

Title: FK Grant Supports Visit to Peter Mac

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I was grateful to receive one of the Fresenius Kabi Cancer Services grants for 2015 offered through the SHPA grants program. The grant was awarded to support my participation in the Peter MacCallum Cytotoxic Preparation Course for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians which was conducted over the week 25th to 29th May 2015.

The reason for attending this course was to obtain skills and knowledge in order to oversee the cytotoxic manufacture service provided by Oncology Pharmacy at the Toowoomba Hospital. The Oncology Pharmacy prepares between 20 and 60 cytotoxic and monoclonal antibody (MAB) items each month. Whilst a majority of treatment drugs for the service are ordered externally, this level of in-house manufacturing is likely to continue due to real time dose changes, short expiry items, lack of drug stability data, compassionate access programs and freight restrictions. Two pharmacy assistants, Leanne Lloyd and Janette Hodgson (also Joan Henry for many years prior to her recent retirement) are appropriately qualified and experienced to perform the manufacturing using a laminar flow cabinet and bench-top isolator.

The main emphasis of the course was developing the practical skills involved in the preparation of cytotoxic admixtures. Over the five day program participants received close instruction and practice in aseptic manufacture and negative pressure techniques in accordance with current practice standards and legislation (a lot of pushing and pulling fluids through syringes, needles, ports, bungs etc). We also gained familiarisation with gowning and clean room procedures. The course included a validation process which comprised observation of technique, broth validation and microbiological testing.

Having completed the course, I have obtained an important skill, expanding my expertise as a cancer services pharmacist. Such expertise is also applicable to non-cancer areas where aseptic manu-

facture is required. I can utilise this training to benefit the service provided at Toowoomba hospital and, ultimately enhance patient care and staff safety in the following ways.

- Review current practices. This course has provided a contemporary knowledge base from which to review and/or develop standard operating procedures.
- Incorporate quality processes including validation of technique and microbiological testing.
- Add to the pool of trained staff available for manufacture of cytotoxics, facilitating rostering issues such as leave cover.

The SHPA Standard of Practice outlines that staff working in a cytotoxic preparation facility are to be adequately trained, and the requirements for quality processes.¹ My attending this course was a valuable and beneficial exercise for myself and for the Oncology Pharmacy at Toowoomba Hospital in complying with these standards.

Not all pharmacists working in cancer services are required to be involved manipulation and preparation of cytotoxics. It is, however, a role that is unique pharmacy as a profession and a role for which pharmacy is attributed exclusive expertise and responsibility. Thus, the profession stands to gain also as more pharmacists have the opportunity to undertake such training.

With much gratitude I thank Fresenius-Kabi for providing funding for this course, and the SHPA Grants Program for facilitating this support. I also thank my colleagues at Oncology Pharmacy, Toowoomba Hospital, for supporting my absence for the week required to attend this course.

Reference

1. SHPA Committee of Specialty Practice in Oncology. SHPA Standards of Practice for the Safe Handling of Cytotoxic Drugs in Pharmacy Departments. *J Pharm Pract Res* 2005; 35(1): 44-52.