Course analysis BIOR14/EXTN45 "Pharmacology 15 cr" autumn 2018

**Course leader:** Bodil Sjögreen  
**Other teachers:** Johan Andersson, Bo Bekkouche, David O’Carroll, Fredrik Johansson, Wolfgang Knecht, Mehnaz Nouri

**Number of students:** 23 registered students

**Grades:** Four (4) Fail (U), 13 Pass (G), 11 Pass w distinction (VG). Result includes exam and re-exam. Four (4) students from previous courses (not formally re-registered, just taking the re-exam). One (1) student has chosen not to take the written test yet.

**Evaluation**

**I. Summary of the course evaluation**

Number of answers: 14 (61 %)  
Overall the students were pleased with the course (grade 3,4; SD 1,1). The students especially appreciated the cardiovascular and inflammatory/respiratory sessions, the *in vivo* labs, as well as the introduction of iRATs but suggested improvement regarding the *in vitro* lab, and the methodological task, see below. An in-depth lecture on biological was positively received. The main criticism comes from the overall workload (high) and the somewhat turbulent start of the course, when we had to reschedule labs – with subsequent changes in schedules, groups etc. We also suffered from double-scheduled/not present staff, which rendered unacceptable long feedback times.

**II. Comments from the teachers team**

The teachers find that the course has gained from the introduction of iRATs, but increasing the complexity of the sessions also increased the workload. There is also a discrepancy between different theoretical areas, since one area is taught only by lectures and a case. The students suggested removing 1st *in vitro* lab (out of two) and the methodological task in order to lower the workload. The first lab is a minor one, so the difference would be ½ day less, but then it would have to be replaced with a calculation session in order to be able to perform the second *in vitro* lab. But the alteration could be taken into consideration. The methodological task is often something completely new, and thereby time consuming, but we find it a valuable exercise. We are well aware that students spend more time on the literature task than they “get credits for”, even if we inform about the requirements. With respect to methodological task and essay: given the quality of the “products” most students hand in – there might be a bit of overachieving on their behalf, making them feel that they do not get enough credits for their work.

Amongst the cohort that did answer the course evaluation, it seems like that they were somewhat divided in their appreciation of the course: some not so much, others very much. We are a bit surprised: the irritation expressed in the evaluation did not show “live” to us during the course. The students were informed about reasons beyond our control for e.g. reschedules and issues with feedback, but some things cannot be adjusted ad hoc. However, 1/3 of the students did not respond and others were positive towards the course. On a final note, compared to the 2017 course, the satisfactory index was much lower, but the total performance higher, as judged by the written test before adding the MCQ credits.

**III. Evaluation of changes made since the previous course**

We have changed the group studies. Although mandatory, little effort has been but into them and hence the work load for exam excessive. The group studies now include more material to interpret and discuss, rather than straightforward Q/A. We have also introduced iRATs: increasing the formative evaluation/feedback on individual knowledge level. Gained credits on the iRATs were “valid” to count towards the final result on the written exam (and the first re-exam). This has been done on all but one of the group study sessions. All respondents perceived the iRATs very positively. However, we know by talking to students that, although it was not mandatory to take the iRATs, it was a stressor to some of them. However, the results on the exam benefitted from the change and from a
more subjective point of view, the teachers experienced more activity and discussions during the sessions.

The introduction of a more extensive guidelines and a short session regarding how to find high-quality sources of information in pharmacology increased the quality of the reports. Also the addition of evaluation criteria for the popular science summary turned out well. The information on how to use the guidelines could have been clearer – some students seemed adopt their writing to the guidelines, rather formatting the written text according to the guidelines.

A follow-up on the methodological task was introduced, but the format (seminar) was less successful.

IV. Suggested changes for the next course and in a longer perspective
We plan to revise the workload in the group studies. We are also considering either more tutor time, or additional material (study questions) to the CNS/case week in order to level the areas. We have been using both LibGuides and L@L, due to different functionalities, but wish to only use Canvas next time. Even if it increases the scheduled time, we will try to make use of the library’s service for how to do database searching (including Embase), and discuss the use of various guidelines.

In a longer perspective, we would also like to start a discussion about pre-requisites in immunology and physiology/intracellular mechanisms. The former subject is not a requirement, but many students have studied just prior to pharmacology, hence creating a knowledge gap towards those with less knowledge in the subject. As for physiology, cell signalling and intracellular mechanisms we would like some areas to be emphasised on earlier courses in the program(s). The weight between different “provmoment/moduler” will be considered during the revision of the course syllabus. If possible, enrolling more teachers in the revisions of hand-ins in order to shorten feedback lag.

Compiled by Bodil Sjögreen