NEW IN TOWN: First year PPS pharmacology graduate students (from left to right) Hanan Qasim, Kalyani Kulkarni, Ghazaleh Behnammanesh, Noor Abdulkareem and Ashfia Khan lounging on the 3rd floor.

Another successful symposium. PPS symposium winners of best poster and oral presentation categories, seen here with the symposium committee (Drs. Hussain, Ghose, and Eriksen), and Scholar-in-residence Prof. Raghu Kalluri (center). Two engaging days of science and career talk energized the PPS tribe.

Students and post-docs showcasing their science. Razia Mohammad and Gurbir Singh (right) proudly display their work. Dr. Brian Knoll, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs (center) browsing posters. Lookin’ good!

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PPS NEWSMAKERS

Congratulations to Pharmaceutics Ph.D. candidate Asma El-Zailik on her third consecutive American College of Clinical Pharmacology award to present her research on statins concentrations in post-gastric bypass surgery patients at the ACCP Annual Meeting Sept. 23-25 in Bethesda, MD.

Congratulations to recent Pharmaceutics alumna & current postdoc Mahua Sarkar, Ph.D., for earning an American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) travel award to present her project, “Pharmacokinetic Evaluation of Novel Combination of Riluzole and Minocycline for Treatment of Spinal Cord Injury,” at the AAPS PharmSci 360 meeting Nov. 4-7 in Washington, D.C.

2017-18 GRADUATES

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A TSIWT in PhD - From Patiently hoping for a Degree to Pursuing harmoniously your Dream.

PhD experience is like a roller-coaster ride, full of ups and downs, fast paced mostly, yet slow sometimes, full of surprising twists, stressful... but for sure worth the run. However, roller-coaster ride takes a couple of minutes while a PhD takes on average 5 years of your life, so if you don’t enjoy the run or learn how to make the best out of it, it will be an extremely tough and painful journey. To twist the norm of the struggle PhD students face, I would like to address the major issues we deal with on a daily basis and share my personal triple-Ps that each student should practice (especially new students) to develop a healthy and balanced 5 years of graduate student life. The key for reviewing, reading and understanding papers is PATIENCE, it is not going to be simple. Science is complex, so expect that it will take some time especially when learning about a new topic.

PLAN, plan and plan, I can’t emphasize this enough, as everyday something new comes up, so DON’T rely on one plan. I have at least two backups to deal with sudden changes. Good planning allows you to have fun with friends, family or just your own time! Balance is crucial, to have balance you need to manage your time appropriately.

Other struggles

School time  Weekends  Every day

Being POSITIVE and NEVER giving up is the MOST important part of this journey. It already is too hard, don’t make it even harder on yourself with pessimistic thoughts, remember, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% of how you react to it" -Charles Swindoll. As everyone before you did it, you for sure CAN DO IT TOO!!

-Hanan Qasim
First year PPS graduate student
Scientists, by nature, are creative. It shouldn't be a huge leap to find that many scientists also have a creative "art" side as well. I indulge my creative art-side with paper collage from paper I collect from all over. –Dr. Lindsay Schwarz. Dr. Schwarz has shared two of her beautiful paper artworks (below).

First year graduate student Hanan Qasim expresses her creativity via art. Hanan is half Bosnian and half Jordanian, and her art depicts the best of both cultures. She has shared few of these. The sketches depict conflict (below left), strength (below center), and emotional turmoil (below right).

Kalyani Kulkarni (bottom left), another artist in the PPS family. She is a first year pharmacology graduate student. Art is her first love and a great way to relax and unwind. She displays Eiffel tower in water color (right).

Nicole Prodan is a third year PPS student and loves to photograph nature (right). Seen here with her brother who visited her from New Zealand this year to celebrate her 24th birthday. Few clicks she has shared from her trip to Los Angeles, Las
Vegas and Grand Canyon. Happy birthday, Nicole. Wishing that you capture many more astonishing sceneries.

-Weddings, Babies, Travels and More!

PPS graduate student **Youngki You** married Hanna Kim on July 21st this year. You is pictured his new bride at the church and later at the celebration in Korean attire.

PPS student **Amer Alali** became a proud dad this year. He has shared beautiful pictures of his 9-month-old baby girl Kayan (left).

