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MY FIRST PUBLICATION JOURNEY

Introduction

I am Mriganka, and I have been associated with the field of pharmacovigilance for more than seven years. I earned my Pharm D degree from St. Peter's Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Warangal, India. In this article, I will share my experience of a unique opportunity that ultimately led to my first trip to the United States of America and my first scientific article publication.

Coumadin Clinic

In 2014, the Doctor of Pharmacy degree was a relatively new topic of discussion among aspiring Pharm D students. I embarked on the journey of earning my Pharm D in 2010 because I wanted to build a career in healthcare. There was ambiguity about the long-term prospects of the course. That being said, St. Peter's left no stone unturned in its quest to provide the right guidance and path for its students. Alongside the regular curriculum, St. Peter's implemented several well-thought-out initiatives for the benefit of its students.

In January 2015, the "Coumadin Clinic" workshop for pharmacy practice students was one such initiative by the institute. Over 300

aspiring pharmacy practice students participated in the three-day workshop. This was the first time I met my mentor, Dr. Chandra Sekar (Professor of Pharmacy, University of Ohio), who, along with Dr. Scot Gier (Director of Pharmacy, Wyandot Hospital, Ohio), explained the importance of INR (International Normalized Ratio) monitoring and how a coumadin clinic can be initiated in local hospitals. The end of this three-day workshop was the beginning of my project.

How I made it through?

The project began with a few hundred leftover strips at the end of the Coumadin clinic. Dr. Sekar and Dr. Scott entrusted these strips to our then-Principal, Dr. Suresh Bandari. It was later decided that the strips would be used for a project related to INR testing before they expired. However, when the project was announced, it did not attract much interest from the students.

In the early days of the project, while we were setting up objectives and conducting the literature review, I found myself as the only remaining participant. Since this project was not part of the regular curriculum, it added to my workload to achieve a desirable outcome. I began using the strips to measure INR for free at a cardiology centre in Warangal.

After four months, I had exhausted all the leftover strips and collected sufficient data to interpret patient awareness of INR monitoring. While the data is published in the journal, I would like to provide a summary of the objective, type of study, and findings from the project. A prospective cross-sectional pilot study was conducted in a cardiac center in Warangal, with the primary objective of determining the level of awareness and understanding about INR testing among patients undergoing oral anticoagulation therapy (OAT). The study also aimed to assess whether patients' INR values were within the



therapeutic range as measured by an on-site INR testing kit. The key findings highlighted a significant gap in awareness about INR testing among these patients. Those unaware of the importance of regular testing were more likely to have INR values outside the therapeutic range and experience bleeding events. The findings underscore the need for enhanced patient education and regular on-site INR monitoring to improve health outcomes and safety. Additionally, I also took the opportunity to educate them about the advantages of using an INR testing kit to monitor their INR value.

ISPOR 2016, Washington DC.

In December 2015, Dr. Sekar, Dr. Bandari, Dr. Scot, and I decided to present our findings at a global forum. We submitted an abstract for a poster presentation at the ISPOR (International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research) Annual Conference, which was to be held in Washington DC in 2016. Our project, "Awareness and Impact of International Normalized Ratio Monitoring in Ongoing Anticoagulation Therapy in Cardiac Patients," was selected as one of three thousand posters for presentation at the conference. Sydney Sweeney once rightly said, "Hard work pays off. The harder you work, the more people will notice." This was certainly true in our case. To our surprise and delight, of the selected three thousand posters, ISPOR selected four posters, including ours, for the Student Research Podium/Oral presentation.

After a year of hard work, we felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment and were ready to celebrate the outcome of our project. With support from my parents, the institute, and my mentors Dr. Sekar and Dr. Bandari, I boarded my first international flight to the United States. My ten-day stay in the US was divided

into two parts: a five-day stay at Dr. Sekar's house in Ohio, followed by five days in a dormitory in downtown Washington DC.

On May 21, 2016, the day of my presentation, I felt nervous and restless. However, as time passed, I managed to calm myself and enjoyed every moment of my twenty-five-minute presentation. It was a proud and special moment for me, as I was the only presenter from India speaking before an audience of about two hundred people from around the world. I must say, the support from my parents and Dr. Sekar was tremendous throughout.

Poster to Paper

Upon my return from the conference, we decided to publish our work in a journal without wasting any time. As a student, the drafting phase of the article was a great learning experience for me. The process of publication was not easy and took considerable time, as it involved finding a relevant journal, drafting the article, and undergoing peer review. Finally, after completing all the necessary steps, we succeeded in getting our work published in the Indian Journal of Pharmacy Practice. This experience of presenting my project at an international forum and subsequently publishing it had a lasting impact, significantly enhancing my ability to apply for and secure positions at leading pharmaceutical companies