

## **South West Area report- Autumn 2018**

I am now in my ninth year as area representative to the South West region. I am told that therefore gives me the privilege of currently being the longest standing area representative (so far!). The years have flown by and I am incredibly grateful to the wonderful group of physiotherapists that I have had the opportunity to get to know, share ideas with, receive support from and continue to develop not only ourselves clinically but the services we can offer in the South West.

The geographic of the South West can sometimes make our roles as Pelvic Health/Bladder and Bowel/Women's Health Physiotherapists feel slightly isolating, but knowing there is a close tight network of clinicians to hand has been really important.

I am very lucky to work in a team with two very enthusiastic and experienced clinicians (Wendy Farren and Helena Costiff) that have helped immeasurably in ensuring the ongoing delivery of the POGP meetings. I have on numerous occasions thought that "enough is enough" and considered retiring from this role, but yet after every meeting I find myself committing to another session and it is solely down to the members that we have. I always leave our meetings invigorated by the conversations and inspired by the amazing work that is being done.



(Tina McGahey, Helen Allan, Susanna Hill, Wendy Farren, Lucy Huntington-Whiteley, Lynne Coates, Helena Costiff, Emily Hoile, Ali Crocker at our last meeting in May 2018.)

At our last meeting in May 2018 we had a fantastic session delivered by Dr Rosamund Yoxall, a Functional Nutritionist. We were able to bombard her with lots of clinical questions and queries to help our practice and dispel some myths and misconceptions. In particular we discussed FODMAP diets and she was able to signpost us to a couple of great resources. We also discussed the complexity of patients who seem a little reluctant to accept that their lifestyle choices can potentially have an impact on their symptoms and applying the principles of Motivational Interviewing as a useful technique. Of particular interest were the tools

that she had developed in helping us and our patients to ultimately understand what a healthy diet looks like and some recipe ideas to support this.

At a previous meeting in September 2017 one of our key members, Jo Lang, presented her research about women's experiences of intimate examinations in physiotherapy. Jo has previously presented this at conference, so it was a great opportunity for us to hear this. We all felt it was an extremely well delivered and insightful presentation. In particular we discussed the impact of the "3<sup>rd</sup> person" in the room with the use of chaperones and the importance of establishing a therapeutic relationship in achieving positive outcomes of intimate examinations. I always appreciate our members sharing their work, ideas or feedback from courses or conferences and would welcome other members to do so for future meetings.

I also aim to have a company attend each meeting to introduce a new product or provide an update. In the last two meetings we have had Qufora irrigation and Contiform devices discussed.

A lot of our members have been busy over the last year, attending the First Pelvic Floor Summit in Telford, the Women on Fire Conference in Brighton and the ACA's conference in Bournemouth. Many have also attended various courses including the POGP's Lower Bowel Dysfunction course in Swindon, the Visceral Mobilisation Course in Bristol, OASI workshops in Plymouth to name but a few. Another of our members, Zoe Aspinall, is currently off on maternity leave so I am sure is busier than ever, we wish her and her beautiful son all the best.

We currently have 23 members and I would encourage as many of them as possible to come along to our biannual meetings to continue to maintain the positive outcomes of the sessions and benefit from the support, enthusiasm and knowledge of our South West members.

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