27th of November between 10a.m through to 4p.m, conducted in collaboration with National Blood Centre.

Likewise with the past blood donation drives, it primarily aims at raising awareness on the importance of donating blood. Thankfully enough, the 2 days long event attracted many students and staff. In fact the National Blood Bank announced that there was a total of about 140 blood donors!

This event would not be a success without the effective promotional strategies, active involvement of PharmNotts' members and support from the university.

I recalled that posters were put up around the campus weeks before the event, serving to promote the benefits of donating blood. As a strategic location is crucial in optimizing response, the organising chairperson and I both decided to hold the event at H1B04, the undergraduate room. We took into consideration its proximity with the cafeteria and also the game arena, where students frequently come by to relieve their days' worth of stress.

Directional arrows leading to the event venue were even placed on the campus grounds.



For both days of the event, volunteers and nurses from the national blood bank would begin their duty at 10a.m sharp. Before the donors could begin donating their blood, they would need to undergo some procedures to ensure the safety of both the donors and the receivers. Firstly, these donors were required to get their form from the volunteers and fill up their personal details which they were told to answer as truthfully as possible. They were then instructed to move on to the second station – the blood check. Here was where they were tested for their blood type and haemoglobin levels. With these parameters noted, the donors were led to have their blood pressure level as well as their overall health checked. Personal identity verification comes as the final procedure to categorised the donors based on their nationality (Malaysian/non-Malaysian) meanwhile registering them as official donors. The donors were subsequently guided to their blood donor chairs and the nurses there would facilitate the blood donation process.

The organising chairperson and I, the vice organising chairperson, were very pleased with how the event turned out after all of the hard work and time put in. It was rewarding to see the willingness of many in donating their blood - even the ones who were terrified of needles; all for the sole purpose of knowing they can make a difference and potentially save someone's life. The volunteers who helped facilitate the event also did a good job by answering to the needs and questions of the donors, thus causing the event to run without any hiccups. Overall, the event did manage to achieve its objective, which is to raise public awareness on the importance of blood donation whilst to give everyone in UNMC a chance to return society's favour.

It is saddening to know that only one in 30 donates blood out of one in three people who will need blood or blood products in their life. Therefore I strongly encourage more people to participate in the upcoming blood donation drive.



**BLOOD
DONATION
DRIVE 2018**

WORDS BY
NG HUI YING

Each year, MyPSA hosts NoGAPS, a nationwide gathering for pharmacy students serving to facilitate the formation of advantageous connections as well as the exchange of knowledge. The 5D4N camp started soon after the beginning of the new semester, and spanned from 28th September 2018 to 2nd October 2018. We were fortunate this year as the camp was held at Segi College, which is a mere hour's drive away from campus.

Ying Qian, Pei Shan and I made our way towards Segi College right after class that day. Unbeknownst to us, we were in for a rough start - road jams, faulty accommodation, and poor briefing. We felt helpless. However, the efforts of the emcees placed upon engaging the crowd at the opening ceremony soon lightened our moods.

Students from each university whooped and cheered as their university was called out, competing against each other in making their presence known. The atmosphere was brought to a boiling point as the committee wowed us with an eye-catching dance performance. Regrettably, the emcees soon called things to a halt and we were asked to find our teammates based on the colour of the wristband given earlier.

What piqued my interest was the fact that the groups were named after Greek or Roman gods and goddesses. As a former diehard Percy Jackson fan, I was pleased to be in the Poseidon group. After sorting out the usual cheers and group leaders, we were allowed to retire for the night.

The second day started with a series of workshops. Prior to the camp, we were asked to choose the path out of a few available options (community pharmacy, hospital

pharmacy, industrial pharmacy and research pharmacy) that we are interested in.

Needless to say, the former two options were high in demand hence assigned on a first come first serve basis. Pei Shan and I were assigned to the hospital stream while Ying Qian got the community stream.

A clip of a digital pharmacy in the UK was played during one of the hospital stream sessions. Albeit being identical to the one shown in one of our lectures, it was still interesting to see the others being fascinated

at the idea of a machine replacing a pharmacist or a pharmacy technician in the filling process. As the clip also showcased the pros and cons of having artificial intelligence (AI) in a pharmacy, a discussion on the future prospects of the usage of AI in large-scale pharmacies was then held.

Following the discussion, a Malaysian pharmacist shared his experience as a former pre-registration pharmacist. He also gave us a detailed explanation on the whole procedure which we were woefully uneducated upon. We became increasingly confused with more jargon being thrown about. In spite of that, I was told that it was overall an enlightening session as he also shared tips on how to be a pre-reg in a hospital, and the benefits of it. These provided a useful insight as half of the participants were in Year 3 and above, who will be either taking the forensics exam or going into pre-reg soon.

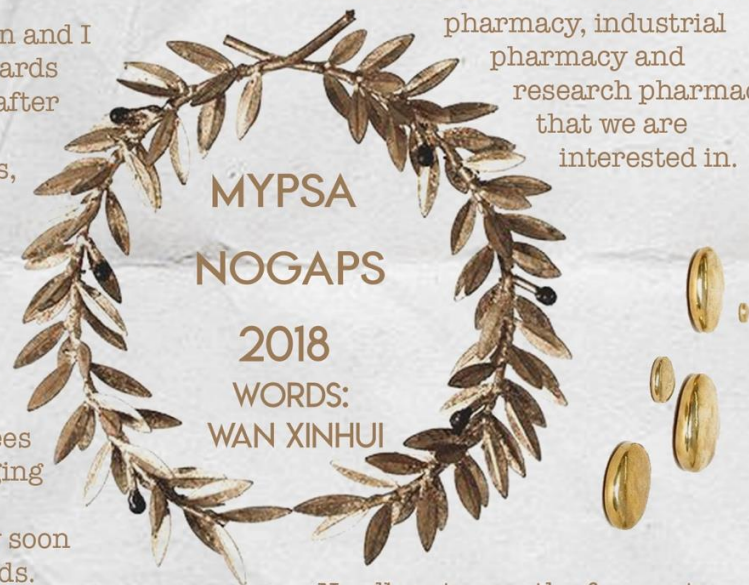
We were grateful for the less hectic schedule but we soon got to know why - Even before the sun had risen, we had to make our way to the campus around 6 in the next morning. After a briefing, the committee signalled the commencement of the highlight of the camp - The Pharmazing Race. It is a race of how quickly the groups could complete the missions (competitive games) of all the designated stations, which are tourist attractions scattered around Pasar Seni area. One by one, the groups departed with their guides, and each trace of sleepiness was wiped clean off our faces as we were pumped up for the main event.

We travelled to our designated stations through MRT and I daresay it was a novel experience for those from other regions.



Although our group decided to relax on the MRT and just think of it as a chance to tour KL, we unleashed our inner spirit of competition in all the station missions we participated. Thus, we emerged victorious in clearing many of the missions. Among those offered, the ones that my group favoured were "Guess the Song" and "Guess the Word". "Guess the Song" was especially challenging for we had to sing the song with Ahs and get our groupmates to guess it, while having another song blaring through the headphones. It got really hilarious at one point where we got incrementally offkey after each song. All in all, we definitely had a whale of time.

At the end of the race, we even snuck off to get some drinks before heading back to campus with the permission of a committee member. With lactic acid-laden bodies, we threw ourselves into another line of activities. In one of the sessions, we were asked to volunteer ourselves for a role that we thought we were best suited to. Some examples were The Best Leader, The Best Innovator, The Best Listener and even The Best Follower. The Best Presenter was the first role to be volunteered. The hall remained quiet as heads were turned to see if anyone stood up.



Quaking slightly, I rose and approached the stage. This act may seem trivial; but for someone who normally sits back and waits for others to lead, this was a huge step. A few people followed suit and soon, it became a race to compete for the role they desired.

Once the roles were sorted out, there came the problem of how to form a group with these roles. The witty emcees put our roles to full use and launched a debate on how a group should be formed. Sound ideas were being thrown about by the idea generator, which were then innovated by the innovators before the final decisions were made by the decision makers. There was an intense discourse between the members before the majority agreed that the leaders should pick their team members. Unfortunately, there was a shortage of some roles as not all groups had every role assigned to their members - that included my group. With apprehension and worry in our hearts, we retired for the night.



Our task was revealed the next morning, which bestowed some relief from the suspense of the previous evening. We were to carry out a small-scaled public health campaign. With minimal materials, we were to create our own poster based on the topic given and educate the university population. The topic given to us was smoking cessation. Without a leader in our group, our idea generator volunteered to take up the role albeit in name while the responsibilities are shared within our group. Our group sure was unorthodox. Without a decision maker, the decisions were settled based on majority's opinions. Looking back, it was amazing how everything ran smoothly despite a shortage in two pivotal roles. Everyone pitched in their efforts and soon it was presentation time. What we didn't expect was that the committee wanted the listener instead of the presenter to take the role! Nearly overrun with nerves, our listener bravely took up the challenge. In fact, it went so well that even the emcee questioned if she was the presenter posing as a listener!



After the presentation, we went around the campus to look for five people to present smoking cessation to. Alas, one of them was a pharmacy lecturer in Segi College! It sure felt strange to educate someone who is already familiar with the material. Fortunately, the next interview we had with a guy made this session more memorable - for he was in a dilemma as he wished to quit smoking but didn't know about nicotine replacement therapy. It was gratifying that our campaign certainly made an actual contribution to society by giving him a nudge in the right direction!

