**From drug development to pharmacovigilance — why industrial pharmacists will be happy at the FIP congress**

*What’s in store at this year’s World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences? The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) gave an industrial pharmacist a preview of the programme. Here’s what she thought.*

FIP congresses are great events to attend for several reasons. One of which is that you only meet lovely people there. There is plenty of opportunity for networking among your own kind, be it industrial, community, hospital or any other pharmacist. It is great to exchange views and tips, contribute to the development of others, learn about how things are done in different countries and gain new ideas to take home.

As an industrial pharmacist, I find it enriching to learn from pharmacists outside of industry, and there is still so much to learn! At an FIP congress you can have a great talk with a community pharmacist about how he or she perceives industry-driven medical information, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of look-alike medicines with a hospital pharmacist, or chat with someone from a regulatory authority about patents. It is at the FIP congress that you can find all views and opinions on the issues you deal with every day. Nowhere else will you get an informed outsider’s view — something we so often lack in our daily working life.

Clicking through the Buenos Aires [programme](http://buenosaires2016.fip.org/programme), you will find many sessions tailored to the interests of industrial pharmacists, leading you to the places and peers to have the most meaningful discussions.

**Regulatory pathways for biosimilars, and more**

Biotechnology is an emerging topic in the pharmaceutical industry. Hence, FIP’s Industrial Pharmacy Section is organising a session to address the questions around getting biosimilar medicines onto the global market. Biosimilars are often described as the easy-access solution for complicated, high-cost biopharmaceutical medicines. The challenges of getting these medicines onto the market, however, are huge, both for pharmaceutical companies as well as for regulators. Nevertheless, biosimilars will play a big part in the medicines portfolio of the future. Participants of this session will learn about strategies from different countries for developing regulatory pathways for biosimilars. The special issues of clinical studies in this field as well as the overall impact this category of medicines has on patient access to high-cost medicines will be of interest.

**Improving access to medicines**

Access to medicines remains an unsolved problem in many countries. That is why FIP is dedicating a full session to this topic. Industry and regulators often discuss ways to accelerate access to much needed medicines without taking too much risk bearing in mind the lack of longitudinal studies of clinical data. Emergency situations, such as the Ebola crisis of 2015, have demonstrated that there is a need for faster access to medicines. In this congress session, different country approaches used to accelerate market authorisations of much needed medicines will be presented. Simultaneous translation into Spanish will be provided.

**Safe use of medicines**

Once a product is on the market, its long-term safety is a key issue for industrial pharmacists. As well as monitoring safety, pharmacovigilance can help solve problems with patient adherence. How these two functions are linked will be explained in the session “Can pharmacovigilance shed light on adherence?”. Speakers from the World Health Organization, health authorities and companies will gather to discuss how pharmacovigilance can be expanded to benefit patients. The session might be of interest not only to industrial and regulatory pharmacists, but also to community pharmacists who play a big role in supporting adherence and who can collect data on undesired events.

**Innovative healthcare, a look into the future**

What about the future? “Innovation” is a popular word within the pharmaceutical industry. It is key to research companies advancing health care and keeping a reasonable amount of revenue. But how can we achieve innovation? The workshop session “Improving outcomes through novel technologies” aims to predict what the innovations of the future will be. The speakers will not only focus on research and development of new medicines — innovation means a lot more. There is a lot of innovative thinking going on, for example, in medicines information for health care professionals, health care regulators and patients. In this session, you will get a full overview of what is driving the industry right now. And there will be time to discuss and contribute ideas on how something new and “out of the box” can lead to better outcomes in health care.

**Healthy balance of work and play**

Besides being a sea of knowledge to fish in, the FIP congress is also great fun! There are designated times and places to meet and greet friends, old and new. You will be able to enjoy food and beverages and relax with your peers during the Industrial Pharmacy Section dinner and groups from the other FIP sections often join us after the dinner. The Industrial Pharmacy Section reception gives a further chance for socialising and a considerable number of industrial pharmacists participate in the 5km FIP Fun Run.

Finally, if you are interested in getting to know the most active members of the Industrial Pharmacy Section in person, come and meet them at the membership assembly. During the assembly the section’s executive committee will report on activities of 2015, new committee members will be elected and everyone will have an opportunity to raise issues that should be addressed following the congress. In short, the FIP congress provides a real chance to shape the future of industrial pharmacy!

To see what else this year’s FIP congress has to offer visit: [www.fip.org/buenosaires2016](http://www.fip.org/buenosaires2016).