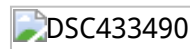


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ICPEP INTEGRATES PHARMACY EDUCATION AND PRACTICE TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE



PENANG, February 2016 - Pharmacy academicians and researchers in tertiary institutions need to work more closely with pharmacy service providers and practitioners to further improve the healthcare system of the country.

The Director-General of Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education, Dato' Professor Dr. Asma Ismail said, such cooperation and partnership between the pharmacy educators and practitioners will further boost the development of the pharmacy profession and pharmaceutical industry in line with the country's aspiration to strengthen its primary healthcare delivery system.

"As the nation transitions towards a developed economy, the current healthcare system faces various challenges ranging from an ageing population to increasing and expensive medical technology.

"Hence every effort needs to be made to transform the healthcare system to be more efficient, effective, affordable and able to provide greater access to the community at large," said Asma recently when officiating the opening of the International Conference on Pharmacy Education and Practice 2016 (ICPEP 2016), with the theme "Improving Patient Care through Integration of Education and Practice" at a hotel here.



She also lauded the ICPEP 2016 co-organisers – the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Penang General Hospital – in working together to organise a conference of such nature which allowed the sharing of latest ideas, knowledge and information between the two institutions of different backgrounds.

"I truly hope that this partnership and cooperation between these two entities will flourish further and be a role model to all the institutions under the two ministries, namely, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Health.

"In fact I would like to see more inter-ministerial cooperation to be established at the national level implementing healthcare programmes that would benefit more Malaysians and even the world population," added Asma.

While commending on this noble effort of organising ICPEP 2016, she also reminded the organisers particularly USM to look into new strategic research and innovation that will prepare the nation for the future.

“With the advent of nanotechnology, robotics, 3D digital manufacturing and personalised medicine, where will the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry heading in 2050? Are we still dispensing drugs?”



“Similarly with technological advances, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Big Open Online Course (BOOC) are gaining increasing popularity among the masses and could change the online concept of education to an extent that an educator’s role may no longer be the same, and the curriculum may need to be revised,” said Asma.

ICPEP 2016, held from January 30 – 31, 2016, saw a total attendance of over 250 participants comprising of academicians, researchers, scientists, undergraduate and postgraduate pharmacy students, healthcare practitioners and professionals, government agencies, hospital management, and those who are directly or indirectly linked to the pharmaceutical and patient care from Indonesia, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, UAE, Nigeria, Australia, the Philippines and Malaysia.

Meanwhile, USM Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Wan Ahmad Kamil Wan Mahmood, representing the USM Vice-Chancellor at the ceremony, said the university welcomed such collaboration between the hospital and the university, as it complemented each other in enhancing the quality of pharmacy education and health services in Malaysia.

“It will also help in increasing the employability of the pharmacy graduates and enable ideas and new knowledge to be disseminated and transferred directly to the patients,” said Ahmad Kamil.

Also present were the Dean of School of Pharmaceutical Sciences USM Prof. Dr. Munavvar Zubaid Abdul Sattar; Chairman of ICPEP 2016 Dr. Baharudin Ibrahim; Dean of School of Health Sciences USM Professor Dr. Ahmad Hj. Zakaria; organising committee, speakers and delegates of ICPEP 2016.

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