

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN



Newsletter

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## MedPlant latest news - March 2016

### Cagliari meeting and Summer School September 2016

P1 and P3 are continuing the planning of the 7th Supervisory Board meeting and 3rd Summer School. We have chosen two venues. For the Supervisory board meeting and project review days (20-21 Sept.) and the Plant to Product course (23-25 Sept.) we will stay in Cagliari at [Italia Hotel](#), and for the last 3 days, Fellows Career workshop (26-28 Sept.), we will change to a small venue about an hour's drive from Cagliari – to [Aquadulci Hotel](#) at the west coast of Sardinia. People are expected to arrive in Cagliari Monday the 19 Sept. As described in the work program we expect several partners and associated partners to be involved in the Plant to product course. Nina will contact you about this in April. Also more info will follow in regard to signing up for the meeting/Summer School.

### Reminder: 2 year report for ESR fellows – an EU deliverable

The template for the 2 year report has been sent out. For those of you who started in March please remember to return it by 31 March/as soon as possible and for you who started in April the deadline is 30 April.

### First MedPlant fellow to land new job

Rosa Buonfiglio, ER1, got a new job after the end of her MedPlant position. She was hired as "computational chemistry researcher" at Angelini, a pharma company in Rome. She is going to work on molecular modeling and drug design projects and use her knowledge gained during her MedPlant postdoc to include cheminformatics analyses.

### MedPlant blog – or no blog?

The blog that was set up on the web-site in August 2015 is not being used, and we therefore conclude that there is not a strong need for it and it will be closed unless someone have a different view on this. On average the web-site has 300 visits pr. month.

### Updates from fellows and partners

Maonian Xu, ESR2, just got a paper accepted by the journal "Phytomedicine" with a DOI: 10.1016/j.phymed.2016.02.012 with title "Secondary metabolites from cetrarioid lichens: Chemotaxonomy, biological activities and pharmaceutical potential" authored by Maonian Xu, Starri Heidmarsson, Elin Soffia Olafsdottir, Rosa Buonfiglio, Thierry Kogej, Sesselja Omarsdottir.

Hugo de Boer has recently visited Copenhagen as censor on a MSc thesis in Nina Rønstedts group entitled 'Phylogenetics of Psychoactive Plants in Neuro-Targeted Bioprospecting' with Haris Saslis-Lagoudakis as main supervisor.

Matthias Geck, ESR7, completed the analysis of data from the fieldwork with the Zoque and the comparison of the Zoque's ethnomedical system and medicinal flora should soon be published. He will also present his current work on selection criteria of herbal medicine at the International Congress on Ethnopharmacology in China in May.

Irene Teixidor, ESR6, is currently in Morocco for a few days coordinating the medicinal plant booklet that will be given back to the community: she carried out meetings with local informants to discuss the project and take their view and opinion into account, the text is being translated and the graphical material produced (drawings and photos). Also she participated in a workshop about Moroccan ethnobotany organized by Gary Martin in the University of Kent last January.

Madeleine Ernst, ESR5, is conducting her secondment at LEO-Pharma, investigating the influence of Euphorbia chemical compounds on TNF-alpha release in peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs). TNF-alpha is a pro-inflammatory cytokine and is used as an indicator of an inflammatory response.

Associated partner Olwen Grace visited Nina Rønsted at the Natural History Museum of Denmark for two weeks in February-March 2016, to work on a collaboration investigating the phylogeny of the iconic Aloe Vera and its relatives. The main purpose of Olwen's visit was to use the natural history collections and genomic sequencing facilities at the Museum, and to spend time in discussion with MEDPLANT and other colleagues. The project is supported by a SYNTHESYS Access Grant.

This winter, Natalie Iwanycki, ESR4, completed a research stay at ArcticMass (AC6) in Reykjavik, Iceland. With the help and expertise of Finnur and Margret, she was able to process over 300 Plantago leaf extracts using ultra-high performance liquid chromatography - quadrupole time of flight mass spectrometry (UPLC-QTOF-MS). She will return to the labs at ArcticMass for a second research stay this April to process the remaining 400 Plantago samples. This data will allow her to explore how the expression of chemicals in Plantago major vary with the environment, geography, and genotype.

MedPlant will be well represented by the Jüerg Gertch, Anders Backlund, Nina Rønsted groups at the Joint Natural Products Research conference in Copenhagen July 2016 [www.jnpc2016.dk](http://www.jnpc2016.dk)

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