Editorial

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The Importance of a Scientific Journal in the Field of Pharmaceutical Technology in Hospitals

<https://doi.org/10.1515/pthp-2019-2010>

This is the third anniversary issue of our journal; we have yet published more than 70 papers in roughly 600 pages on the broad field of pharmaceutical technology in hospitals. Those included research papers on stability studies, development of novel formulations (especially for paediatric use), sterilization processes, personnel training, quality control, automation and regulatory analyses as well as opinions and review papers.

The role of this journal is to spread scientific data in order to allow a real improvement of practices in hospital pharmacies. This also allows the exchange of views, as in our field many solutions are possible to solve the same technical problem. With specific scientific journals, the pharmacist is not isolated anymore. An international journal also allows to share different practices from all over the world. Until today we have published papers from Europe (France, Germany, England, Netherland, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain) but also from North America (Canada, USA) and other countries such as India. The papers have been evaluated by reviewers from all continents. The sharing of international pharmacy practice makes the authors, reviewers and readers ask themselves a number of questions about how to implement good practice. For example, what is considered to be a good stability study may be viewed differently in different countries. In the end, the highest standards will come out and all professionals will benefit from this.

It is thus clear that a good scientific journal is important to improve practice and knowledge especially in a fast changing field such as pharmaceutical technology. However, a journal develops from the material provided by its authors; the rate of manuscript submission thus directly influences the quality of the journal. For PTHP we have now managed to receive regular submissions, but the flow should be enhanced in order to help us publish more results and also to raise the standards of the journal. We believe it is the pharmacist's

responsibility to take time to write some papers and to submit them to serious peer-reviewed journals such as PTHP. We accept also short papers in order to allow a rapid communication of interesting studies that are focused. With a too low submission rate, a journal is dying and this is not what we all want if we would like to benefit from each other's experiences.

In this issue, we have four papers, which illustrate the diversity of our field. The first one is a literature review on the use of mass spectrometry for the investigation of drug packaging interactions. The authors from CHUV in Lausanne, Switzerland, analysed 32 papers in order to assess the suitability of mass spectrometers to study the sorption of leachables after contact between the drug products and the polymers of the container. They found that for simultaneous qualitative and quantitative analysis of extractables and leachables with liquid chromatography (LC), Quadrupole Time of flight or Orbitrap is a suitable detector. For quantitative analysis with LC only, triple quadrupole is suitable. For qualitative and quantitative analysis with gas chromatography, single quadrupole can be used.

The second paper from the team of Prof. Sylvie Crauste-Manciet in Bordeaux, France describes a risk analysis performed in order to validate the aseptic sterile preparation process. Automation is claimed to facilitate the production of sterile products. However, because of the diversity of sterile preparations added to the risk of contamination spreading and the aseptic constraints on the process, automation has to be carefully validated. This validation is linked to a risk analysis that has to be performed for every type of automate, taking into account the organization of the activity and the type of prepared products. Thus, it will not be possible to translate the results of this paper directly into all pharmacy preparation units but the very well performed study may be taken as an example of how to perform a risk analysis in the context of automation.

The third paper is from the team of Nancy, France. It describes a physical compatibility study of intravenous drugs used in intensive care units. A total of 389 combinations of 2 injectable drugs were observed. The majority

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those combinations have not yet been described in the literature. The authors used additional techniques such as UV spectrometry following pharmacopeia guidelines. The paper provides some very valuable results regarding the visual and non-visual stability of those combinations. It will be really useful for pharmacists, it is however important to understand that the results are only valid under the same experimental conditions.

The last paper is a short communication from the team of Strasbourg also in France. The authors describe the assessment of an online training tool for automated unit dose dispensing systems. This study is an example of training evaluation and not the main type of paper that we usually publish in our journal, however, it could be of value for pharmacists who are in need of quality quantification for their personnel training.