

Experiential Education Newsletter MAY 2025



كلية الصيدلة
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
HEALTH SECTOR القطاع الصحي

QU CPH Experiential Education Newsletter

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College of Pharmacy, Health Sector, Qatar University

Editorial Board

We welcome you to the College of Pharmacy (CPH) Experiential Education Newsletter. The aim from this letter is to shed the light on the activities and updates of the experiential program and to showcase the skills and abilities of CPH students during their SPEP and PharmD rotations and their preceptors.

The newsletter will cover different highlights from the experiential team, preceptors and CPH students.



Dr. Ziad Nasr (Editor-in-Chief)

Dr. Stephanie Atweh (Associate Editor)

Dr. Hazem Elewa (Assistant Editor)

Clinical Intervention of the Month



Patient: A 36-year-old female diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) was receiving neoadjuvant chemotherapy, followed by pembrolizumab monotherapy.

Drug-related problem: During routine monitoring, the patient developed Grade III immune-related liver injury, indicated by elevated liver enzymes. Given the suspected pembrolizumab-induced hepatotoxicity, immediate intervention was required.

Recommendation & Rationale: Pembrolizumab was held, and steroid therapy with prednisolone 60 mg was initiated after ruling out viral causes. Due to persistent liver enzyme elevation, mycophenolate mofetil (MMF) was introduced at 1 g twice daily. Additionally, lansoprazole was discontinued to prevent interaction with MMF. Prednisolone was later increased to 100 mg to control the inflammation effectively.

Outcome & Impact: The intervention successfully stabilized the patient's liver function. By Day 5, liver enzymes returned to normal. The healthcare team fully accepted and implemented the proposed intervention. The planned course of pembrolizumab was resumed with additional safeguards, including weekly liver function tests for the first four weeks, followed by biweekly monitoring for two months. The steroid regimen was tapered gradually to prevent rebound liver inflammation. Additional monitoring was initiated for potential adverse effects of MMF, such as bone marrow suppression or infection.

Learning Experience: This case highlighted the essential role of clinical pharmacists in identifying and managing medication-related problems. It reinforced the importance of a systematic approach to assessing drug safety, understanding pharmacologic mechanisms, and collaborating with healthcare professionals to optimize patient outcomes. Effective clinical decision-making requires continuous learning, critical thinking, and staying up-to-date with evolving guidelines and best practices.

Submitted by:

Salma Said, PharmD student , precepted by Dr. Nabil Omar

Intervention captured during the Oncology and Palliative Care rotation at NCCCR

Preceptor Insights



Earlier this year, we had the chance to interview Dr. Nabil Omar, Oncology Clinical Pharmacist at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research – Hamad Medical Corporation (NCCCR-HMC) to tap into his experience of precepting PharmD students in their Hematology/Oncology rotation. The following are some of his insights that highlight the unique role of a preceptor in enhancing students' learning.

What are the most critical skills and knowledge areas students gain during the NCCCR rotation?

During the **oncology and palliative care rotation**, students gain both **foundational knowledge** and **practical skills** critical to their development as clinical pharmacists. The rotation starts with an in-depth discussion on **cancer biology**, where we explore how normal cells transform into malignant ones, using the "**Hallmarks of Cancer**" paper as a guiding framework. This ensures students understand the fundamental disease process before diving into therapeutic strategies.

From there, students develop **core competencies in oncology pharmacy**, including:

- **Pharmacotherapeutic decision-making** in chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and supportive care.

- **Toxicity management** and optimizing supportive care for chemotherapy-induced side effects.
- **Ethical considerations in palliative care**, including deprescribing and patient-centered care.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration**, where they engage with oncologists, nurses, and senior administrators to see how pharmacy integrates into the broader oncology care team.

Students don't just learn how to manage cancer pharmacotherapy; they **experience the impact of their role on patients, families, and the entire care team.**



Have there been any standout moments where you saw a student significantly grow or contribute during the rotation?

One of the most rewarding moments as a preceptor is seeing a student's **mindset shift** from uncertainty to confidence. Many students initially approach oncology with **apprehension**, finding it intimidating due to the complexity and emotional weight of the field. However, I've had multiple students tell me by the end of the rotation, and I quote:

"I never thought I would enjoy oncology, but now I see how vital and fulfilling this specialty is. I want to pursue a career in this field."

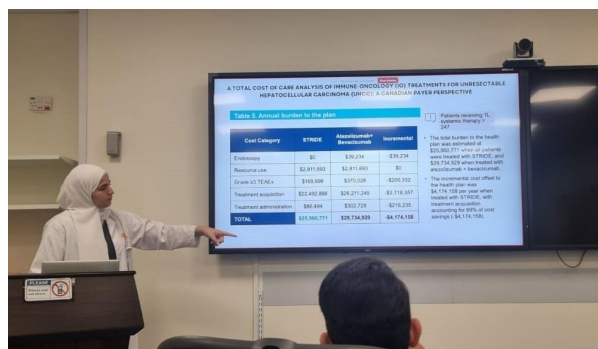
I also take pride in their growth beyond technical knowledge. Some of my most memorable moments include:

- **Students leading impactful case discussions** during interdisciplinary rounds and receiving positive feedback from senior clinicians.
- **Hearing from oncologists and administrators** that our students are confident, knowledgeable, and trustworthy team members.
- **Watching students present journal clubs or topic presentations** to an audience of physicians, pharmacists, and nurses, showcasing their ability to break down complex oncology topics.
- **Seeing students gain research opportunities** and become involved in projects because they demonstrate dedication and initiative during the rotation.

