

# THE HISTORY OF APPOINTING

# WORLD PHARMACISTS DAY : 25 September

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## INTRODUCTION

Pharmacists have observed **World Pharmacists Day** on **September 25** for the last seven years. This special day not only brings attention to pharmacists around the world through a series of activities and pharmacy-related campaigns but also successfully serves to promote the role of pharmacists in improving health outcomes and patient safety. This day has been officially coordinated by the **International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)**, a non-governmental professional body representing over three million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. However, in contrast to the popularity World Pharmacists Day enjoys in many countries, the history of appointing this day has remained unknown to both the pharmaceutical community and the public.



## PROPOSAL FOR APPOINTING SEPTEMBER 25 AS WORLD PHARMACISTS DAY

The idea of appointing September 25 as World Pharmacists Day was first suggested in the last paragraph of an article written by Halil Tekiner, the author of this poster and former public relations officer (2007/2008) of the FIP Young Pharmacists' Group, with the following sentences:

**"It is a pity that we do not have one common day for pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists during which we can celebrate our profession together throughout the world. Therefore, here, I humbly suggest that we come together to celebrate an International Pharmacy Day on September 25. (...) It is my sincere wish that this humble proposal be considered by the relevant authorities before the Federation's [FIP's] centennial in 2012."**

This article, entitled "Turkey celebrates National Pharmacy Day," was published on the FIP's website on May 14, 2009, to promote the 69<sup>th</sup> FIP Congress to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in the same year. The article is still promoted online at the FIP's website (1), and the full text of this article is available there as well (2).

## WHY SEPTEMBER 25?

To overcome the problem of appointing a day that the great majority of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists of different countries around the world could agree upon, without any ethnic, religious, geographic, or other discriminatory connotations, Tekiner proposed celebrating the official formation day of the FIP in 1912 as an "International Pharmacy Day."

Considering the fact that the FIP not only represents pharmacists but also pharmaceutical scientists—as is explicitly stated in its official documents—Tekiner thought that the day should be named "Pharmacy Day" instead of "Pharmacists Day" and should be paired with the word "International," attributable to the Federation's original name. After researching historical references and conducting an archival search at the FIP Bureau in The Hague, which was helped by the efforts of the FIP project coordinator Mr. Luc Besançon (currently the CEO of the FIP), Tekiner found out that in the afternoon of **September 25, 1912**, the FIP's foundation meeting was held in the Trêveszaal of the Dutch government, in The Hague (3) (Fig. 1 and 2a-d).



Fig. 1: A photo from the FIP's constituent meeting held on September 25, 1912, in The Hague (Courtesy of the FIP).



Fig. 2a-d: Tekiner's liaisons with the FIP officials regarding the formation day of the FIP and the convenience of this day for celebrating an International Pharmacy Day.

## ATTEMPTS THROUGH THE TURKISH PHARMACISTS' ASSOCIATION

In his e-mail dated June 19, 2009, following up on previous phone calls, Tekiner officially asked the Research and Development Department of the **Turkish Pharmacists' Association (TPA)** and the TPA's coordinator of international relations, Mr. Şerif Boyacı, for their institutional support. Tekiner also explained his motivation behind the proposal in great detail during Mr. Boyacı's visit to Kayseri for the 36<sup>th</sup> Term Third Interregional Pharmacy Meeting of the TPA, hosted by the Kayseri Chamber of Pharmacists on July 2-4, 2009.

## ASKING THE OPINIONS OF THE HISTORIANS OF PHARMACY

In order to raise awareness of the idea among historians of pharmacy, Tekiner also communicated with several names including Prof. Afife Mat (Turkey); Prof. Axel Helmstaedter (Germany); Prof. Greg Higby (USA); Mr. Jacques Gravé (France), president of the FIP Working Group on the History of Pharmacy (Fig. 3a-b); and many other academics including Prof. Hüsnü Can Başer (Turkey), former president of the Turkish Academy of Pharmacy; and asked for their opinions and suggestions.

After receiving responses supporting his idea, Tekiner submitted a short note entitled "When shall we celebrate an International Pharmacy Day?" to a group of other pharmacists and historians of pharmacy including Mr. Ainley Wade (UK), editor of the *Pharmaceutical Historian*. Thanks to Mr. Wade's positive approach and offer of this idea to a larger readership, Tekiner's note was published on the back cover page of *Pharmaceutical Historian* (4) (Fig. 4). Later, this note received limited interest in international pharmaceutical media and some Turkish pharmaceutical magazines (5).

