

BPC IS THE PLACE TO BE

By Jodie Taylor

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As I was registering at the British Pharmaceutical Conference 2006, the first thought that passed through my mind was “what am I doing here?” I felt intimidated by the people around me; there were people whose names I recognised from textbooks and *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, important-looking people I had never heard of and quite a few of my lecturers. This first thought was quickly replaced with the realisation of how impressive the Manchester International Convention Centre and G-Mex complex is. I was amazed at the size of the exhibition hall; it seemed to go on forever and, as I later discovered, the BPC only took up half of it. After heading for the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association stand, for a bit of reassurance, I decided to take a look around the exhibition.

Within minutes I was happily chatting away with a woman from Pfizer with a cup of coffee in one hand and a list of useful contacts in the other. All my initial fears quickly disappeared. Everyone at the stand seemed eager to answer my questions and offered valuable information about applying for a preregistration placement. I left the Pfizer stand feeling a lot more confident and looking forward to speaking to the next company. Of course the beach

towel that I was given as I walked away was an added bonus! I spent the rest of the morning going around various stands in the exhibition speaking to people from pharmaceutical companies. I also used the opportunity to take advantage of the careers forum — held for the first time this year. It provided the chance to sit down with an employer and have an informal interview. Even though I am not looking for a job yet it was a great chance to practise my interview technique, something that is going to be important over the next year as I apply for a preregistration placement.

In the afternoon I went to the talks in the undergraduate and preregistration trainees' programme. It was chaired by Jennifer De Val, president of the BPSA and Professor Bill Dawson, from Bionet. The talks were “Diagnostics in the high street”, “The effect of a pharmacist's personality on medicines use reviews” and “Can big pharma survive patient subset?” The talks were relevant and informative and there was time for questions after each one. I would really recommend attending student's day at next year's BPC (10–12 September 2007). It is well worth it; I left the G-Mex with a head full of knowledge and my arms full of freebies! ■