The approach of evening marked the time for the highly-anticipated Bollywood Gala Night. Putting on the finishing touches to our looks, we made our way to the hall where the gala was held. Everyone was dressed to the nines in traditional Indian clothing. Photobooths were scattered around and participants were seen in their coolest poses with their friends. Soon, the lively chatter of the emcees signalled the commencement of the event.

Amused by the good-natured bickering of the emcees, we prepared ourselves to be entertained by a series of performances. Some Indian students of Segi College put up a stellar performance consisting of both traditional Indian and modern dances that told a story of friendship and love. As the performance ended, the emcees announced the winners of the lucky draws.

My favourite part of the night had finally arrived! That's because we participants were led to an open dance floor with funky Indian music booming through the speakers! Soon, a crowd gathered in the middle of the dance floor and danced to the strong yet simple beats. Occasionally, there would be people dishing out mesmerising dance moves. We would form a circle around them and cheered at each climax. Time was nothing and we seemed to forget physical exhaustion. Although we yearned to stay longer, the night soon came to an end. We were saddened by the reality of having to return to campus half a day earlier the next morning to attend classes.

In short, this whole camp had its ups and downs. We didn't have a smooth start in the beginning, and there were certainly some awkward moments scattered throughout. However, in the brief period of 4 days, the connections I made and the soft skills I picked up sure did give this already meaningful event an added significance. As such I highly recommend you juniors to attend the next one, **who knows that this event may decide your future prospects as a pharmacist?**

YSP INDUSTRIAL VISIT 2019

Have you ever wondered about the amount of effort that goes into the little pills that bring you so much relief from diseases?

From researching possible medicines in the lab to manufacturing it in factories and finally, to pharmacies to be provided to patients; In the world of pharmacy, many processes are involved to engineer such miracles that are so common nowadays we sometimes take for granted.

In PharmNotts, we believe in learning through exposure and try our very best to add value to our members' student experiences.

On the 22nd of January, we organized an industrial visit to the prestigious manufacturing plant of YSP pharmaceuticals.

The visit started off with an overall presentation of the history of the company, the brand, manufacturing plant and the products it produces. It was great to be able to gain a little insight into the journey of a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certified pharmaceutical production plant. The production pharmacists of YSP industries also gave a brief introduction of how their machines produce those life-saving little pills/elixirs. The introduction was just a teaser for what was ahead of our visit.

After the presentation, participants were given a tour of a few of the facilities of the plant. These included the sterile manufacturing area, tableting machines, storage facilities where participants were given the chance to witness an active production line managed by the production technicians. They dressed in sterile white gowns which looked straight out from an alien movie we couldn't help but joke about how 'the aliens are coming! AHHH!!'. Overall, it was cool to be able to see what we have learnt in the textbooks come alive right in front of our very eyes.



Next, we were brought to the in-house Quality Control (QC) labs of the plant. There were 2 arms to this, namely the Chemical Lab and the Microbiological Lab, where stability tests and sterility tests were carried out, respectively. It was pleasantly surprising to see that the machines in the pharmaceutical industry that test for stability, such as the disintegration tester, tablet friability tester, etc were nearly identical to ours on campus. It's nice to know that what we're learning is actually preparing us for the real world out there. Besides that, the scientists and technicians in the Microbiological Lab were also super friendly and were open to our many questions. Again, it was really great to know most of the things going on in the laboratory despite our practical inexperience!



The tours went on for a little over an hour and we finally gather back in the presentation room. Some tea and snacks were prepared where participants can help themselves to some light refreshments as we received a final debrief. The chief production pharmacist was beyond kind and inviting for our many inquiries about life as a production pharmacist. She also provided us with many tips on our career pathways and shared some personal stories about her pharmacy student days. "Be relentless," was a common theme around her speeches and I am sure her words have motivated at least a couple of us to fight on.



DISCOVERING CAREERS IN HEALTH SCIENCES 2019: ALUMNI SHARING



This year, PharmNotts collaborated with BioMed Society, Careers Office and The Faculty of Science to organize a careers-related event. We invited several UNM alumni, each have respectively graduated from BioMedical Science, Pharmaceutical and Health Sciences (PHS) and Pharmacy (MPHARM) programmes, to share their respective career choices and pathways. This event aimed to explore and gather information for internships and future career prospects, develop a better understanding of the requirements and expectations of employers in health science industries alongside preparing students for the transition from university to the work environment.

The event began with a welcome speech by Ms Alicia, the head of Careers Advisory Services. This is followed by Prof. Dr Ting Kang Nee, the Head of School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, giving out tokens of appreciation to the respective speakers.

There consisted of four great speakers from some well-known and leading companies; namely Mr Puvaindran from Johnson & Johnson, Ms Amelia Andrew Nazareth from Novartis, Mr Lim Shi Hao from Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA) and Mr Shahrizal Shahrudin from Pharmaniaga Research Center Sdn Bhd.

These speakers conveyed their message for the students through their short presentations about their respective companies and some future job scopes the companies could offer. Up next was a panel discussion which focused on answering most of the questions the students posted for the speakers.

Finally, the event ended with some light refreshments, as well as a photography and networking session where the students could continue to ask questions in case some were not covered during the previous sessions.

Being an organizing chair of the event, I witnessed my team working very hard throughout the day. The flow of the event was smooth as per planned. Hence it did not come of as a big suprise to have received positive feedback from those who attended. What left me most satisfied is that we managed to draw attention from not only final year students, but also juniors from the respective courses; who seemed to be encouraged by the guest speakers.



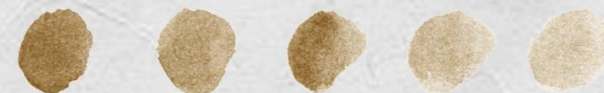
11TH MYPSA NATIONAL PHARMACY QUIZ AND PIALA AISHAH

WORDS: JOHN SU & CELINE THIEN



John is one of the participants that competed in the National Pharmacy Quiz, which involved challenging his knowledge that he learnt so far as an MPharm student.

Read along to learn about his thoughts on what it's like to compete with seniors!



This year, a team of 6 MPharm Year 1 students from The University of Nottingham Malaysia participated in the annual competition held at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Puncak Alam campus. The competition is one of the many annual events organized by the Malaysian Pharmacy Students' Association (MyPSA). The aim of this competition is mainly to provide a platform for the pharmacy students from different universities to gather and interact with each other, as well as to act as a channel of communication among different Schools of Pharmacy. This was the first time our university participated in this competition, and we had the opportunity to go against 12 other universities throughout the country. Among the six students, four of us competed in the NPQ event. Through

the few months of lengthy preparations and sleepless nights that the four of us have gone through, we managed to pull off a great fight and achieved a satisfying result, considering the fact that we were the youngest team among the 19 teams which consisted of year 2,3 and 4 pharmacy students from various universities.

Generally, NPQ consists of four rounds:

- Prelim round 1
- Prelim round 2
- Semi-Final Round
- Final

Preliminary Round 1 consists of 50 randomized multiple choices questions (MCQ) and it involves all four participants for all teams. In this round, the participants must answer 50 Multiple Choice Questions within 1 hour. After a hectic and stressful hour of 50 MCQ questions,

the four of us have managed to get an average score of 13.65% from 30%. This turned out to be quite surprising news for the NPQ competitors as we managed to top a few teams from other universities and at the same time, it provides us with the momentum to head towards the prelim round 2.

Preliminary Round 2 is an oral-based quiz. Total marks allocated for Preliminary Round 2 is 40 marks where challenge mechanism was also applied; every successful challenge earns 5 marks, while unsuccessful challenge will cost 2.5 marks.

In this round, our four NPQ competitors brought out their best abilities and successfully answered various questions correctly. We also displayed spectacular teamwork ability throughout the whole round, especially in the challenge session where we managed to correct other teams' mistakes.

In fact, at one point our team had led in total points scored which lasted for at least two cycles of questions. Eventually, we ended up with 9.38% among 30%, tremendously close with several other teams. Unfortunately still fell short to most of the universities.

Sadly, we failed to proceed to the semi-final round.





On the brighter side, through the various rounds that we have competed in, we have gained tons of knowledge and skills, and it also reminded us of our level of competency compared to the other pharmacy students.

Nonetheless, there is still a huge room for improvement for the four of us. Most importantly, the 3 days and 2 nights event have really strengthened our bonds and allowed us to make new friends from different universities, as well as broadened our scope of the pharmacy course. It also helped us to build up our teamwork skills as it plays a very crucial part in the competition, as quoted,



***Talent wins games, but
teamwork and intelligence
win championships.***

– Michael Jordan



After averaging the accumulated scores from both NPQ and Piala Aishah, our team has gotten 35.86% overall which was slightly above a few other teams and it was considered as a satisfying outcome for our team as it was our first try.

Personally, I find this competition very useful as the six of us have gained a lot from it. We had plenty of fun and memorable experiences. It was surely a pleasure to be able to compete with some of the top teams from various universities around Malaysia. Moreover, this short trip has definitely fostered the bonds between our team. We are tremendously grateful for the organizers as well as the committees for their immense hard work and commitment. Without them, our experience wouldn't be as great, and this event wouldn't be as smooth as it was. Last but not least, we will definitely come back more prepared next year and strive for the championship.



Celine on the other hand, competed in Piala Aishah, which challenged her skills in laboratory settings.

Just like the rest of her teammates, she also had to compete with seniors from different universities.