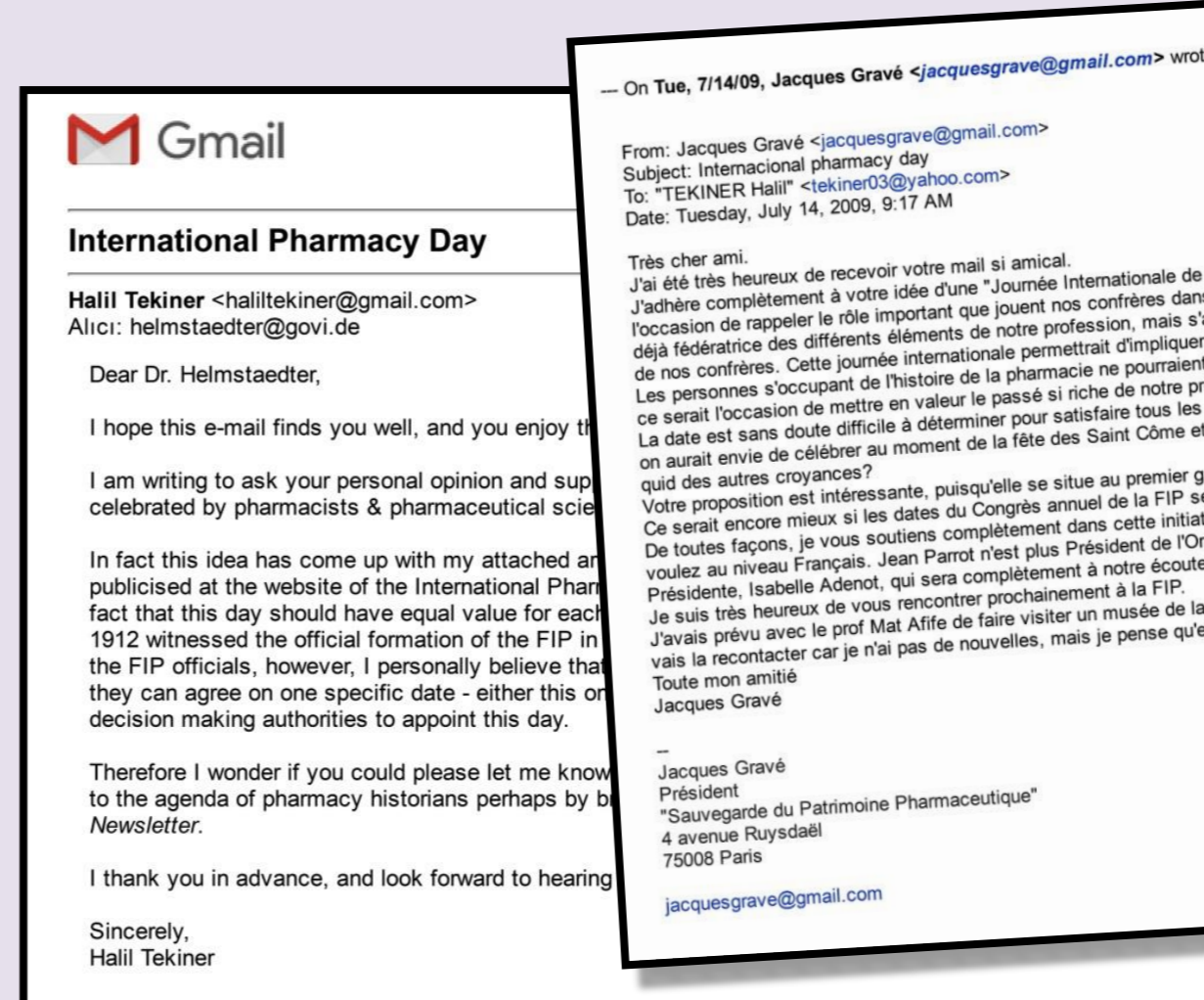


Fig. 3a-b: An example of Tekiner's letter to the historians of pharmacy around the world and the response of Mr. Jacques Gravé (France), president of the FIP Working Group on the History of Pharmacy.

