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## CUHK Launches territory's first Master Course in Pharmacy

During the past two decades the pattern of health delivery in Hong Kong has changed greatly. The number of new medicines coming onto the market has increased dramatically. In addition, patients' expectations of first class health services are now higher than before. An increasing trend, seen overseas as well as in Hong Kong, is for patients to become more involved with their medication, to become more knowledgeable of it and to take more responsibility for it. Pharmacists, in particular hospital pharmacists, with their breadth of knowledge of medicines, health care and disease processes are taking a new and important role in assisting in the optimisation of this modern medical care.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, which pioneered to offer the first Bachelor Course in Pharmacy in Hong Kong in 1992, is now offering an innovative Master Course in Clinical Pharmacy to promote better pharmaceutical care services in Hong Kong. The course, catering for the special developing needs of the hospital pharmacy profession, is planned in conjunction with other hospital pharmacy professions such as the Chief Pharmacist's Office of the Hospital Authority, and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Hong Kong. Eleven experienced hospital pharmacists have been selected to join this novel programme.

This new two-year part time course is the first of its kind in the Asian region. The course structure involves four major modules: Clinical Therapeutics for Hospital Pharmacists, Clinical Pharmaceuticals and Pharmacokinetics, Advanced Applied Hospital Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Care.

"The course will be integrated around a central theme of particular disease states. For example, when we teach asthma, not only will we look at the disease state and its therapy, but we will also examine problems in the education of asthmatics and their compliance with therapy and use of aerosol inhalers. We will also discuss the ideas behind the therapeutic drug monitoring of aminophylline/ theophylline and introduce concepts associated with the design of aerosols for the optimisation of drug therapy in the lungs," explained Professor Kenneth Raymond, Course Director of Master of Clinical Pharmacy.

All major disease states will be covered. Geriatrics, paediatrics and the use of drugs in neonates will also be taught. The course will comprise teaching classes, ward rounds and clinical seminars.

A project to collect important data on the roles of hospital pharmacists in the hospital settings will be undertaken in the second year of study. The results of these researches will be published to develop a valuable data base outlining the positive contributions made by hospital pharmacists, Professor Raymond added.