

Friday, 14 February 2020

TOXSA SPONSORED ACTIVITY – COMPUTATIONAL TOXICOLOGY TRAINING WORKSHOP,
27-31 JANUARY 2020 - SOUTH AFRICA

I would like to thank TOXSA for inviting me to attend the workshop that facilitated my development and understanding of computational toxicology and risk assessment. The content has already started to greatly benefit my postgraduate BHSc Honours in Pharmacology, MSc and PhD students. In discussion with attending students, they echo that they too gained a lot from this workshop and appreciate being able to interact with specialists in these fields.

The *lectures* over the four days were organised to cover various topics with case studies therein. Various concepts, applications and computational website links and reference articles were supplied. I found these to be of tremendous value, and my group have started to use them towards their dissertations, theses and research outputs. The *workshop venue* (Economic and Business Management lecture theatre) was spacious and allowed for the presentations and importantly the interactive discussions to take place.

The *hands on training* Friday morning session was split into three subject areas, namely Human covering QSAR and PBPK, Environmental ecotoxicology, and Molecular covering nanomaterial physical properties. These sessions held in three computer centres had the software preloaded for the various sessions, allowing for the interactive case studies and activities to take place. I attended the human QSAR and PBPK sessions, which allowed us to work on a couple of programmes with case study data. I would suggest that for future workshops that more hands-on time is factored into the programme. Bearing in mind that the majority of participants had their own laptops/tablets with them and the freely available software could be accessed and explored in the lecture timeslots.

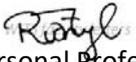
I would like to acknowledge all the *speakers* who took time out of their busy schedules to deliver the presentations and hands-on sessions - Professor E. Faustman, Professor B. Meek, Professor M. Gulumian, Professor V. Wepener, Professor P. Ramasami, Professor R. Grafström, Prof R. Harris, Dr E. Benfenati, Dr GC Gini, Prof H. Clewell, Dr W. Malherbe and Dr G. O'Brien. Their scope of knowledge and enthusiasm with which they delivered the sessions and interacted with the students was first class and the students were in awe of their pooled knowledge. The students appreciated the offers made to them to be able to communicate with them for further information or assistance.

The timing of the workshop to be held at the beginning of the year was an advantage with respect to venue availability and for academics before the teaching year began. The weeklong workshop allowed all participants to fully engage with the intense daily work plan and commit to the activities being undertaken.

I am grateful to our hosts Prof Mary Gulumian (TOXSA) and Prof Victor Wepener (Department of Zoology, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus) for the excellent organisation of the workshop for attendees and invited speakers. The communication, transport, accommodation, catering and social and student activities were superbly organised. I would also like to express gratitude to the *sponsors and organisations* involved in facilitating that this workshop took place, namely TOXSA, IUTOX, NWU, SETAC and SRA.

This workshop has helped to expand and clarify some of the diverse concepts of computational toxicology and risk assessment, with several questions answered, but with many more being asked. Looking forward to the next workshop.

Yours sincerely,



Personal Professor Robyn van Zyl

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