



UCSI University's Pharmacy students conducting a demonstration on drug compounding for visitors during the recent 12th Annual Public Health Campaign.

# Where aspiring pharmacists soar

**I**NSIGHTFUL drug compounding demonstrations, detailed health exhibits and a range of health screening tests were some of the highlights of UCSI University's (UCSI) recent 12th Annual Public Health Campaign (PHC) – its second for the year.

Held in Mydin Meru Raya Hypermarket in Ipoh on June 29 and 30, shoppers were pleasantly surprised when they discovered that the “pharmacists” who conducted the tests comprised students of UCSI's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences and their lecturers, who are registered pharmacists.

Themed *Know Your Drugs, Love Your Kidneys, Together We Care*, the two-day event organised by the Pharmacy Student Association under the faculty on an annual basis since 2002 provided closure to this year's campaign.

In January, the same committee organised a similar campaign in Muar, Johor, which was attended by High School Muar's Parent-Teacher Association chairman, Dr Mohd Ali Salleh, among other UCSI academics.

Commenting on the event, Dr Mohd Ali heaps praise on UCSI's students.

He says, “I'm a general anaesthetist in Johor Baru. I know that health care practitioners are not able to focus as much as PHC members on such events due to their hectic schedule. This is why PHC members play a crucial role in this initiative.”

Prominent industry leaders have also recognised the impact of the public health campaign and Perak State Health (Public Health Division) deputy director, Datin Dr Ranjit Kaur, also acknowledges the noble work done by the campaign.

UCSI Group founder and chairman, Datuk Peter Ng, who was also present at the event, echoes Dr Ranjit's sentiment.

He says, “Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) reported that there were 25,688 dialysis patients and 1,884 registered kidney receivers at the end of 2011.

“As such, health campaigns like this help foster greater awareness on kidney disease, and the importance of health care and preventive methods, among other issues.”

Like its predecessor, it is worthy to note that the recent public health campaign in Ipoh received overwhelming response with

a total of 1,048 registered participants and much positive feedback from the public.

Such glowing testimonies show that the faculty's holistic approach is working well for its students.

According to Faculty dean, Assoc Prof Dr Yeong Sie Wei, academics educate students with the intention of making them compassionate pharmacists.

“Hands-on activities like this campaign equip future pharmacists with enhanced leadership qualities, communication skills and other soft skills that cannot be found in textbooks,” she says.

As such, students not only gain life skills pertinent to their professional development but also learn the importance of giving back to the community.

This year, all proceeds from the event will be channelled directly to the National Kidney Foundation Malaysia (NKF) – a non-profit charitable organisation to help dialysis patients.

Cultivating social responsibility among youths is no easy feat but this principle is one that the faculty strongly advocates and it has been practised for more than a decade.

Year after year, pharmacy students gain important soft skills while organising this annual event and also gain valuable insight into intricacies in the industry.

The faculty constantly provides avenues for students to apply theory to practice and this approach is recognised by NKF head (Fundraising Department), Lesley Ng, who finds the campaign well-organised.

As evidenced in this event, the faculty provides the ideal platform for students to interact with the community, companies and even industry leaders, which PHC organising chairperson, Choong Yin Leng, greatly appreciates.

“A pharmacy student's life should not be all about books,” she says, elaborating that not many universities offer such hands-on learning experience for students.

■ For details on UCSI University's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences degree and master's programmes, contact 03-9101 8882 or log on to [www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry](http://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry).