

Press Release: 00.00h Monday 3rd November 2014

Helping to improve safety in the use of medicines in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Medicines have powerful effects to help patients. However medicines also have the potential to cause powerful harmful effects. Education on how to ensure safe and effective use of medicines is therefore vitally important for patients and health services.

An International Symposium on Medicines and Patient Safety is being held in Kigali, Rwanda at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS) on Wednesday 5th November 2014, followed by an international videoconference on Prescribing Skills and on Pharmacovigilance on Thursday 6th November with contributors from the UK and the WHO. The meeting will include talks on medicines and communicable and non-communicable diseases by national and international clinical and policy experts from Rwanda, South Africa, USA and the UK.



The Symposium is being held in partnership with Pharmacology for Africa, a consortium of 8 Sub-Saharan countries supported by the International Union of Pharmacology, and led by Professor Douglas Oliver and Professor Christiaan Brink, from South Africa, both of whom will be speaking at the meeting.

The 3 major themes of the symposium are: educating health professionals in safe and effective use of medicines; regulating drugs, including pharmacovigilance and quality of medicines, reducing harm from high risk medicines and in patients with high risk conditions.

Speakers will discuss ways to reduce risk from medicines for treating children and expectant mothers, preventing disorders of the heart and stroke, and for treating cancer, retroviral disease and kidney disease. There will also be round table discussions not only on prescribed medicines, but also on the risks of over-the-counter and traditional medicines.

The meeting is being organised by British Pharmacological Society Fellow Professor Donald Singer from Yale School of Medicine and the HRH Program for Rwanda, Dr Pierre-Claver Kayumba, Pharmacist and University of Rwanda's CMHS Vice-Dean, and Dr Emmanuel Head of Medicine at King Faisal Hospital in Kigali, in association with a national and international advisory board of distinguished health professionals.

Pharmacist Dr Kayumba said: "The Symposium is timely in building on strategy in Rwanda on pharmacovigilance and on developing our undergraduate and postgraduate educational systems for good practice in use of medicines."

Physician Dr Musabeyezu added: "The Symposium will also provide important updates for doctors, pharmacists and nurses from Referral and District Hospitals from throughout Rwanda on reducing risk of harm from high risk medicines often used for high risk diseases".

Clinical Pharmacologist Professor Singer noted: "Partnership with Pharmacology for Africa brings important opportunities to improve patient health and safety through engaging with a wide range of international experts in education, training, clinical practice and research aimed at best practice in use of medicines."

The symposium is supported by the World Health Organisation, Pharmacology for Africa, the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology, Partners in Health, the Rwanda Social Security Board and the University of Rwanda College of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Information for Editors

For further information by email, including to arrange an interview with the organisers, and for a press pass to attend the symposium on 5th November 2014, email ISMPS@gmail.com

[Symposium website](http://wp.me/p5566q-4) <http://wp.me/p5566q-4>