What are some challenges students typically face, and how do they overcome them?

Oncology and palliative care rotations are **intellectually and emotionally demanding**, and students often face several challenges:

- **Overwhelming Complexity** – Oncology pharmacotherapy is intricate, with evolving treatment regimens and unique toxicities.
 - **Solution:** I provide students with a **structured framework**, pre-planned agendas, and key learning objectives, so they can systematically approach the material without feeling lost.
- **Emotional Impact** – Witnessing terminal illness and end-of-life discussions can be distressing.
 - **Solution:** I encourage students to focus on the **value they bring to patients and families**, reminding them that their role is not just about medications but about improving quality of life.
- **Interdisciplinary Communication** – Many students feel intimidated when presenting to oncologists or senior staff.
 - **Solution:** I guide them through mock case discussions and encourage active participation in **morning reports, journal clubs, and clinical rounds**, gradually building their confidence.



Finally, what advice would you give to incoming students to help them make the most of this rotation?

My biggest advice for incoming students is: **Be open-minded and proactive.**

- **Oncology is complex, but it's a rewarding challenge.** Don't be afraid of the learning curve; embrace it!
- **Ask questions and seek feedback.** The more you engage, the more you will gain from this rotation.
- **Be prepared.** Read about the key cancer types, chemotherapy regimens, and toxicity management before coming in.
- **Understand your role beyond medications.** As a clinical pharmacist in oncology, you impact not just the patient but the entire care team and the patient's family.

SPEP Program Updates



This section will highlight the newly introduced SPEP assignment for students enrolled in a hospital rotation: Medication Use Evaluation (MUE)

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee in a hospital plays a crucial role in ensuring the **safe, effective, and cost-conscious** use of medications. MUE is a significant activity undertaken by this committee to achieve quality assurance and patient safety goals. We recently introduced MUE as an assignment to ensure that all of our students and preceptors in the hospital setting have the chance to identify a high-risk , high-cost, or high-

volume medication or class of medications, and conduct a systematic and data-driven process aiming at optimizing the medication's use.

Here are the steps required for completing a MUE:

- Identification of a need , topic and rationale for a MUE
- Defining the scope and objectives such as the medication to be evaluated and the desired outcomes
- Developing the methodology of the study design which could be retrospective or concurrent
- Data collection and analysis with the help of the informatics team
- Recognition of discrepancies and potential problems or suboptimal trends
- Developing evidence-based recommendations for improvement
- Implementing and monitoring changes
- Reporting results and providing feedback to the P&T Committee

It is important to note that our students could not always complete the last two steps due to the time limitation of the 4-week rotation. Regardless, the MUE was an extremely powerful tool for bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world practice. According to one student, the MUE "helped in fostering (her) problem-solving skills and promoted interprofessional and collaborative practices".

In summary, by engaging in this process our students developed essential competencies required for impactful future practice as well as professional development.

Since the full MUE reports are quite lengthy , we will share with you a few examples of the **impactful topics chosen by SPEP students and their preceptors :**

- An evaluation of antibiotic prescriptions with respect to clinical guidelines and diagnoses at a tertiary hospital using the FOCUS-PDCA: a retrospective MUE
- A retrospective evaluation of the prescribing patterns of alprazolam for anxiety disorder in geriatric patients
- A retrospective evaluation of vancomycin use in the NICU setting
- A retrospective evaluation of morphine wastage for individuals on Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA) at a new private hospital
- A retrospective formulary review of newly approved drugs for depressive episodes associated with bipolar disorder at a mental health hospital

PharmD Program Updates



Launch of Medication Safety Rotation

We are pleased to announce the successful launch of a new PharmD rotation focused on **Quality and Medication Safety at Al Wakra Hospital in Al Wakra, Qatar**. This exciting development represents a key step forward in our mission to offer PharmD students diverse and impactful clinical learning opportunities.

Through this rotation, students are gaining hands-on experience in identifying, preventing, and managing medication-related errors, while also exploring strategies to enhance patient safety across healthcare settings. Guided by Dr. Mahmoud Alma'moon, the preceptor of this rotation, it emphasizes the critical role pharmacists play in promoting a culture of safety and continuous quality improvement.

We are grateful for the outstanding support and collaboration from Al Wakra hospital teams especially the pharmacy department which is led by Dr. Rasha Al Anany. Their dedication and commitment have been essential in ensuring the smooth implementation and success of this rotation.



As we celebrate this achievement, we look forward to the continued growth of the partnership between Qatar University, College of pharmacy and Al Wakra hospital.

Through this successful partnership, we are shaping the next generation of pharmacists to lead in medication safety and beyond.