What I found most eye-opening besides being a Year 1 MPharm student competing against other Year 3 and Year 4 pharmacy students, was actually being introduced to a rather new event - compounding event. Compounding event was a totally fresh thing to me as it has not been taught or implemented in the UK system.

We have participated in the compounding event in a pair and I'm truly grateful to have had Sarah as my lab partner and teammate, as she's very reliable, helpful and co-operative. We were initially given two prescriptions and were required to accomplish the task within 90 minutes. That included our discussion, manufacture of 2 different medicines according to the prescriptions given, completion of two sets of 6-page worksheets, hand-writing 2 labels

for each medicine and cleaning up the workbench and apparatuses used in manufacture.

The prescriptions given were Captopril Syrup and Potassium permanganate solution. Both medicines were in the form of liquid but the methods of manufacture were significantly different. Prior to the usual manufacturing of medicines practical sessions we attended in Year 1, we were always given at least a week to prepare the batch manufacturing records and risk assessment forms. Completion of these records and forms were also done referring to UK sources such as BNF 74, British Pharmacopoeia and online database of Martindale: A Complete Drug Reference, Pharmaceutical Excipients etc.

The information that could be retrieved from these sources were very adequate, including the formula and ingredients of each type of medicine, their instabilities and hazards, thus allowing us to decide on the shelf life of the medicines based on our professional judgement. However, we were only given a copy of BNF '74 and British Pharmaceutical Codex each for reference purpose in the Piala Aishah competition. Both my lab partner and I were astonished when we realised that we could find no information about the formula and excipients from the resources given. We both panicked, as it was a rather difficult task for us to continue on the manufacture of the two medicines since we did not know what excipients to add into the medicines despite knowing what was their active ingredient. It was slightly more challenging for Sarah too as she had to calculate and figure out how to dilute the medicine that she has prepared. Another difference between Malaysian and UK system that I have noticed through the compounding event was that we actually had to create hand-written labels for the medicines that we have manufactured.

To be frank, I wasn't very used to hand-writing my labels as in UK pharmacy schools, we normally type and print our labels before manufacturing our medicines in the lab.

The only skills and knowledge I've learnt from Year 1 practical sessions so far that I actually got to apply during the competition was my interpretation of prescription, calculation of strength and amount of ingredients required to manufacture the medicine, method of manufacture and usage of BNF '74 for checking of dosage, frequency and route of administration.

Unfortunately, we did not make it to the final round of Piala Aishah Compounding Event. But it was overall a very eye-opening and challenging experience as it made me realise how different the pharmacy syllabuses are in the UK and in Malaysia. The local pharmacy students tend to practice more in compounding events. According to some UiTM pharmacy students, they practice 6 hours of compounding event per week. It was even more mind-blowing when I realised that what we did for the preliminary round was actually considered easy for the pharmacy students studying in Malaysian local universities. This shows how significantly different the Malaysian and UK syllabus are from each other, despite both being pharmacy courses.



Even though the competition was stressful and challenging, my lab partner and I were grateful that we had the opportunity to work together in this competition. Although we didn't manage to progress towards the end of the competition, we managed to hone our team working, stress management and time management skills. I've realised that these qualities are crucial in order to become a competent pharmacist in the future, and I'm thankful that the competition has allowed me to work on these skills.

ROUTE DES FLEURS 2019

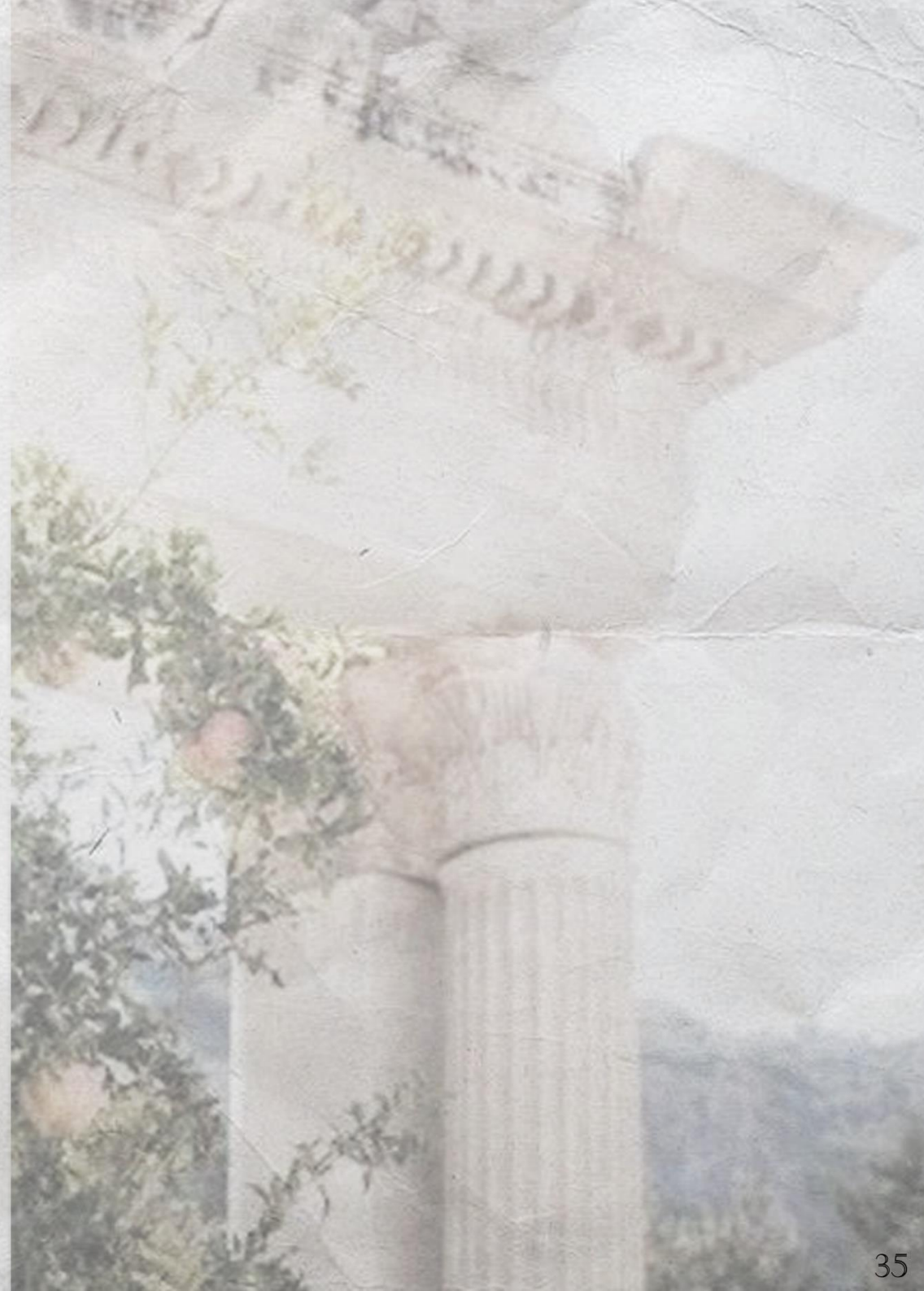
WORDS: SARAH YASMIN SHARUDDIN

*Follow us on the journey of
Routes Des Fleurs, where every flower
petal scattered is another bittersweet
memory cherished.*

The PharmNotts Ball is organised annually to create meaningful memories with MPharm Year 2 before they depart to the UK, and graduating PHS students. This event is built on good times, friendships and hardships that all of them went through together, leaving us with a sense of nostalgia and bittersweet warmth.

This year, the ball, or what the sophisticated would call, 'Routes Des Fleurs' ('flower path' for us commoners) was held at Dorsett Putrajaya. A humble yet beautiful hall was provided for us

to awe at the petals scattered on the red carpet, the cascade of greenery that frames the iconic 'Routes Des Fleurs' and the petite flowers that gave a splash of colour on each table. The floral theme for this year's PharmNotts Ball was further enhanced by the guests; both men and women clad in floral suits and dresses.



As the guests began to make themselves comfortable in their respective seats, the lights began to dim, then followed by darkness. Anticipation and curiosity began to fill the air. What did the organisers have in plan?

Everyone's questions and chain of thought were disrupted the very moment Cheap Thrills by Sia blasted through the speakers. The new, fresh batch of PharmNotts 19/20 committee put their pride down, lined up together and performed a flash mob. For the audience, it was blackmail material. For the performers, they've created a memory that will soon be repressed, never to be brought up again. For the sake of their dignity.

The performance ended with confetti poppers in the air, and a speech by Kit and Yong Chuan to commemorate the official beginning of the event.

The emcees of the event, Wei Nie and I, introduced the performers while the others began browsing the food buffet and savouring the meals provided. Velvety sounds of a saxophone filled the air, thanks to Melissa's wonderful performance of 'You Are the Reason'. The beautiful melodies that graced our ears continued on by Florence who sang 'Can't Help but Falling in Love with You' by Elvis Presley, accompanied by Ke Xin on the piano. Amidst the chatter, the melodies and the aroma of food, you could hear the clicking sounds of photographs being taken at the Routes Des Fleurs backdrop.

Soon after everyone has settled down and digested their food, the game session commenced. Led by Ashley and Huan, the games involved volunteers from each table to come up the stage. The session was called Minute to Win it, where participants had to complete a set of goals within one minute. The first game involved trying to get all the members to eat three crackers falling from their face within the limited time duration. It turned out rather hectic, with many participants trying to eat the crackers that eventually fall to their doom - the floor. The next session consisted of having participants passing a sheet of blotting papers from one end of the stage to another. The catch is that they could only do so by passing the papers with their mouths.

