

International Organization of Physical Therapists in Pelvic and Women's Health



Introduction

This has been the most challenging year for physiotherapy that I have ever known. The COVID-19 pandemic has made an impact on all of us, whether we have contracted the coronavirus or not. It has affected not just our families and the way we work, but all aspects of our lives. I have been fascinated by the insights that I have had into the resilience of the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Pelvic and Women's Health (IOPTPWH) community, and how physiotherapy is responding to the crisis worldwide. I would encourage you to visit the IOPTPWH website (<https://world.physio/subgroups/pelvic-womens-health>) for more information.

The Executive Committee has plans to make terrific contributions to the 2021 World Physiotherapy Congress, which will take place online (<https://congress.physio/2021>).

I am very pleased to share a report from the IOPTPWH president (Davidson 2020), and also some thoughts from the vice-president (Roa 2020). Both were published in the latest *IOPTPWH Newsletter* (IOPTPWH 2020), which is available online.

Sonia Roa (2020) reminds us of how closely we work with patients in women's health and pelvic physiotherapy, and unfortunately, that the pandemic has seen increasing levels of domestic violence during lockdown. She asks us to prepare ourselves by familiarizing ourselves with the World Health Organization recommendations (WHO 2020), and each nation's official advice. We all need to play our part in helping women who are the victims of domestic violence.

Those of us who also work with men and the LGBT+ community are acutely aware of the increase in domestic violence in all populations. I urge you to familiarize yourselves with the kinds of support that are available in your area, and to take part in training courses so that we can all assist our patients to the best of our ability during this difficult time.

Also in the newsletter, IOPTPWH secretary Heather Pierce reports that:

"Since the start of 2020 we have received several enquiries for membership from: Iran,

Argentina, Togo, Jamaica, and Egypt. Formal membership applications have been received from Austria and Latvia. It has been wonderful to be contacted by physiotherapists from our global community, and to learn about practice in women's and pelvic health in these countries." (Pierce 2020, p. 3)

A new project intended to promote education in the field of women's and pelvic health worldwide has been announced by IOPTPWH member-at-large Annelie Gutke:

"During spring, the Executive Committee of IOPTPWH called for interest in participating in the working group. We were pleased to receive interest from ten colleagues representing six different countries and three continents. We were impressed by the high level of competence, knowledge and expertise that these colleagues constituted. However, in order to have a reasonably large group for discussions, it was decided that each country can only have one representative at the meetings." (Gutke 2020, p. 4)

The group's first digital meeting was held on 31 August 2020. The participants discussed goals that could be set that would work globally. They will establish how the group can support physiotherapists around the world to find, and implement adequate education in the field of pelvic and women's health physiotherapy:

"Wouldn't it be great if all physiotherapists had [a] basic knowledge of pelvic and women's health?" (Gutke 2020, p. 4)

I hope that you enjoy reading the reports from member countries in the *IOPTPWH Newsletter* (IOPTPWH 2020), and getting a global view of women's health and pelvic physiotherapy. The issue also includes a report from the IOPTPWH president (Davidson 2020), and an edited version of this follows below.

Shirley Bustard
IOPTPWH Newsletter Editor

President's report

It has been a rough year for most physiotherapists around the world. The loss of loved ones,

friends and colleagues, and the stresses of coping with COVID-19 have affected everyone on both a personal and business level. Our thoughts are with you all, and we hope that 2021 will be a better year.

With many countries locked down, international travel is off the cards for most of us. This has affected the 2021 World Physiotherapy Congress, which has been changed from a “live in-person” meeting in Dubai to an online event. We had been planning social events, networking opportunities, a pre-Congress course, symposiums, and of course, a dedicated stream for pelvic and women's health physiotherapy. This has had to change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but rest assured, we are working behind the scenes to enable as much content to be presented online as possible. Nothing is set in stone yet, but keep an eye out for World Physiotherapy updates in your e-mail inboxes.

We are in the process of reviewing the IOPTPWH constitution, and hope to have the first draft sent out to members for review by the start of the year. It is a long document that we are trying to streamline as much as possible, as well as bring up to date with modern technology, such as using e-mail to send members news! We are also looking at social media as a way of communicating with members, so keep a look out for information on this coming soon.

Be kind and stay safe.

Dr Melissa Davidson
IOPTPWH President

World Physiotherapy Congress 2021 online

The World Physiotherapy website has been redesigned (<https://world.physio/>), and now has a wide variety of information, including advice about COVID-19 and other resources. The organization also holds various webinars, conducts surveys (the latest was about digital practice) and provides information updates on Congress (<https://world.physio/congress>). By the virtue of this year's meeting being an online event (Fig. 1), there is some hope that even more physiotherapists will be able to attend it. It is well worth signing up for e-mail bulletins (<https://mailchi.mp/world.physio/subscribe>).

The IOPTPWH Executive Committee is working hard to bring content relevant to women's and pelvic health physiotherapy to Congress.



Figure 1. Logo of the World Physiotherapy Congress 2021 online.

The programme is already developing (<https://congress.physio/2021/programme>), so mark the dates 8–10 April 2021 in your diary.

As IOPTPWH secretary Heather Pierce reports in the newsletter (Pierce 2020), the following sessions have been accepted for the programme:

- Pre-Congress Workshop – “Physiotherapy in the maternity setting”;
- Focused Symposium – “Role of physiotherapy in prevention and management of urogynaecological cancer”;
- Networking Session – an informal opportunity to meet and talk with colleagues who share common interests.

As Heather notes:

“With the Congress moving to an online format, we are currently in communication with the organizing committee to see whether (or not) and how these events will be held. Further updates will be provided as they come to hand. Regardless, I hope to see you all ‘online’ for the World Physiotherapy Congress [in] April 2021!” (Pierce 2020, p. 3)

Shirley Bustard
IOPTPWH Newsletter Editor

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