

Qatar University, College of Pharmacy Students Win Award at the 4th Qatar International Pharmacy Conference

Graduate Pharmacy students, Farah Zahrah, Sara Abdulrahim and Nour Isleem, won the best student poster award at the 4th Qatar International Pharmacy Conference organized at the Grand Hyatt, on November 18-19, 2017. This winner poster summarized excellent work conducted under the supervision of Dr. Monica Zolezzi (Assistant Professor of Pharmacy and Director of the Structured Practical Experiences in Pharmacy (SPEP) program).

The poster presented entitled "Physical comorbidities and their management in patients with severe mental illness". Over 100 posters were participating in this competition.

Dr. Monica Zollezi, Assistant Professor of Pharmacy and coordinator of the Structured Practical Experiences in Pharmacy (SPEP) program, stated, "As the primary research mentor for this UREP funded project I was delighted to hear this project has again been recognized by our fellow pharmacy colleagues at a highly reputable international pharmacy conference where this project was presented. Apart from the value of this recognition, our three hard-working CPH QU students who were involved in this project, once again have been able to showcase our results and increase awareness of the overall health care needs of those affected by mental illness."

MSc student Sara Abdelarhim stated, "The 4th Qatar International Pharmacy Conference was another opportunity for our project to get an excellent recognition. The conference enabled us to present our project to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who have a vital role in pharmaceutical and patient care. Winning the best poster award for the third time indicated that the project adds great value to patient healthcare. This was the first research that explores the prevalence rate and management of physical comorbidities in patient with severe mental illness in Qatar. The project also highlights potential areas for healthcare providers to improve."

Doctor of Pharmacy student Nour Isleem added, "The 4th international pharmacy conference was one of the greatest conferences that I attended during my collage years. It was a huge conference since more than 700 pharmacists from all different pharmacy departments in Qatar attended it. It was a great opportunity to share our project with many experts in the field. Our research is the first research that done in the Arab world to explore the prevalence rate of physical comorbidities in patient with severe mental illness (SMI).. In this research, we included 306 patient with severe mental illness. The aim of this project was to investigate the prevalence rates of different physical illnesses in individuals with SMI in Qatar and to examine how these are being managed. Results from this study suggested that individuals with SMI in Qatar are less likely to receive standard levels of care for their medical comorbidities and less likely to be followed-up regularly. At the end, I would like to thank the college of pharmacy at Qatar University as it always support us as a student and encourage us to attend such conferences."

Doctor of Pharmacy student Farah Zahrah commented, "This research is one of the most important projects that have been done on physical comorbidities in psychiatric patients for several reasons. First, it is the first of its kind in Qatar, forming the basic foundation for future research to build on. Second, it is composed of 3 different research designs (literature review, prospective chart review and semi-structured interviews), making the findings very comprehensive and highly reliable. Winning the best student poster was well deserved because we provided a high quality of research in addition to the uniqueness of the research focus point in Qatar."

Well done to Dr Monica and her students.