Inevitably, laughing and cheers followed as everyone witnessed people breaking proximity barriers for the sake of winning. The third game involved throwing peanuts from one end of the stage to other, in hopes that some of the nuts would fall into the cups.



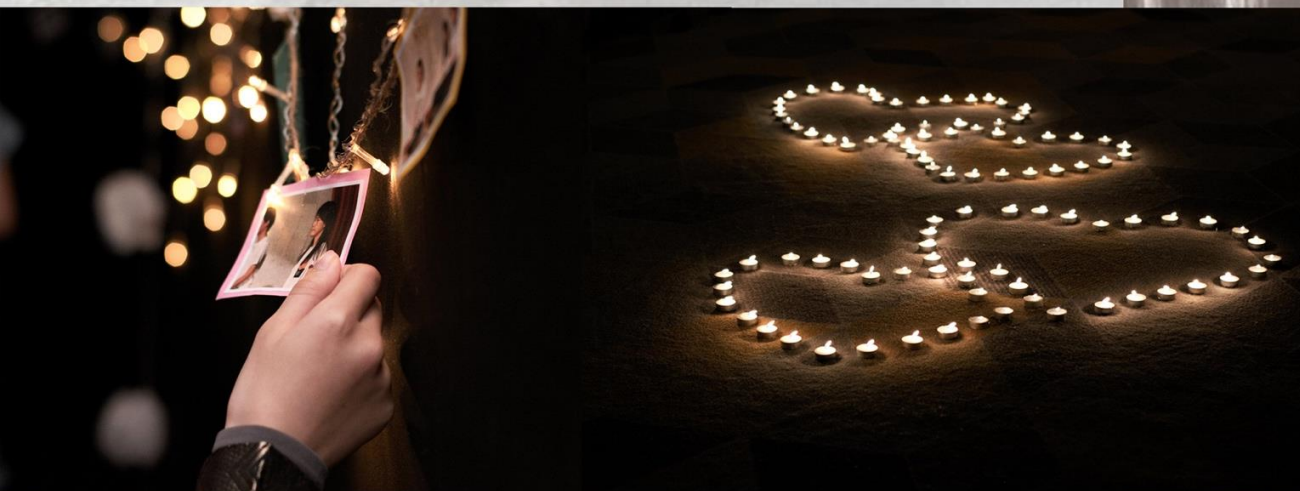
Apart from the game sessions and the lucky draw opportunities that were planned, the guests were in awe as they watched a dance performance by Aaron, Nazia, Janice, and Hui Ying. They showed us fluid yet snappy and upbeat movements as they danced to Ddu-du-ddu-du by Blackpink and Dalla Dalla by Itzy. However, the performances didn't stop there. A bittersweet, touching performance by Ashley, Yong Chuan, Nazia, and Janice followed, where they sang 'Way Back Home' and 'Safe and Sound'. Once the clapping of the audience has subsided, the guests were graced by another saxophone performance by Melissa, who performed 'Auld Lang Syne'.

As the time struck closer to 10 pm, the guests began to lose energy due to the chaotic games they played as well as clapping and laughing during the impromptu open mic karaoke. When we announced that there was one more game to play, they all looked rather reluctant, not eager to leave their seats. Ashley managed to convince them that this game was rather special and that it involved a certain punishment, unlike like others. The guests were asked to leave the hall to play musical chairs (with a twist) outside. This particular game of musical chairs follows the standard rules, however, more than one person can sit on one chair, as long as they don't topple over. It was hilarious to see guests trying to sit on each other (while for others, shove each other away) to remain in the game. Some polite gentlemen even offered their seats to other girls so they didn't

have to lose the game (maybe chivalry is not dead?). For those who lost the game, they were led back to the hall, only this time, the hall was dark and eerie. No one knew what the punishment was, but it seemed menacing.

However, instead of being greeted by a possible demon in the dark, they found that the dark, ominous hall was laced with candles softly glowing, arranged in a heart shape. Cascading from and across the walls were fairy lights, with each glowing bulb illuminating pictures of happy memories shared together among the MPharm and PHS students. Each picture that was on the wall, or dangling from the fairy lights were the embodiment of 'a picture is more than a thousand words'. The guests were in awe as they walked through the Memory Lane, impressed by the beauty and the bittersweetness that came along. Laughter was shared and nostalgic tears spilled, but it was definitely safe to say that the Memory Lane has left an impression and that it would leave an imprint in their thoughts for a while.





Once everyone had a chance to go through the Memory Lane, the guests were asked to be seated one last time. A video to commemorate their time in UNM was played, where pictures and clips of silly acts (and blackmail material) that has accumulated over the years were included. Laughter again ensured, followed by the constant gnawing of nostalgia. The event concluded at the end of the video, and some guests remained to take final pictures together near the Memory Lane before they make their way back home.

Despite all the hardships, assignments, and break downs these MPharm and PHS students have gone through, they all managed to make it in one peace and had the opportunity to make lasting memories one last time before departing from UNM.

Amidst all the stress that radiates around us, we sometimes tend to forget to have fun and make memories with others. We hope that the MPharm students make more meaningful memories in the UK, and we also wish good luck to the graduating PHS students going into the workforce or continuing their studies. They've left an imprint in UNM, and we hope that they would leave even more meaningful imprints in the future, no matter where they decide to go.

BPSA 77TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN NOTTINGHAM, UK

WORDS: ANTHEA MING



Anthea was one of the winners of the Reckitt Benckiser 'Responding to Symptoms' competition. She had the chance to attend the BPSA Annual Conference in the UK as a result!

The 77th British Pharmaceutical Students' Association conference this year was held on 14th April 2019-21st April 2019 at Nottingham, UK. It was a whole new experience for both Rachel and I. We learned a lot and were deeply inspired by this amazing opportunity. Before the trip, we already felt pumped up to fly across the globe and engage with people from different cultures and beliefs, despite rushing to meet the deadline for our BFI essay.

The event kicked off with conference business, where pharmacy students debated on motions such as "Should cannabis be legalised?" or "Should herbal medicines be taught during the course?". Once the motion was being carried, it will then be implemented into the BPSA policy. Most of the time there was a heated discussion in the room, where everyone gave out their views. Witnessing the scene of people fighting for the future of pharmacy, as well as their bravery to change the world, has made me stand firm and continue practicing in this course. The conference organisers took pride in their work - their sense of duty in making a better future for the

pharmacy students made them shine and motivated me to continue pursuing pharmacy. During the event, we also got the chance to listen to inspirational stories from various speakers of different pharmacy related professions. For example, we were told about the global opportunities for pharmacy students and how global issues have threatened public health. Listening to their visions and viewing things from a different perspective helped me to broaden my horizons and learn how to respect others' opinions.

During the Royal Pharmaceutical Pharmacy dinner night, every participant was assigned to different tables. This was a unique experience where we got to network with the members from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and many of the event's sponsors. Every evening, there would be different social themes for us to dress up and socialize. This is usually the most anticipating part of the day as the tense and serious atmosphere began to lighten up.

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The 4th day of the event was particularly exciting because it was Boots' day out! We got to visit the Boots headquarters. Boots has been the largest UK's leading pharmacy chain till present and we felt honoured to be able to visit them through this trip. Three of the Boots' pharmacists gave a brief talk about the different stages in their life as a pharmacist.



The fact that made me looked up to them was their ability and enthusiasm in their work, despite their nations, skin colours or religions. On other days of the conference, we got to select and attend various interesting workshops. These workshops are particularly useful as they provided detailed information according to our interests and choices. Throughout the event, we were also being introduced to the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation, which is a student exchange programme, exclusively for pharmacy students. Furthermore, we were also educated on the sustainable development goals of the United Nations during the Public health campaign speech by a BPSA member.



I feel lucky to be part of a Nottingham student and being able to get together with everyone was the greatest highlight of the year. This one-week program had been exhausting but exhilarating. Despite the sleepless nights and packed schedules, it was totally worth it! This conference had inspired me as much as I wanted to inspire the others. To our future juniors, my advice would be "Go grab this once in a lifetime opportunity and enjoy those moments!".

BPSA SUPER SKILLS BLOG

WORDS: SARAH YASMIN SHARUDDIN

Following the BPSA annual conference, Khushali visits the Malaysia campus to give tips to MPharm students on skills crucial in pharmacy, as well as tips to survive in the UK

On the 24th and 25th of April 2019, Year 1 and Year 2 students of MPharm had the exciting opportunity to take part in the BPSA Super Skills event.