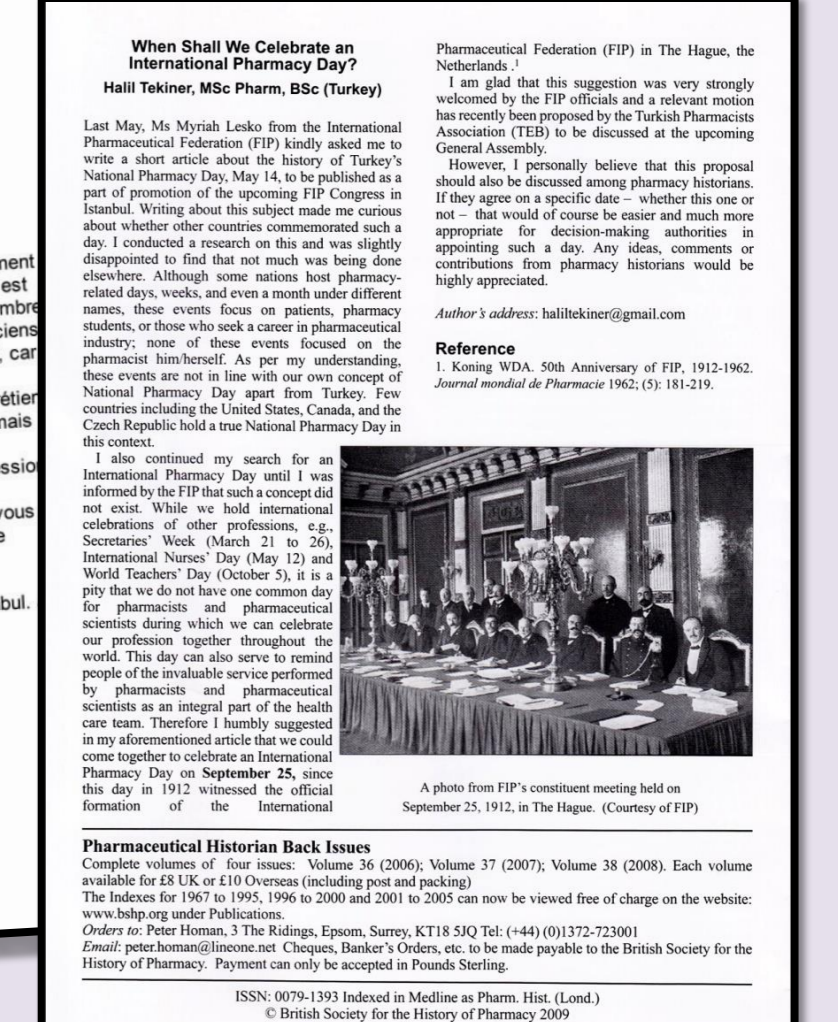


Fig. 4: Tekiner's note entitled "When shall we celebrate an International Pharmacy Day?" was published in 2009.

## APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 25 AS WORLD PHARMACISTS DAY

At the Council meeting of the FIP Congress, held on September 3-8, 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey, the TPA—as a member organization eligible to make motions at council meetings—suggested celebrating World Pharmacists Day annually on September 25. This proposal was unanimously accepted, and hence the day came to be celebrated internationally. Each year the FIP welcomes a new theme to showcase pharmacists and their positive effect on health. The theme of 2017 has been decided as follows: "From research to health care: your pharmacist is at your service."

NOTE: This poster can be viewed online by scanning the following QR code.



## REFERENCES

1. Tekiner, Halil. "Turkey celebrates National Pharmacy Day." International Pharmaceutical Federation. May 14, 2009. [http://www.fip.org/www/index.php?page=news\\_publications&news=newsitem&newsitem=66](http://www.fip.org/www/index.php?page=news_publications&news=newsitem&newsitem=66)
2. Tekiner, Halil. "The history of Turkey's National Pharmacy Day." International Pharmaceutical Federation. May 14, 2009. <http://www.fip.org/files/fip/news/TekinerPharmacyDay-FIP09.pdf>
3. Wittop-Koning, Dirk Arnold. "50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FIP (1912-1962)." Journal mondial de pharmacie 1962;5(2):181-219.
4. Tekiner, Halil. "When shall we celebrate an International Pharmacy Day?" Pharmaceutical Historian 2009;39(3):50. Also available online at [https://www.academia.edu/7406312/When\\_shall\\_we\\_celebrate\\_an\\_international\\_pharmacy\\_day](https://www.academia.edu/7406312/When_shall_we_celebrate_an_international_pharmacy_day)
5. Sandalci, Mert. "25 Eylül Dünya Eczacılık Günü nereden çıktı? [Where did September 25 – World Pharmacists Day come from?]" Eczacı 2013;8(103):68-69. Also available online at [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/255d13\\_ac35bd9106641efa0e19f0a8e2d583f.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/255d13_ac35bd9106641efa0e19f0a8e2d583f.pdf)