



## Celebrating Pharmacy Month: a handful of colour jam

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### *When was the last time you had some fun?*

The last week of September 2023 was filled with colourful hands, celebrations, fun and education to unite to promote patient healthcare.

The clinical pharmacy team at the School of Pharmacy (SOP) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) collaborated with the postgraduate committee and the UWCAPS team to present a colour jam event on campus. The team also worked with the pharmacy at New Somerset hospital to host a similar event there. The purpose of the colour jam event was to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance, and how we as healthcare professionals and communities can combat resistance to promote patient health. Furthermore, the event provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the critical role of pharmacists within the healthcare system.

The clinical pharmacy team and collaborators invited students, staff and patients to their painting station at the front area of the SOP building and the coffee shop area at the hospital. The team member asked the individual to choose a colour to paint their hand with. While the team member painted the individual's hand, they used the opportunity to educate the individual about the meaning of the colour they chose, how it relates to antimicrobial resistance, the role of pharmacy and their role as patient or provider in preserving antibiotics.

Several themes were discussed on the day, aimed to increase awareness and knowledge about the role of the pharmacist and the public's role in the following:

- Antimicrobial stewardship (definition and concept of antimicrobial resistance, the difference between viral, fungal and bacterial infections, responsible antibiotic prescribing, rational antimicrobial use, and the meaning of resistant, intermediate or susceptible infections),
- Infection prevention and control (hand hygiene and handwashing technique, contact precautions, prevention of infection through vaccinations),
- Adverse drug reaction reporting (why report, when to report and how to report, and the difference between side-effects and adverse reactions).

We decided to use colours to represent different types of microbes to make it more fun to remember. These were our colour key:

- Green = sensitive bacteria
- Orange = intermediate resistant bacteria

- Red = resistant bacteria
- Purple = virus
- Yellow = fungi

Each individual was asked to imprint their hand on the white cloth with paint to make their pledge to unite in the promotion of patient healthcare and rational antimicrobial use. Some hand prints were very creative creating new types of organisms. After they made their painted pledge, they could wash their hands with soap and water at the second station. Sanitiser was also available, and patients could see that the "microbes" came off better with the soap and water.

Individuals were also encouraged to take a photo using the selfie-frame, which was handmade by the clinical pharmacy team. The colourful hand prints are now portrayed in the hospital and the SOP building to showcase our pledges.

Everyone LOVED the station! It was a hot topic on the day and some staff were even late for their meetings because they first wanted to get their hands painted. The students appreciated the staff visiting the station on campus. At the hospital, it was a hit! Some of the moms visited from the paediatric ward and came to learn about antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention. Patients were encouraged to go paint their hand after receiving their repeat prescription at the pharmacy. The staff were also very engaged, and when the stand closed after a while some doctors that missed the initial commotion came to paint their hands in the pharmacy. The selfie frame was the favourite – everyone wanted a photo or more with the beautiful frame.

The colour jam was a great fun initiative to educate the public on various important topics and how we can take ownership and unite to promote healthcare together. We decided to include the hospital staff as well as a way of "pledging" to use antimicrobials rationally, and this also set the stage for collaboration and relationship building.

It was a team effort between patients and personnel, emphasising that healthcare is both the patient and the healthcare worker's responsibility. It is only by working together that we can achieve a patient's individual health goals, as well as the bigger public health goals.

### ***Learning should be fun, and what is more fun than painting!***

Watch a snippet of the day at New Somerset Hospital here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yC1c9SRO8PPhJAMsRa6sEOOScE52S9fd/view?usp=sharing>