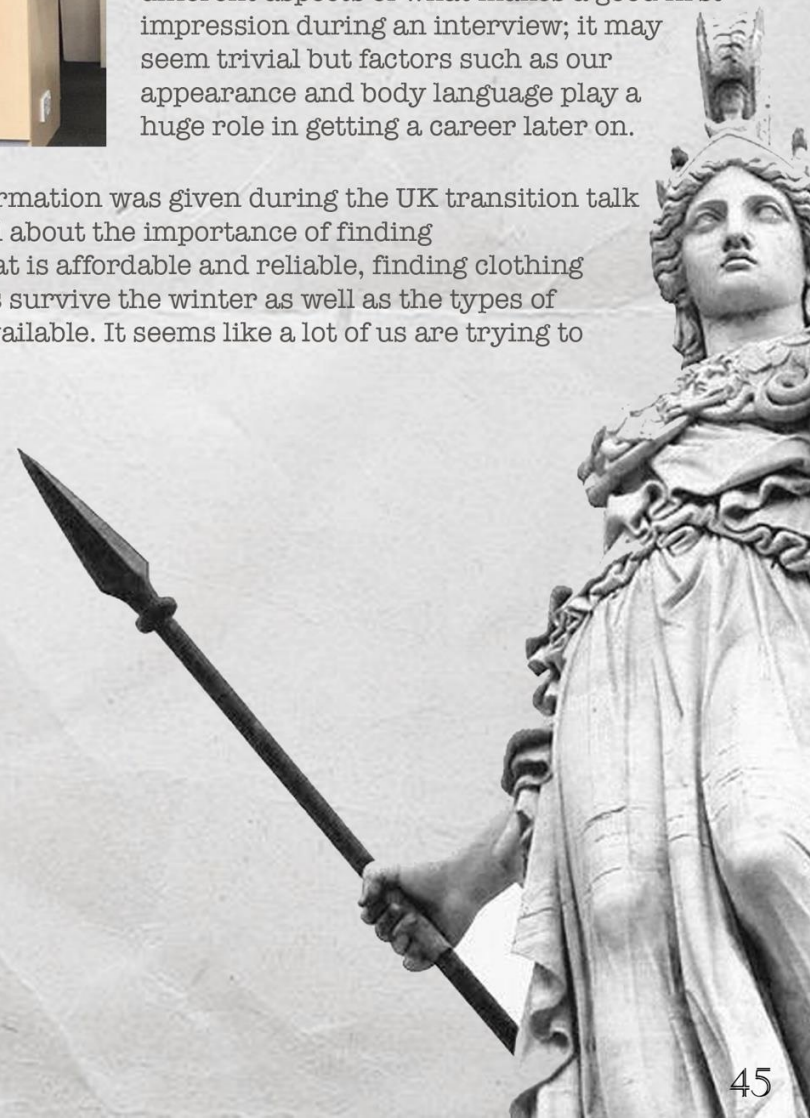
It was aimed to provide enrichment activities to hone on our skills essential for the MPharm course as well as preparing us for the role of being a pharmacist in the future. This event was run by Khushali Halai, a friendly and approachable 3rd Year Pharmacy student, who's also a member of the Pharmacy Society and is in liaison with the BPSA.

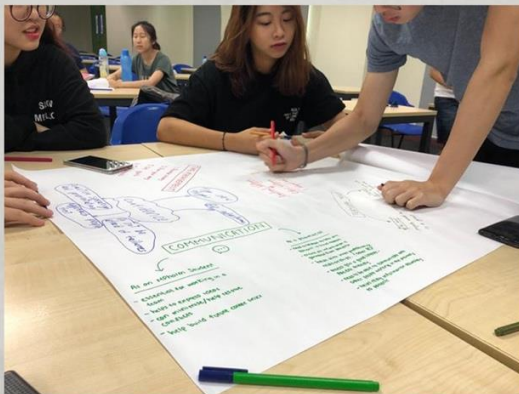
The first session began on the 24th, where we learnt about BPSA itself, which essentially represents all pharmacy students including pre-registration pharmacists throughout the UK. One of the highlights provided by the BPSA that piqued our interests includes the annual BPSA conference which provides a plethora of opportunities to develop on our professional skills, explore career paths and even make connections with future employers. We were graced by Anthea and Rachel's speeches on their journey during the BPSA's 77th Annual Conference in Nottingham during mid-April. Rest assured, despite the long-haul flights from Malaysia to the UK. It was evident that they had a wonderful time making new friends, participating in debates and enjoying the weather (that's not scorching hot!).



The day continued on with the next two sessions which involved a CV workshop and a talk about transitioning to the UK. During the workshop, we were told about the importance of being a 'well-rounded person' by being involved with other activities outside the MPharm course, as it shows that we have honed our soft skills that are vital in the workforce. Khushali reminded us that it doesn't matter what societies we were involved in, even though we think it's insignificant. Moreover, we also explored the different aspects of what makes a good first impression during an interview; it may seem trivial but factors such as our appearance and body language play a huge role in getting a career later on.

Various useful information was given during the UK transition talk where we were told about the importance of finding accommodation that is affordable and reliable, finding clothing that we can help us survive the winter as well as the types of public transport available. It seems like a lot of us are trying to aim for Dunkirk!





The sessions held during the second day gave us a chance to interact more with our course mates and our Year 2 seniors. We were split into two groups during the first workshop where each group had to draw a mind map of skills that were necessary to have as an MPharm student and as a pharmacist. The main objective of this session was to improve our presentation skills, which was cultivated when each group had to present their ideas. Khushali and the rest of our peers gave useful feedback on what they thought was good and what could be improved. The workshop then transitioned into an OSCE skills workshop where Year 1 and Year 2 students get to evaluate each other's OSCE performance. While it seemed a bit daunting, we had a chance to cultivate our communication skills and our OSCE performance. Year 1 students also had a taste of what OSCE would be like in Year 2 – it seems challenging! It was also a wonderful way to end the BPSA Super Skills event.

At the end of the day, both Year 1 and Year 2 students had learned a lot yet also acknowledge that there's still so much to learn. This event was a success, and it couldn't have happened without Khushali, as well as the executives of PharmNotts. We are very grateful for what Khushali has taught us, and we're also grateful for all the snacks and 'bickies' she brought! We wish her all the best and look forward to seeing her when we move over to the UK.

GET TO KNOW OUR CLUB ADVISOR

INTERVIEWED BY: SARAH YASMIN SHARUDDIN

Step into the life of our lecturer, Dr Val, as she reminisces her university days and talks about what it's like to be the club advisor of PharmNotts.



WHAT WAS YOUR REASON FOR CHOOSING PHARMACY?
HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN A FIRST CHOICE?

The reason why I chose pharmacy was because I didn't know what to do. They say if you have good grades, you need to do either pharmacy, medicine, veterinary, dentistry, and that's it. Initially, I wanted to become a lawyer because they told me "you [Dr Val] speak really well, you should become a lawyer". I did sciences but then they said "you don't need to waste it [good grades] on sciences -

what about healthcare?" and back then, Pharmacy to me was a very popular course. So I chose something that was very popular back then. Then again, it was something I regretted as well - I didn't use my gut instincts to choose. As a lecturer, I applaud all of you who came here because you know exactly what you want to do and why you want to do pharmacy. At the time when I was around 18 or 19 - I was a bit more indecisive.



IT'S A KNOWN FACT THAT YOU ARE A DOUBLE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM GRADUATE. WHAT WAS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM LIKE?

My specialised clinical diploma was done at the University of Leicester. When I went to other universities, I didn't think they were as great as the University of Nottingham. As a Nottingham alumnus, you are always thankful for where you came from and you are very proud of the university as well. It began with my degree - I made a lot of good friends, the experience was really holistic, and then I could call back as a PhD student. It's a big deal when I tried to apply for a scholarship - I gave it a shot and there I am.



IN GENERAL, WHAT ARE THE COMMON OBSTACLES YOU FACED DURING YOUR TIME STUDYING PHARMACY?

Life as an international student was really difficult. You miss your family, you miss everyone back home, you miss the food and you miss the weather. The emotional part was possibly the most difficult thing to get through. But study wise, as long as you put enough effort in, it's not that bad. For lecturers in the UK, you always need to email them for appointments - you guys are lucky here [in UNMC] all you need to do is just knock and barge in to talk to your lecturers. Generally, you get good lecturers so they'll help you out with your education, and possibly [life aspects] like adapting to life as a PhD student, international student, etc. Back then, there was no Echo360 - we were just given notes - at the time it was just handouts. Some lecturers used powerpoint, but at that time it was still new. [Beyond that], you do independent learning. Obviously, there were a lot of physical papers and not a lot of online papers like ScienceDirect, so you have to spend your hours in the library, looking up for papers one by one. To be fair, not everyone is good at teaching - some are good, some are bad. If you don't have anyone to depend on, always refer back to your tutor. If it's not your tutor, there will always be someone helpful enough to help you out.

YOU ARE A REGISTERED PHARMACIST IN BOTH THE UK & MALAYSIA. IS THERE ANY ASPECT OF THE UK PHARMACY PRACTICE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE BEING REFLECTED ON MALAYSIA PHARMACY PRACTICE OR VICE VERSA?

There's a lot; from OTC sales to how we handle antibiotics. In Malaysia, we are pretty much highly paid dispensers - they don't really consult us because of our expertise in medication rather than clinical work, which happens very little. As a pharmacist, you feel like you moved away further from the main city, which is KL. If you speak to other people from other hospitals, which is outside of town, they're pretty much dispensers and they forget things that they learned in universities. All the information that's vital for a pharmacist to know, they've forgotten it all because all they do is take the medication out of the shelf and dispense. In the UK, wherever you go, clinical pharmacy is the basic job that you will have. Every single day, you are expected to go through ward rounds and looking into other people's prescriptions. Community [pharmacy in the UK] is becoming like that as well - you have independent prescribing so you can start to prescribe POM drugs for patients who come in and see you at the community level. If that can be transferred to Malaysia, that would be great.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE LIKE AS A LECTURER?

