

Report on the Pharmacy Research Awareness Symposium 2017

The Pharmacy Research Awareness Symposium is an annual symposium organized by the Department of Pharmacy, Postgraduate Committee and the NUS Pharmaceutical Society. It serves to build a platform of communication between students and faculty of the department to discuss research, ideas, and innovation. It also serves as a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate and postgraduate students to showcase their research findings to the community and expand their spectrum of research knowledge.

This year's symposium was held on 5th April 2017, at the Shaw Foundation Alumni House. The theme was "*Healthcare from Bench to Bedside: Optimizing Drug Development and Delivery*". The event saw over 300 attendees, inclusive of over 40 invited guests from hospitals, retail pharmacies and the pharmaceutical industry; 20 faculty and students from Nanjing Tech University; sponsor representatives; undergraduates, postgraduates and staff. The symposium comprised of invited talks from six local and international speakers, including a featured lunchtime speaker, as well as six postgraduate and undergraduate student presentations. There were a total of 156 posters and 16 prize awards.

The Opening Address was delivered by **Prof Christina CHAI**, Head, Department of Pharmacy, while the Keynote Address was given by **Prof Gert STORM** (Utrecht University, University of Twente, University Medical Center Utrecht, The Netherlands; Royal School of Pharmacy, Copenhagen, Denmark). Other invited faculty speakers included **A/Prof Thomas Hugo KELLER** (Experimental Therapeutics Centre, A*STAR; College of Science, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore), **A/Prof Josip CAR** (Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; School of Public Health, Imperial College London, UK), **Prof Roger W BEUERMAN** (Duke-NUS Medical School, School of Chemical & Biomedical Engineering, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Eye Research Institute, Singapore) and **Prof John CLIMAX** (ICON Clinical PLC, DS Biopharma, Afimmune; Royal College of Surgeons Ireland; Department of Pharmacy, National University of Singapore). In addition, this year's symposium had a Featured Lunch Speaker, **Mr XiangLiang LIN**, Global President of Esco Healthcare.

In line with this year's theme, the invited speakers and student presenters shared on how their research in drug development and delivery played a role in bringing healthcare from bench to bedside. Topics ranged from laboratory-based research to clinical research in patient populations, as well as merging informatics solutions such as mobile apps and automated compounding to enhance patient care.

Dr Kevin YAP, Chairperson of the Symposium Organizing Committee said, "This year's Pharmacy Research Awareness Symposium was a huge success. We had many interesting presentations from the invited speakers and students. I'm sure the participants gained many insights to the exciting research work that was done by our undergraduate and postgraduate students."

According to participant feedback, 90% of them felt that the symposium sessions met or exceeded their expectations, while 86% felt that the topics covered by the speakers were relevant, interesting and timely. In fact, nearly 80% of them indicated that the sessions would help them be more effective in their position.

The Keynote speaker, Prof Gert STORM, said that "It was a great pleasure to attend this well-organized lively symposium." This sentiment was echoed by Prof ZHU Yishen, head delegate of the Nanjing Tech University, who remarked that "It (was a) very well organised symposium!" ZHANG cong, a student delegate, also commented that he liked the "confidence and attitude of the speakers", as well as the "interactions between the speakers and the audience".

Shawn Ignatius TAN, a final year undergraduate participant, also expressed his thoughts about the symposium, "I felt that the symposium was a good opportunity to learn more about our friends' projects. I also found that the talks given by the guest speakers broadened my understanding of the various types of research done in the pharmaceutical field. All in all, the symposium was a good learning experience."

Through this symposium, the Department of Pharmacy hopes to showcase the wide variety of research conducted among the various research groups in the department, so as to foster more and closer collaborative ties with organizations within and outside NUS.



Prof Gert Storm delivering his Keynote Address.



Group photo of speakers, invited guests, faculty and student winners of the Pharmacy Research Awareness Symposium.



Prof Christina Chai, Head of Department, giving her Opening Address.



Symposium committee and student helpers at the registration booth.