



Pharmacy Month

Frere Hospital Pharmacy Month

Pharmacy Month is a worldwide celebration of the pharmacy profession and the services we offer to patients. Nationally, the month of September is included in our Health calendar, and the promotion of Pharmacy Month is encouraged to create awareness. The theme for 2024 was “Let’s Talk About Vaccines”, which is centralised on the promotion of health education, provision of access to primary healthcare and vaccines and empowering patients in regards to vaccinations.

Staff Morale

Pharmacy Month aims to recognise pharmacy personnel and bring about awareness of the profession to others. It is important to raise staff morale in the workplace to have a healthy environment to practice in. The planning team decided to host events that will foster a supportive and appreciative work environment, increase job satisfaction, improve staff morale, and ultimately contribute to a more effective and engaged team of professionals at Frere Pharmacy. Creating an environment where staff is valued and motivated is essential for maintaining high standards of patient care and professional excellence. The goal was to enhance staff motivation, by recognising the efforts of the pharmacy staff and celebrating it. The team planned four different activities aimed at staff morale for the month, but due to time constraints, were limited to achieving two. All pharmacy personnel were included, i.e. pharmacists, pharmacist interns, post basic pharmacist’s assistants and learners.

Intervention catcher of the week

An intervention catcher game was planned for the various pharmacy departments, i.e. Inpatient, Outpatient, ARV unit, and Oncology. It

was decided that a small award be given to the winning department/team that collects the most interventions. The aim of the game was to identify, document, intervene and report medication errors across the hospital, by use of the existing medication error reporting tool. The interventions were then analysed by the clinical pharmacy team and captured. The “game” was well received by the different departments. The oncology pharmacy team emerged victorious, identifying and documenting a total of 15 medication errors for the period analysed. This achievement not only highlights the critical role that pharmacists play in patient safety but also encourages a culture of continuous improvement within pharmacy practice at Frere Hospital. The pharmacy department was fortunate enough to secure a prize for the winning department.

Heritage Day Event

The team hosted a bring and share event, to promote camaraderie and provide an opportunity for informal socialising and networking. An invite was extended to the entire pharmacy department, allowing staff to showcase their diverse cultural backgrounds. All were encouraged to wear traditional outfits and share their cultural dishes. The event was a resounding success with staff members proudly displaying their heritage. A potluck-style meal, featuring dishes from various cultures facilitated sharing and appreciation of each other’s culinary traditions, took place. The event fostered social interaction among staff members, strengthening relationships and teamwork within the department. The Heritage Day celebration not only provided an enjoyable and enriching experience but also reinforced



Handover of the gifts by the pharmacist interns to Oncology Pharmacy, the winners of the intervention catcher competition



Heritage month celebrations



Heritage month celebrations

the importance of cultural diversity in the workplace. It served as a reminder of the unique perspectives and backgrounds that each staff member brings to the pharmacy team.

Community Disease Screening

Pharmacists play an important role when it comes to screening for various diseases, such as Tuberculosis (TB). Screening provides healthcare workers such as pharmacists the opportunity to contribute to early detection leading to optimal therapeutic outcomes. South Africa ranks eighth amongst the top 30 high-TB burden countries, accounting for three per cent of all TB cases worldwide. South Africa is one of 10 countries that face a triple burden of drug- susceptible (DS-TB) and drug-resistant (DR-TB), as well as HIV/TB coinfection. TB is the leading cause of death in the country and the high rate of HIV coinfection continues to accelerate the impact of the epidemic.



Pefferville community TB screening and soup kitchen

The team contacted a local charity organisation, to assist in their weekly soup kitchen and to perform TB screenings on the persons that were present. The interns made use of a validated TB screening tool and conducted 15 TB screenings. Those persons identified with potential TB symptoms were promptly referred for further evaluation and treatment to the nearest identified healthcare facility with a referral note. The interns shared important pharmaceutical advice, educating community members on TB prevention, symptoms, and the importance of seeking medical care. Their presence at the soup kitchen allowed them to engage directly with individuals in need, fostering a supportive environment while addressing health concerns. This initiative not only facilitated essential health screenings but also strengthened the interns' connection with the community, highlighting the critical role of pharmacists in promoting public health and wellness.

Inspiring Future Healthcare Professionals

High school students often find the process of selecting a course in school and institution for further studies overwhelming and daunting. Pharmacy is a profession that is rarely highlighted in schools as a viable career path. The limited information available tends to focus solely on community pharmacy, neglecting other career opportunities within the field. Pharmacy is sometimes viewed as a second choice for those who did not gain admission to medical school or as a stepping stone to pursue a medical degree.

A presentation was developed for the students to highlight the diverse and rewarding profession of pharmacy, covering the following key areas: Role of a Pharmacist, Career Opportunities, Educational



School visits conducted by pharmacist interns

Requirements, and Importance of Pharmacists in Healthcare. The team also compiled a fun, educational video, "A Day in the life of a Hospital Pharmacist" to show the learners. The pharmacist interns visited two public schools, to engage with students about the pharmacy profession and promote awareness of vaccinations. During the visits, discussions centred on the importance of vaccinations, addressing common misconceptions, and encouraging students to understand the benefits of immunisation for individual and community health.

The interactions with the students fostered a lively dialogue, allowing students to ask questions and gain insight. Learners were advised to contact the pharmacy department or the pharmacy training and development co-ordinator if they needed more information, assistance or guidance. Informal feedback from the teachers on-site at both learning institutions, was that the initiative undertaken by the Frere Hospital Pharmacy interns was very rewarding for the learners and it provided some much needed guidance in terms of their career and subject choices.

Social Media Awareness

With the rise of social media as a means for health communication, there is an increased amount of reach to a larger audience, particularly younger persons. The main objective of this social media campaign was to educate and encourage the public about the necessity of vaccinations through the development of interesting educational content, with the intention of ultimately enhancing vaccine uptake and promoting awareness of vaccination.

The team decided to merge social media trends with evidence-based literature to engage the audience on pharmacy-related topics. They researched the various vaccines that are available and developed an evidence-based summary on them, highlighting facts, myths and key points for the general public. Two videos were created and after gaining approval via the internal departmental processes, the videos were posted on social media platforms.

Video 1 "Debunking the Myths around the Flu Vaccine" aimed to clarify common misconceptions about the flu vaccine and provided information to encourage vaccination. Video 2 "It's September and it's Pharmacy Month!", was an introductory video which kicked off Pharmacy Month, highlighting the significance of Pharmacy Month and promoting various activities and initiatives planned for the month. The social media campaign for Pharmacy Month yielded impressive results from the metrics that were analysed. The videos addressed the different aspects of vaccination: debunking vaccine biases, promoting the benefits of vaccination, and encouraging community involvement in vaccination initiatives. Viewers also requested for more content.

We encourage all pharmacy teams to perform similar activities at some point, not just in Pharmacy Month. These activities are rewarding on a personal level, but the most important part was that the Frere Hospital Pharmacy team could contribute positively to the patient's overall well-being and health.

Thank you



The Frere Pharmacy Intern Team 2024 (Camille Harmse, Unathi Makubalo, Okuhle Mpaka, Zuziphe Sobuwa, Nishitaben Vyas, Achuma Yawa and Siphumeze Jikija) and Pharmacy Training and Development Co-ordinator (Dr Seshnee Moodley)