I think it's good - I think this is my dream job. I think I finally found it and I'm quite lucky as well because I'm just bumping into all the different sectors blindly like coming into pharmacy blindly, not knowing anything about pharmacy. Halfway through in pharmacy course, I wanted to quit. So in second year, I told my family that I wanted to quit pharmacy because it's such a boring course; I couldn't stand it. I just wanted to get out. I had younger siblings, and I went there with my parents' expenses. So what happened was, I was forced to face the course anyway, and if I wanted to change, I can do so once I finish the course. So I dragged my feet on and continued doing pharmacy. When it came to dispensing, I hated it so much. I failed most of my dispensing classes because I couldn't be bothered. However, during the real examinations, I didn't want to fail so I put some effort in and managed to pass. After working as a pharmacist, I realised this isn't the job I wanted in long term. The good thing about pharmacy is that it can take you anywhere and it's quite flexible. As a student, I enjoyed the research part. When I'm here with you guys while doing research, it's quite hectic and hellish at the moment because with the Bacterial and Fungal Infections module running, you have a lot of things to juggle. I don't really have time to sit down and have my meals properly or have proper rest, but it keeps me going because this is the thing I really enjoy doing. You're running based on adrenaline but also endorphins because it keeps you happy. I enjoy speaking and teaching young people - it makes me feel alive that way and feel less older.



COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW IN TERMS OF RESEARCH?

At the moment, I am establishing my research in Malaysia. It's quite difficult because in the UK, I was given the facilities to run experiments and you get papers published. In Malaysia, when I came back, I had a lack of funding and had to start everything from scratch again. I got into a case based research by accident because my previous research was on airway inflammation. So coming in over here, the air quality was going up and down, depending on how the haze phenomenon was. So I took the advantage of using haze pollutants to treat on human cells, and I will see whether or not there is a way to study airway remodeling due to haze pollutants and those with potential to cause cancer. Also, airway inflammation is generally like asthma.

DO YOU HAVE ANY BITS OF ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO PLAN TO GO INTO RESEARCH AND ACADEMIA LATER ON IN THEIR CAREER PATH?

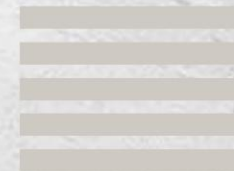
Possibly as a student, if you're looking into research and academia, at the moment try to do your best in your studies. If you graduate with a two-one its easier to get scholarships because at the end of the day, when you do a PhD you don't want to fork out from your parents or your own money. That could be the short term goal. Secondly, if you're really interested in reading and writing, which will be reflected during your final year project. The time you spend on your final year project will be the beginning of what you'd feel like as a PhD student. So if you enjoyed part of that, then academia is the one for you.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR JOB SCOPE AS A CLUB ADVISOR?

After two years of running as a club advisor and being with two different committees, you guys are quite independent and I have very little supervision with you guys. What I do is that I push you guys as a friend, and if you need any help or if there's anything can do to make your life easier, I'm here. But most of the time, I'll try to get you guys to do work on your own because its good to gain independence yourself and get that holistic experience, rather than being spoonfed. I enjoy it in a way its quite an easy job because you guys are independent, but at the same time, I also get to join all the activities.

WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS TAKE PART IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE MPHARM COURSE SUCH AS ORGANISING EVENTS FOR THE PHARMNOTTS COMMUNITY?

It's good to learn what the whole pharmacy feel is all about. As a member of PharmNotts, it's good for you to get the holistic experience that we cannot provide you in lectures and practicals. You learn things a lot more especially when it comes to human interactions. You will have a lot of disputes with your members, people who disagree with each other, and how will you come out from the conflict. In lectures, we dont make you guys quarrell with each other, so then there is no such human interactions on how you learn to deal with other people. But in your real working life, there is. So the society teaches you experiences in such a way, like "how do you deal with this problem" when it's in front of you. It's more realistic kind of problem.



SURVIVAL TIPS: ADAPTING TO THE UK

WORDS: CHI NGAI



Ever wonder how on earth you're going to survive if you were to transfer to the UK campus? Fret not, Derick is here to save the day!

It seems like it was only yesterday that I enrolled into the MPharm course and I remember being pranked by our seniors during orientation day. Fast forward to a few years later, here I am in the UK, almost at the end my undergraduate journey.

For me, it definitely took some time adapting to the new environment, time zone difference and weather, besides coping with Year 3 Semester 1, which had been a crazy roller coaster ride. The weather is ever-changing and during winter, the temperature can go as low as -5°C with icy cold winds and snow. Be sure to keep yourself warm and consider investing in a good quality, water-resistant winter coat in the UK, preferably filled with down-feathers to help block out wind and retain body heat. An umbrella may also come in handy during rainy days.

As for expenditures, the best cost-saving way is to cook for yourself as eating out can easily cost £5 to £15 per meal, depending on the restaurant, whereas your weekly groceries would only cost about £10 if you cook at home. By all means, pamper yourself once in a while

by eating out with your friends or trying out new food such as Scotch eggs at the Christmas market. I would definitely recommend bringing some comfort food with you such as dried shrimps, dried shitake mushrooms and soup packs and pastes like curry, laksa, herbal, etc although the oriental marts here are quite well stocked.

I am sure you would have heard of the dreaded "Week 9" exams in Year 3 at some point, which you have to pass all the components in order to proceed to Year 4. My advice would be to try your best to pass all, if not most of the components in the first sit so that you wouldn't have to worry about the resits along with your semester exams. Remember pain is temporary but your effort will definitely pay off in the long run. Throughout these times, my friends had been my second family and my pillar of support in the UK. Cherish the friendships that you have developed with your cohort as you will go through many ups and downs together.

Nonetheless, mingle around, make new friends, join different clubs and activities.

Make the best of your time here by immersing yourself in their culture and trying out new things. I personally prefer to travel whenever it's possible as the air tickets to Europe are considerably cheap, sometimes even cheaper than a flight from Malaysia to Thailand. Grab the chance to travel to experience the local culture, sceneries, and architectures while you have the luxury of time as a student.

I hope my sharing of experience would be of some help to you. Enjoy your time at the Malaysia campus, you will definitely miss it when you are here. I wish you all the best and I look forward to meeting you in the future.



MY SUMMER PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE - INTERNING IN A COMMUNITY PHARMACY

WORDS: TEOH JIA WEI

Summer break is the time for work placements, isn't it? I cannot deny that it is tempting to relax for three months after almost 8 months of continuous study, but a pharmacy work placement experience is definitely essential in securing your chances of employment in the future. With that said, I am more than fortunate to have been given an opportunity to serve as an intern at Caring Pharmacy, Empire Subang Gallery. I am really grateful to have gained valuable insight and experience on the operations of a community pharmacy over the past 2 months.

I remember having to reach the pharmacy half an hour earlier (at 9.30am) to 'prep up' the pharmacy - I have to clean the floor, stock up items, rearrange items on shelves... That is of course, with assistance from my colleagues. I was even expected to carry out some of these aforementioned tasks throughout the rest of my working hours.

At times I would be assigned more 'prestigious' roles such as a cashier or a sales assistant. These definitely allowed me to acquire some valuable skills; from effective customer service, to working collaboratively with colleagues of different sociocultural upbringing. Working as a sales assistant is remarkably enlightening for I learned to culminate enough confidence in recommending products to customers as well as recognised the importance of being an active listener.

There was a particular incident during my experience as an intern that consoled me from the boredom of my routine. One day, there was a customer who complained about a dull pain behind her sternum and feeling nauseated. Upon further questioning, several symptoms of heartburn emerge. It was an exciting moment for me as I finally got a chance to apply the knowledge that I have learnt from my dyspepsia module. I made a quick diagnosis of heartburn then asked her to consult the pharmacist to resolve her symptoms, though I also recommended her some ranitidine tablets. It was especially rewarding when she returned to the pharmacy two days later to thank the pharmacist and I. I felt accomplished to acknowledge her genuine appreciation for the help I offered.

This internship has definitely stirred my interest to work as a community pharmacist in the future. I strongly recommend my juniors to try out a community pharmacy internship during summer break as it is rewarding yet challenging. Moreover, life is not meant to be a flat road, so do push yourself out of your comfort zone and take up the challenge!

FOUR TROPICAL ORNAMENTAL PLANTS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ARE MEDICINAL

DISCLAIMER: THE PLANTS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE ARE NOT FOR SELF MEDICATION. MEDICINAL PLANTS SHOULD ONLY BE CONSUMED UNDER A SPECIALIST'S DIRECTION. THE AUTHOR AND EDITORS ARE NOT ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY MISHAPS RESULTING FROM THE CONSUMPTION OF THESE MEDICINAL PLANTS.

The tropics have been well-known as a hub of plant biodiversity. It is home to many species of flowering plants that yield valuable medicines, such as quinine. As a cradle of many ethnic groups and cultures, the distinct uses of medicinal plants by these people have provided invaluable knowledge for scientists in the discovery of novel drugs.

Medicinal plants are not the crazy-looking 'extraterrestrials' one would expect to only be unearthed from the deepest corners of the jungle. In fact, they are all around us in all forms and sizes imaginable; from the bush in the garden to weeds in the sewers. All it takes is just a keen eye for observation and an insatiable curiosity to notice them.

This raises a question: do ornamental plants have medicinal properties? Some of them do, however it is unfortunate that we often take our ornamental plants for granted. As most of us are well-informed on the medicinal properties of temperate ornamental plants, such as foxglove (*Digitalis* spp.), less light is shed on the tropical counterparts.

Therefore this article aims to raise public awareness of and appreciation on the medicinal value of plants, particularly tropical plants.

