



**New Zealand Association of Pharmacy Students – Otago**  
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### **Asia Pacific Pharmaceutical Symposium (APPS) Report, Thailand 21st - 26th July 2017**

In July, three students from The Otago School of Pharmacy had the opportunity to attend the 16<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Pharmaceutical Symposium (APPS) in Thailand. Nina, Prashikha and Alisa are third year pharmacy students who went and represented the wider NZAPS-O association at the symposium. We were able to attend seminars, workshops, regional assembly and cultural events that united students from various countries to build friendships, share knowledge and encourage one another. We also partook in a public health campaign that proved to be a success.

The seminars were informative yet intriguing. The content was designed to be relevant to students of all ages and experience as the participants varied from first-year pharmacy students to pharmacy graduates. Some of the topics touched on were career options in pharmacy, building on soft skills to become a better pharmacist, and the past, present and future of chemotherapy treatment for cancer.

The theme of the APPS this year was 'Pharmachine', which symbolised pharmacy from the past, present and future. The workshops covered a variety of pharmacy related topics that were suitable for students in all years. The workshops included topics such as Health Care in Danger which is an initiative of the International Red Cross, Rational Drug Use to ensure patients are treated by appropriate medications and Personalised Medicine and Clinical Applications which looked at how personalised medicines may affect drug dispensing and how the role of the pharmacist may change in clinical pharmacy. Each workshop was run by experts in that field and the workshops were structured as a brief talk followed by a question and answer session. Some workshops also played the kahoot game, which is a multiple question quiz based on the topics learnt in the session and participants were scored based on how many they get correct and how fast they answer the questions. The students thoroughly enjoyed it as it allowed them to test their knowledge in a friendly yet competitive setting. The workshops allowed students to explore their interest and share ideas with other students from the Asia-Pacific region.

In the regional assembly, representatives from each country were able to input in the decision making for the Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO), which is part of the bigger International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF). In the discussions, we learnt about activities the other student associations organised and through this, we were able to get ideas we could implement into our own association. We were also able to vote on motions that contributed to the future of APPS and voice out changes and ideas we had. This was the first year New Zealand could vote as we only became full members last year, making this a more memorable and exciting experience for us to be able to share NZAPS-O's voice on these important matters.



There were multiple events where the culture of Thailand was displayed. We had a whole day where we went around the city of a Bangkok in groups which consisted of participants from different countries. During this we were able to make friendships as well as work together as a team. There was also a Thai night where there were traditional performances, food and games for us to try.

In addition, we had the opportunity to partake in a flashmob to promote our public health campaign we all worked on. The public health campaign was smile agonist and this was to raise awareness of depression. The message of this campaign was about how a smile can go a long way for people can suffering. This was a simple, yet powerful message. We made posters and performed a dance to a song in front of many in a crowded location in the city. This was a fun experience which could be potentially done by NZAPS in the future.

Overall, APPS 2017 was amazing experience and we would all highly recommend current and incoming pharmacy students to get involved in such events in the future. We hope to integrate the ideas such as the public health campaign and more workshops into the many activities NZAPS hold every year.

2017 APPS NZAPS-O Representatives,  
**Nina Qin McMurtrie, Prashikha Chand, Alisa Tan**

*Special thanks to our sponsors for helping the NZAPS-O delegates attend this congress*