PPS Chair **Dr. Doug Eikenburg** got married to Kathy Ryan this summer. The beautiful couple is seen at right with Professor Musti Lokhandwala, Executive Vice-Dean for Research, and his wife, Mrs. Sanobar Lokhandwala.
PPS LIFE-

PPS staff celebrated Dr. E’s Birthday in October this year. There were signs, he was warned!

Going away lunch for PPS graduate students Xitao Wang, Ankita Salvi and Hesong Liu. Ankita's parents traveled from India to attend her graduation ceremony. Xitao Wang’s parents flew from China to attend this important event of their son’s life.

Third year student Camila Kochi travelled to Seattle and visited the tulip farms at the Skagit Valley Tulip festival earlier this year with husband Nabih (right). “In between experiments, I enjoy decorating my house with unique finds”, says Camila. Shown (left) is the picture of Camila’s dining room wall with ceramic plate decoration. She picked up random plates from a thrift store and thought of a unique display idea. You go girl!

Going away lunches: Fatin Atrooz defended her dissertation in the summer and will “walk the walk” in May 2019. Fatin in a relaxed mood with advisor and lab mates Camila and Safiyya Zaidi.
A Thanksgiving to Remember- Noor Abdulkareem

We always heard about Thanksgiving as one of the biggest festivals in the USA when family and friends get together and share some great memories with amazing food. As first year students, who are all away from their families some from a different country and culture, thanksgiving was such a wonderful experience. Dr. Richard Bond (Professor of Pharmacology, Dept. of PPS) and his family were the generous host for our first Thanksgiving in Houston. We shared some great stories from our lives with delicious food, some of which we tried for the first time like Texas special pecan pie. It was truly a special first thanksgiving, and we ended the day with just one thought in mind “We felt like home!” Thank you Dr. Bond!

Holiday Luncheon- PPS graduate students closed a hectic semester with a holiday luncheon on December 20th. Some pictures of an appetizing spread and a warm crowd are shared by first year graduate student Guoyi Jiang.
Many thanks to Ella, Camila and others for arranging the party. Flavors were amazing and the company awesome!! Have a great holiday season everyone. See you all in 2019!

Before, we close please pay attention to what Dr. Aditi Marwaha has to say!

**Fasting and Feasting**

Right after the holidays and the holiday feast(s) it seems like an appropriate time to talk about fasting. Fasting in the strictest sense is defined as voluntary abstinence from food and drinks except water. During fasting, the body is capable of supporting itself using reserves stored in the tissues. While intermittent
fasting for weight loss is the new buzz word these days, fasting has a long history and has been practiced in virtually every culture and religion around the world and it offers more benefits than just weight loss.

Many of the great doctors of ancient times and many of the ancient healing systems have recommended it as an integral method of healing and prevention. Hippocrates, considered as the father of modern medicine wrote, “To eat when you are sick, is to feed your illness”. Ayurvedic medicine, has long advocated fasting as a major treatment. Therapeutic fasting in the US became popular in the early twentieth century as a part of the natural hygiene movement started by Dr. Herbert Shelton.

One of the major benefits of fasting is detoxification. In the total abstinence of food body undergoes a self-detoxification process. Fasting promotes autophagy, in which the cells clear out old dysfunctional organelles because they do not have enough energy to sustain them. This destruction of dysfunctional organelles makes way for rebuilding of new organelles. In addition, during fasting the body first uses up the stored glycogen (carbohydrate) and then body starts burning fats, which are converted to ketone bodies. This state of ketosis (NOT ketoacidosis) is a natural metabolic state and has been shown beneficial for weight loss, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, epilepsy, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease and cancer.

Several studies indicate beneficial effect of fasting on glucose levels, lipid profile, blood pressure, improved brain health and even increased immunity, but is it something that can be done on a regular basis? Time restricted feeding such as having dinner earlier and having more than a 12 hour window between end of dinner and start of breakfast may offer some health benefits and could potentially be done on a regular basis. In a large prospective cohort of about 2400 patients with early-stage breast cancer, a nightly fast of more than 13 hours was associated with a 36% lower risk for breast cancer recurrence. In addition, women who fasted for more than 13 hours had better glycemic control and lower HbA1c. They had similar diet, consumed similar number of calories compared to the other group, they just finished dinner earlier.

Of course, one has to strike a balance between fasting and feasting. Fasting leads to destruction and cleansing and feasting leads to cell growth. It’s all about striking a balance!