A brief overview on four medicinal, tropical ornamental plants are as follows:



***LAGERSTROEMIA SPECIOSA* (LYTHRACEAE); CREPE MYRTLE**

Lagerstroemia speciosa is a tree that is native to South and Southeast Asia. This tree can grow up to 20cm in height and it is mainly characterised by the attractive pink or purple flowers it bears. The shredded leaves of this plant species are used in Philipino folk medicine for the treatment of diabetes, obesity and kidney-related diseases. (Klein et al., 2007)

The compounds corosolic acid and lagerstroemin isolated from leaf extracts contribute to the plant's antidiabetic property. On the other hand, penta-O-galloyl-D-glucopyranose is a compound that plays a role in inducing weight loss. (Klein et al., 2007) As for the plant's use in treating kidney-related diseases, it is discovered that the compounds valoneic acid dilactone and ellagic acid reduce excess uric acid levels in the blood. (Unno et al., 2004) In addition to the scientific studies carried out on the leaf extracts that validate the traditional uses of this plant species, research on the bioactivities of *Lagerstroemia speciosa* indicate that it contains compounds for potential treatment against pain, cancer and infectious diseases. (Chan, Tan and Wong, 2014)

Fun fact: This flowers of this plant only bloom once a year in the peak of summer (June-July).

***CATHARANTHUS ROSEUS* (APOCYNACEAE); PERIWINKLE**

Catharanthus roseus is an evergreen herb that is native to Madagascar. It can grow up to 1m in height. This plant also bears pale pink flowers with a magenta center and secretes milky sap. It is traditionally used as an antidiabetic among the people of south and southeast Asia. (Nejat et al., 2015)

Attempts at researching the plant's antidiabetic activity in the 1950s led scientists from Eli Lilly to discover its anticancer properties. Two molecules with the most potent anticancer property were isolated and developed into what is known today as vinblastine and vincristine. Vinblastine is useful for the treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma whereas vincristine is indicated for acute childhood leukaemia. (Nejat et al., 2015)

Nonetheless modern studies prove that extracts of this plant possess antidiabetic activity. An investigation by Tiong et al. (2013) managed to identify the responsible molecule as vindolicine. Apart from the studies on the above properties, other research on the bioactivities of *Catharanthus roseus* suggest that the plant is of therapeutic value in metabolic syndrome, neurodegenerative and infectious diseases. (Nejat et al., 2015)

Fun fact: Due to the popularity of *Catharanthus roseus* as an ornamental, many modern cultivars with their flowers having interesting colour combinations exist.





HIBISCUS ROSA-SINENSIS (MALVACEAE); HIBISCUS

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis is an evergreen, woody shrub with showy, red flowers that is native to southern China. Interestingly, it is the national flower of Malaysia. Various plant parts of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, ranging from its flowers and leaves to its roots, have been utilised in traditional medicine across south and southeast Asia.

They are used for conditions associated with female sexual health (to regulate menstruation; for fertility control as well as abortion), cough, diarrhoea at the same time for the improvement of digestion. Furthermore, records in ancient Indian medicinal literature state that the flower is useful not only in relieving heart disorders, but also as a cosmeceutical by stimulating hair growth. (Maganha et al., 2010)

The hair growth potential of the plant is proven by a study conducted by Adhirajan et al. (2003). The plant's use as a contraceptive is explained by the presence of steroids. (Vasudeva and Sharma, 2008) In contrast, the role of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis in heart disorders is due to anthocyanins. An investigation by Gilani et al. (2005) managed to solve the paradox behind the use of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis in both constipation and diarrhoea. With regards to the plant's role in alleviating constipation, it is suggested that the plant contains compounds that stimulate muscles lining the gut to contract. On the other hand, compounds that prevent muscular contraction are responsible for the plant's use in relieving diarrhoea. The same reasoning is also implicated for its role in cough. In addition, extracts of this plant display antidiabetic and anticancer properties. (Maganha et al., 2010)

Fun fact: Hibiscus is also known as shoeblackplant because its flowers can be used to polish shoes.

CASSIA FISTULA (FABACEAE); GOLDEN SHOWER

Cassia fistula is a tree native to India that bears beautiful bunches of yellow flowers. It is interesting to note that Cassia fistula is the national flower of Thailand. The leaves and pods are mainly used in Ayurveda as a purgative due to the sennoside content. Other uses of this plant in Ayurveda as well as in folk medicine across the tropics include the treatment of skin diseases and diabetes. (Rizvi et al., 2009)



The flower extract is effective against causative bacteria and fungi for skin disease. (Duraipandiyan and Ignacimuthu, 2007) This confirms the plant's use in infectious skin conditions. The same researchers isolated 4-hydroxy benzoic acid, and demonstrated its antifungal activity. The wound healing properties of the extracts of this plant further validate its use in the treatment of skin diseases. (Rizvi et al., 2009) In terms of the use of this plant in diabetes, leaf extracts of this plant are shown to not only reduce blood sugar levels, but also exert liver-protective effects. It is deduced that steroids and triterpenoids from the plant are responsible for protecting the liver. (Bhakta et al., 2001) Furthermore, extracts from various parts of this plant show antioxidant activity. (Rizvi et al., 2009)

Fun fact: The yellow petals of the flowers are symbolic of Thai royalty.

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Many of us are familiar with the terms pot, weed and joint - but what is it actually? Cannabis (also known as marijuana) is well known for its effects as a recreational drug. It can be consumed in many ways; vaporised, eaten or smoked. Cannabis is derived from the flowering plant *Cannabis sativa*, where its other popular variants include *C. ruderalis* and *C. indica*. *C. sativa* mostly includes the psychoactive cannabinoid called THC (delta9 tetrahydrocannabinol) as well as the non-psychoactive cannabidiol, CBD. Since CBD is non-psychoactive, it moderates the 'high' that's caused by THC. Cannabinoids such as THC act on the receptors in the brain called cannabinoid or CB1 receptors.

Cannabis interacts a lot with our endocannabinoid system. This system is mainly responsible for maintaining homeostasis and is present in all vertebrates. The CB1 and CB2 cannabinoid receptors mediate the effects of endocannabinoids. There is also a higher number of CB1 receptors compared to CB2 receptors. The receptors are present because our bodies also produce endocannabinoids, called anandamide and 2 AG. Anandamide was discovered to cause further intracellular interactions in our body. The endocannabinoid system contributes to many different characteristics such as neuroprotection, motor coordination, appetite and pain control.

The cannabinoid that is responsible for the illegal use of recreational cannabis in most areas of the world is THC - the psychoactive ingredient that is found in cannabis.

It resembles closely to the structure of anandamide, hence why it's able to interact with our endocannabinoid system. THC is able to modify the functioning of orbitofrontal cortex and the hippocampus in our brain. These areas are responsible for helping a person to create "new memories and shifting their attentional focus". Therefore with the use of cannabis, it would result in one's ability to learn and perform certain tasks, as well as cause impaired thinking. Those under the influence of cannabis tend to be unfit for driving since THC also interacts with basal ganglia and the cerebellum - areas that contribute to reaction time, balance, posture, and coordination. The reason why users get 'high' under the influence of cannabis, however, is that THC causes the release of dopamine at higher levels than normal, causing a pleasurable feeling. Apart from recreational use, THC also provides medical benefits like inhibiting vomit and being useful in the treatment of patients on chemotherapy.

On the contrary, CBD, the non-psychoactive compound, acts differently from THC. CBD interacts with different receptors and acts in different ways in the body. It is also known that CBD decreases the psychoactive effects of THC, which makes it useful for those who seek the health benefits of cannabis without experiencing the 'high'. Multiple research has been conducted to learn about the health benefits of CBD. The most prominent use of CBD is seen in children

suffering from severe epilepsy that can't be treated with normal antiseizure medicines, such as Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS) and Dravet syndrome. Moreover, CBD is also used to treat insomnia and anxiety. It was only until June 25, 2018, where the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) acknowledged the beneficial effects of CBD on the severe epileptic syndromes. Epidiolex, a treatment for LPS and Dravet syndrome containing almost pure pharmaceutical CBD formulation was approved.

There are a number of unwanted side effects when it comes to the use of recreational cannabis. While there are many ways to use cannabis, smoking tends to bring more detrimental long term effects - similar to the effects of smoking cigarettes. Like normal cigarettes, cannabis smoke can cause heavy cough during use due to it acting as an irritant to the throat and lungs. Smoking

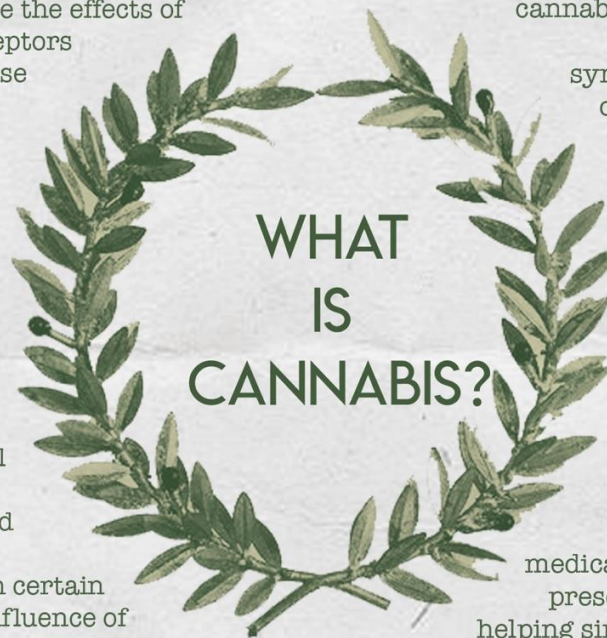
cannabis is also linked to increased airway resistance, large airway inflammation, lung hyperinflation and increased chances of symptoms for chronic bronchitis. In rare cases, the chronic use of cannabis, in general, may cause Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome. This condition is associated with severe nausea, vomiting, and dehydration. However, this syndrome may be resolved when an individual reduces their use of cannabis.

