

International Activities in Pharmacy – Erasmus Plus



NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS,
DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY

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Erasmus



- Erasmus program is a European student exchange program established in 1987, offering university students a possibility of studying or working abroad in another European country for a period of at least 3 months and a maximum of 12 months.
- Its name was taken from Dutch Renaissance humanist and theologian **Desiderius Erasmus** of Rotterdam. He studied at diverse European universities and described the education as a chance for modern people.
- The most chosen countries are: France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Spain.

Erasmus



Erasmus is considered an exciting opportunity for students:

- To enhance academic development, enrich period of studies,
- have better chances while looking for a job,
- travel, gain an insight into a different way of life ,
- learn a foreign language,
- meet new people from all around the world, socialize→ it is said that Erasmus program is becoming like a community, named the “**Erasmus generation**” (Stefan Wolff) or a “**cultural phenomenon**”, as this experience consists not just in learning but also in cultural understanding and having the chance to socialize with people from all around the world”

Erasmus



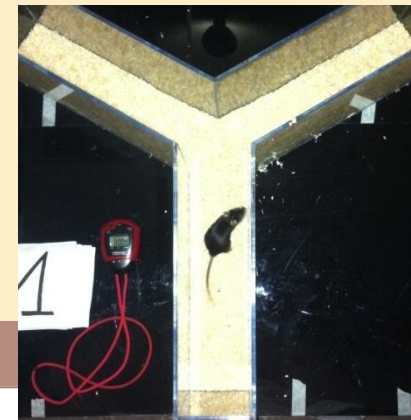
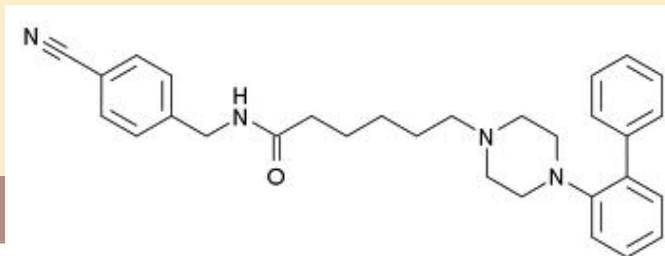
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Erasmus-Final thesis project



- In the context of Erasmus-plus I conducted my final thesis project, working for 4 months in a neurobiological laboratory in the section of Behavioral Neuroscience, Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience, Istituto Superiore di Sanita, which is in cooperation with the Sapienza University of Rome.
- “*CDKL5 knockout mice as a model of Rett syndrome: Behavioral characterization and effects of the 5-HT₇ agonist LP-211*”.



Sapienza University of Rome



- the largest European University by enrollment
- positioned within the top 3% of universities in the world
- the most prestigious Italian University and one of the most reputable in Europe
- the oldest of Rome's four state Universities founded in 1303
- significant research programs in the fields of engineering, *biomedical sciences*, natural sciences and humanities

Istituto Superiore di Sanità



Istituto Superiore di Sanità (National Institute of Health), also ISS is an Italian public institution that, as the leading technical-scientific body of the Italian National Health Service (Servizio Sanitario Nazionale), performs research, trial, counseling, documentation and training for public health. The Institute is under the supervision of the Ministero della Salute (Ministry of Health).



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



ISTITUTO
SUPERIORE
DI SANITÀ

Laboratories in ISS-Rett syndrome



- Rett (RTT) syndrome is a neurodevelopmental disorder and the aim of the thesis was to describe the behavioral phenotyping and to investigate the modulatory effects of treatment with LP -211, on a mouse model of RTT syndrome.

A battery of behavioral tests, specifically tailored to detect RTT-like symptoms, was performed in this model:

- Assessment of general health status
- Testing of motor functions
- Testing of cognitive functions
- Testing of emotional behaviours

Laboratories in ISS



A day at the ISS included studying, reading articles and writing, conduction of the above experiments, cleaning the cages, change water and food to the animals and also video scoring (watch videos of the mice during the day and give scores for their behaviour)

Advantages



- **Academic development:** hard and cooperative work, quick adaption to emerging problems related to the experiments, solid knowledge of behavioral neuroscience
- **Cultural understanding** , meet new people and share ideas
- **Learn a foreign language**, regret not participating in one of the Erasmus Language Courses offered at Sapienza, *that was a huge linguistic support for other Erasmus students.*
- **Life is not the same after Erasmus** ,changing my attitude to other countries and people, enhancing my confidence and adjustment to difficulties and providing self-development and integration.

Disadvantages: obligations, responsibilities



- 1. Money:** There's a considerable need for money when you go abroad including:
- Travel costs
 - Different living costs: Renting, transportation → there are no discounts for students
 - Health insurance costs in my case, as it is compulsory when working with animals
- 2. Documentation:** Documentation requirements are considerably demanding including documents before, during and after the Erasmus period, thus you need to be constantly vigilant for the deadlines.

Disadvantages: obligations, responsibilities



3. **Laboratories and expectations:**

- The laboratories did not live up to my expectations for better organization, technology and innovation. I could say that the laboratories offered there were **comparable to these offered from our University.**
- Hard work from 9am to 5pm daily and ability to acquire information quickly.

The negative part though is negligible and Erasmus is not just a simple acquisition of knowledge. It is a process that changes mentalities and people in general.

Why hesitate?



Students are usually afraid of taking the chance and apply for Erasmus:

- Money is definitely one of the obstacles. Each student receives a grant which covers partly the costs but sometimes it may turn out to be insufficient. **So greater emphasis should be put into the financing of the program.**
- Difficulties because of the language. Students can improve their language skills by participating in one of the **Erasmus language courses** offered at Universities.

Why hesitate?



- Living alone in a foreign country. In Erasmus there is the principle of students helping students. **Erasmus Student Network (ESN):**
 1. is a non-profit international student organization and its sections can be a valuable source of information and advice.
 2. with your ESN card you have discounts on trips, museum entrances and cafeterias.
 3. dinner, parties and other events are organized in order to help you socialize with other students.
 4. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has also an ESN section called ESN KAPÁ ATHENS (<http://esnkapa.org>).



Erasmus



- It is important to make easier the **communication between students** that have already participated in the program and those that are planning to apply, so as to offer information and feedback about their experience and support them in taking the step.
- Erasmus changes people's attitude to other people, countries and also themselves in such a short period of time and life after this program is never the same.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