PharmD Student Exchange Highlights



Highlights from the international PharmD rotation at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada

As part of the student exchange program between Qatar University College of Pharmacy and UBC in Canada, Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) students **Ms. Jawaher Abdulla and Ms. Reenad Alyafei** from Qatar University College of Pharmacy were selected to complete their pharmacy practice experiences at UBC from 16 February- 13 March 2025. Both students were precepted by Dr. Janice Yeung, Director of the Office of Experiential Education in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UBC.

"My academic rotation at UBC was a life-changing event that improved my critical thinking, leadership, and teaching abilities. I witnessed how pharmacy education is always changing to produce well-rounded, flexible pharmacists through practical professional skills labs and research-driven practice. This event reaffirmed the value of teamwork, lifelong learning, and constantly aiming for improved patient care."

Jawaher Abdulla--PharmD student at QU CPH

"My rotation at UBC was a transformative experience that went beyond learning and into discovery. Engaging with faculty members provided invaluable insights into the inner workings of academia, deepening my understanding of its structure and impact. Experiencing diverse pharmacy settings was eye-opening, allowing me to witness firsthand how the profession is practiced in another country. This contrast reshaped my thinking, fueling my passion for advancing pharmacy education and practice in Qatar. Above all, representing my university and country on an international stage was a profound honor. The lessons I gained are not just experiences to remember, they are stepping stones toward shaping the future of pharmacy practice in Qatar."

Reenad Alyafei--PharmD student at QU CPH



Highlights from visiting University of British Columbia (UBC) students

As part of student exchange program between Qatar University College of Pharmacy and UBC in Canada, **Ms. Ayah AlAnsari and Mr. Amirali Masoud**, UBC PharmD students, visited QU-CPH to complete an academic pharmacy rotation from 3 February – 28 March 2025. UBC students were precepted by Dr. Tarik Al-Dairy and Dr. Zachariah Jamal Nazar, cross-appointed faculty at QU-CPH.

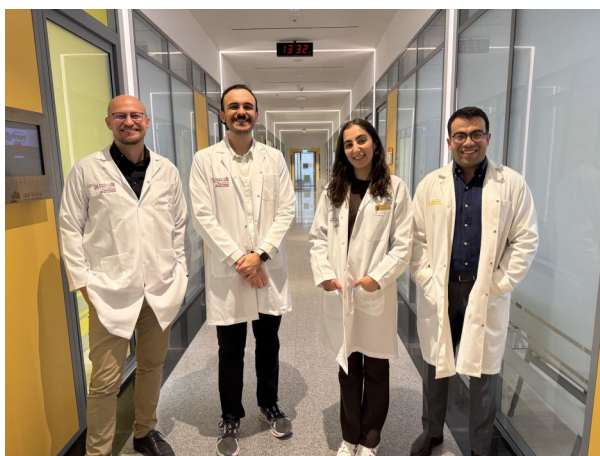
"I have always been passionate about teaching and taking part in academia as part of my career. By joining the amazing teaching team at QU I felt that I am part of a big family that strives to create the next generation of pharmacists, full of motivation and knowledge.

Also, being both a student and educator helped me bridge a stronger connection with the students and understand their learning needs, which has been a very fulfilling experience for myself. All of these moments are further complemented by the amazing culture and hospitality of Qatar and it's amazing people. It has been a pleasure to work alongside such bright individuals and I hope this opportunity continues to exist for UBC students to explore different healthcare settings outside of Canada."

Amirali Masoud--PharmD student at UBC

"My time in Qatar was nothing short of amazing. The staff and students were incredibly supportive and a pleasure to work with. I really enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere and collaborative environment at Qatar University. It was really an incredible and enriching experience that allowed me to develop new skills and broaden my perspective."

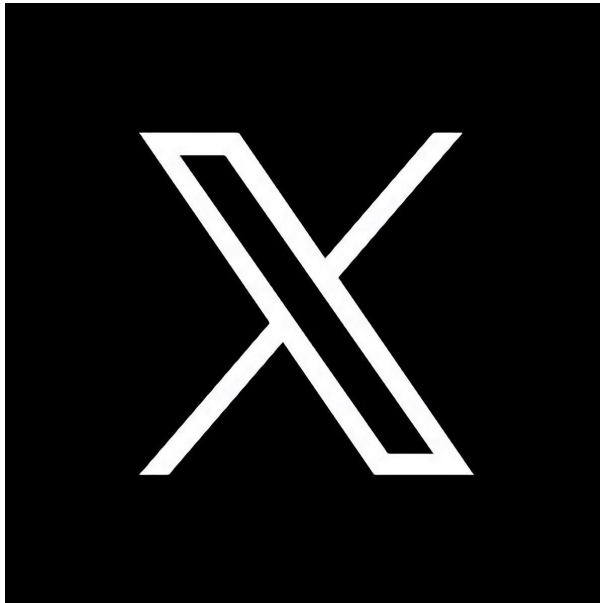
Ayah AlAnsari --PharmD student at UBC



1 - UBC students with QU CPH preceptors Dr. Zachariah Nazar and Dr. Tarik Al-Diery



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