In terms of legal aspects of cannabis, the UK has changed its laws regarding medicinal cannabis 1st November 2018. Cannabis, previously a schedule 1 drug under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2000 (meaning it had no therapeutic value) has been moved to schedule 2 (controlled drugs that are recognised to have medicinal use and can be prescribed under certain circumstances). Despite it being legal, the prescribing of medicinal cannabis does not occur as often, due to a plethora of reasons. For example, GPs aren't allowed to prescribe cannabis-derived medications - only specialists can. Moreover, a patient may only be prescribed medicinal cannabis only if licensed medications aren't helping since cannabis is considered an unlicensed use. Additionally, a month's supply of medicinal cannabis is expensive - the NHS Trusts could meet the costs if necessary, but "the current position is that no cannabis-based products for medicinal use are routinely commissioned." There are many other countries where cannabis/medicinal cannabis is legalised include the

Netherlands, certain states in the USA and Argentina.

While the use of recreational cannabis is still frowned upon and can lead to jail time, people are starting to acknowledge the benefits of medicinal cannabis. The recent legalisations of medicinal cannabis in certain areas around the world highlight how medication and healthcare are constantly changing, as well as showing the importance of keeping updated. In the future, perhaps Malaysia might consider medicinal cannabis beneficial, but as of now... we'll have to keep dreaming.

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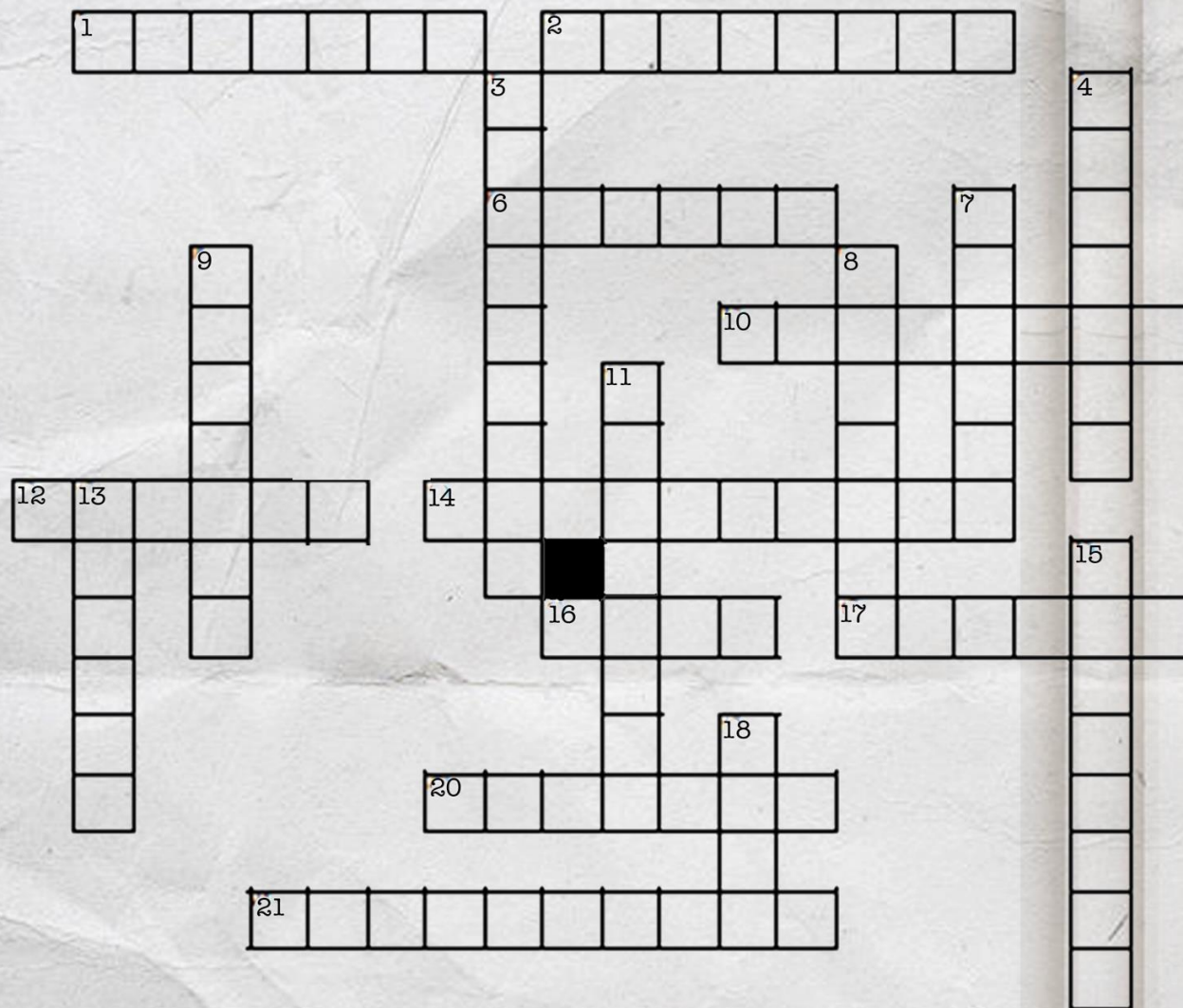


WHAT IS CANNABIS?

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/medical-cannabis/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/cannabis-the-facts/>
<https://www.healthline.com/health/cbd-vs-thc>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/52581a>

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https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/cannabis/en/
<https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/cannabis/>
<https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/medicinal-cannabis/>

<https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/synthetic-cannabis/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4789136/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vtc11kRinF4>
https://www.chic.ac.uk/vchemlib/mim/bristol/thc/the_text.htm



ACROSS

1. I am sometimes used as a poison.
2. I am not really an alkali metal but sense I have only 1 electron I behave like them.
6. I am a metal with 28 electrons.
10. What is the term that refers to the repeating patterns of chemical activity on the periodic table?
12. I am a silvery white metal used to make salt.
14. Elements that have both properties of metals and non-metals are called _____.
16. My atomic number is 79.
17. Elements to the left of the stair step line on the periodic table are called _____.
20. I am a metal that is a liquid at room temperature.
21. Elements are listed on the periodic table in order of _____ atomic number.

DOWN

3. The scientist that arranged the first periodic table.
4. I am the only element in the halide family that is liquid.
7. The vertical columns on the periodic table are _____.
8. I have 92 protoons and was used in making the atomic bomb.
9. I have 92 protoons and was used in making the atomic bomb.
11. Elements such as Hydrogen, Nitrogen, and Oxygen are called _____.
13. I am a gas with 8 protons and 8 neutrons.
15. I am the most electronegative element on the periodic table.
18. I have 26 protons.



Chemistry Crossword Puzzle

BY RENO TAN

ANSWERS:

ACROSS:

1. Arsenic
2. Hydrogen
6. Nickel
10. Periodic
12. Sodium
14. Metalloids
16. Gold
17. Metals
20. Mercury
21. Increasing

DOWN

3. Mendeleev
4. Bromine
7. Groups
8. Uranium
9. Uranium
11. Diatomic
13. Oxygen
15. Fluorine
18. Iron

PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS

S	S	T	N	A	S	S	E	R	P	E	D	S	C	G	L	V
S	T	I	J	W	K	Z	O	B	N	R	A	W	O	P	Q	Z
U	R	N	A	M	P	H	E	T	A	M	I	N	E	S	C	U
D	Y	I	A	E	V	F	P	R	E	L	R	P	G	Y	F	P
F	S	O	A	L	Q	Y	Y	X	S	Z	O	U	D	V	G	Z
Y	S	R	F	U	U	A	E	E	M	O	H	M	E	T	H	L
M	W	E	R	D	C	M	T	N	A	W	P	O	L	T	D	I
C	O	H	H	I	K	A	I	R	I	H	U	T	T	Q	D	L
O	V	R	D	W	I	V	X	T	V	E	E	G	G	A	P	L
C	E	K	P	P	L	R	X	K	S	H	D	F	I	L	S	K
A	C	K	O	H	A	L	L	U	C	I	N	O	G	E	N	S
I	T	A	B	O	I	K	V	A	Z	K	N	X	C	Y	H	B
N	A	K	F	M	E	N	R	O	I	A	K	C	A	R	C	D
E	S	R	C	O	N	N	E	K	R	O	M	D	X	S	Y	V
B	Y	I	S	Y	Z	I	H	A	L	D	D	S	T	J	M	B
G	U	E	N	S	Z	O	P	I	G	I	H	L	U	C	S	E
B	A	R	B	I	T	U	R	A	T	E	S	Y	V	A	G	L

PARANOIA
HALLUCINOGENS
ACID
ESCTASY
CODEINE
CRACK

OPLATES
DEPRESSANTS
LSD
MORPHINE
BARBITURATES
COCAINE

EUPHORIA
STIMULANTS
PCP
HEROIN
METH
AMPHETAMINES

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