



World Confederation for Physical Therapy Congress 2011

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) held a very well attended congress in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 20–23 June last year (Fig. 1). As an official subgroup of WCPT, the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health (IOPTWH) was busy both before and during the event in the following ways:

- Our general business meeting was attended by representatives from the vast majority of our member groups, and also delegates from six “members elect”: Bermuda, Croatia, Finland, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. I am delighted to report that all of these nations were voted in unanimously, swelling our numbers to 23 countries.
- In conjunction with the Dutch pelvic physiotherapists, we hosted a one-day Congress satellite programme on the physiotherapeutic management of anorectal dysfunction in adults and children. Drawing over 100 attend-

ees, this meeting attracted more delegates than any other programme. It was an excellent event with a broad range of speakers, including both doctors and physiotherapists, all experts in their fields.

- The WCPT subgroups held an evening reception to which IOPTWH could invite its chief delegates and other guests. This was an opportunity to network with physiotherapists from other specialties, but lacked the intimacy of similar receptions at previous congresses when the Organization hosted its own event.
- The Executive Committee also held its biennial face-to-face meeting. With officers in the UK, USA, Canada and Slovenia, most Committee work is undertaken by e-mail or Skype conference call.
- Finally, the Executive Committee led an early-morning (07:00 h) networking session for any WCPT Congress delegates wishing to meet in order to discuss different aspects of women's health physiotherapy. With such an early start, we were not expecting much interest, so were amazed when more than 50



Figure 1. Darija Šćepanović (left), International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health (IOPTWH) Member-at-Large, and Ros Thomas (right), IOPTWH Treasurer, at the Organization's stand at the 2011 World Confederation for Physical Therapy Congress.

physiotherapists participated. During the 90-min session, attendees had the opportunity to circulate between five different tables, at each of which an Executive officer facilitated discussions.

Female genital mutilation

During the WCPT Congress, there was a range of platform and poster presentations of interest to women's health physiotherapists. Ruth Broom, chief delegate for New Zealand and chair of the IOPTWH Practice Committee, presented the results of a survey of women's health physiotherapists internationally that was conducted to determine if women who have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) are receiving physiotherapy. There were 423 responses from 18 countries and 12.9% of those who replied reported that they were treating women suffering from the effects of FGM. The most commonly reported symptoms were urinary incontinence, perineal trauma during childbirth, dyspareunia, post-partum urinary problems and chronic pain.

The conclusions reached following an analysis of the survey were that physiotherapists are treating some women suffering from the long-term effects of FGM and that research into the subject appears to be minimal. A lack of awareness of available treatments and other barriers to seeking help may mean that women are not

receiving optimal care for their symptoms. A synopsis of the results of the survey will be sent to the World Health Organization.

Website

In summer 2011, refashioning of the Organization's website (www.ioptwh.org) was completed. At the time of writing this report, the Executive Committee is developing a job description for the role of website coordinator, and it is hoped that the person who takes on this post will continue to develop, modernize and update the site over the coming years.

Newsletter

Following a call for a new newsletter editor at the IOPTWH general business meeting in June 2011, the Executive Committee was delighted to accept an application by Hana Al-Sobayel from new member country Saudi Arabia.

Hana and the Executive are always looking for suitable articles and papers for the newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact Hana (e-mail: h.alsobayel@gmail.com) or myself (e-mail: gill.brook@lineone.net) if you would like any further information. You can access the current newsletter and previous editions on the website (www.ioptwh.org/publications/newsletters/index.cfm).

Gill Brook
IOPTWH Secretary