***THE FOCUS FOR PHARMACEUTICAL
KNOWLEDGE***

The Focus for Pharmaceutical Knowledge

The Proceedings of the Sixth International Meeting
of Pharmaceutical Physicians
Brighton, England, June 1987

Edited by
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Foreword

It has been my good fortune to be present at most of the meetings sponsored by the International Federation of Associations of Pharmaceutical Physicians. Over the years, I have been impressed repeatedly by the high quality of these gatherings, and the atmosphere in which they are held. The topics covered and the invited speakers have allowed for comprehensive discussion of important problems in a format permitting the expression of different points of view with candor and without an 'agenda', hidden or otherwise.

The physicians in the pharmaceutical industry represent an important and unique force in that industry. They provide a special expertise in both the science and the morality of medical research and the clinical application of the medicines produced by pharmaceutical firms. This is not to say that non-physicians are either less wise or ethical than physicians; rather, these remarks are intended to emphasize that medical training and personal involvement in the care of the sick can provide a perspective not obtainable in any other way.

During its relatively short lifetime, the International Federation of Associations of Pharmaceutical Physicians has grown in a highly satisfying fashion. It now has 20 affiliated organizations and the Federation's newsletter reaches nearly 4000 pharmaceutical physicians around the world. The outstanding 'missing link' is the United States. For reasons which I do not comprehend, there is no association of pharmaceutical physicians in my own country. I hope that by the time that the next international meeting is held, the United States will join its sister nations in the praiseworthy efforts of the Federation.

The meeting whose proceedings are described in this book was a splendid one in every respect, with spirited treatment of important topics not often covered in scientific meetings. Its high quality indicates that the International Federation continues to perform a key function in our society's attempt to deal with one of its most important tasks—to discover, and to provide the public with, new and better medicines.

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Preface

This publication is in essence a report on the sixth of a series of meetings held every three years by the International Federation of Associations of Pharmaceutical Physicians. The first meeting was held in London in 1972, and it was there that discussions took place which led to the formation of IFAPP. Subsequently the growing importance of pharmaceutical medicine was recognized through meetings in Florence, Brussels, Paris, Munich and Brighton.

Over the years there has been a change in emphasis in the subjects which generate particular interest for pharmaceutical physicians and the industry for which they work. The content of the Brighton meeting reflected this. At these meetings there will always be great interest shown and lively discussion of topics, such as animal toxicity data and their relevance, design and conduct of clinical trials, drug interactions and problems of drug regulation in different parts of the world. The need for a more integrated and better system of post-marketing surveillance of medicines has been sharpened by widespread public and media concern over adverse reactions encountered with certain groups of medicines. This has led to company or licence withdrawals.

Today, concern over health care is demonstrated world-wide, and as a result the pharmaceutical industry must be responsive to its international rôle as one of the chief providers of the means to combat illness. It is significant that the first plenary session was concerned with pharmaceuticals and health care, with a subsequent keynote lecture on the future of the pharmaceutical industry. In other sessions, clinical trials in developing countries, orphan drugs and information about medicines required by the consumer were considered. Controversial subjects were not avoided and there was animated participation in discussions on sponsored meetings and publications, the use and abuse of phase IV clinical trials, the use of volunteer subjects, consent and compensation.

Every three-year period between each international meeting brings with it advances in technology and new ideas for handling data and assessing response in clinical trials. The sessions on biotechnology, data measurement, and the measurement of quality of life are reflections of this progress. The establishment of pharmaceutical medicine as a significant medical discipline has implications for pharmaceutical physicians and non-medical scientists involved in all aspects of drug development, regulation and monitoring. It was pertinent that training and careers in the pharmaceutical industry should feature as a topic for discussion, and it is likely that at future meetings there will be increasing collaboration with non-medical groups involved in all

aspects of drug development, under the broad heading of pharmaceutical medicine, with perhaps less concentration on the rôle of the pharmaceutical physician.

We look forward to the next international meeting in Spain in 1990 and wish our AMIFE colleagues every success. There is much hard work to be done, but accomplishment of an aim is in itself rewarding. Success cannot be achieved without unstinting help from colleagues and friends. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Smith, Brian Marsh, Geoffrey Venning on the scientific programme committee, and Robin Elsdon-Dew, Ian Lennox-Smith, Julian Ruiz-Ferrán, Richard Rondel, David Lott, Christopher Mugglestone, together with Enid Oldrini, Sharron Ashburner, Sally Priest and Christobel Haward, on whose shoulders the greatest organizational problems fell.

Finally I pay tribute to the late Bill Burland, who organized the first meeting and at the time of his death had started to guide us through this, the sixth meeting. It is to him that this volume is dedicated.

Horsham, 1988

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