



# International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health

A sub-group of WCPT



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We are getting the program for the October 9, 10 2009 conference into it's final form. Please see other details later in this newsletter. It will be exciting to reconnect with all our international colleagues in such a wonderful location in Portugal.

The Executive Committee unanimously approved a remake of our website that will be easier and have a better menu system. New web programs have been developed since we first constructed the site. This new programming language, ColdFusion, will give us a more contemporary looking and functioning site. I am hoping that this will be ready in the early spring.

The listservs continues to be very active with members and friends around the globe. Would there be any interest in having articles that members refer to on the listservs available to download on the web site? Please let me know your thoughts in this regard.

In the summer 2007, at the WCPT Congress in Vancouver, more than 70 physical therapists from around the world gathered at an open networking session to discuss a central website to link physical therapists with underserved WCPT member organizations, with specific rehabilitation needs. Since then the group has continued to liaise with WCPT, and you are encouraged to find out more by visiting <http://wcpt.org/about/faqs/international/index.php>

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Please also see the new WCPT News at <http://www.wcpt.org/publications/news.php>

Recently Talli Rosenbaum brought to my attention a CME article that appeared in Medscape (<http://mp.medscape.com/cgi-bin/1/DM/y/hBzJb0EAROW0F6A0JoDp0G8>). It was very positive in promoting pelvic floor exercises but failed to mention the physical therapy profession or that physical therapists are the experts in evaluation and treatment. As a result I sent the editor the following response:

*Dear Editor*

*In my role as president of the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health, (IOPTWH) an international body of women's health physical therapists, many of whom specialize in pelvic floor rehabilitation, I comment on the CME activity posted on October 30th entitled: Pelvic Floor Exercises Reduce Female Urinary Incontinence. The Journal of Urologic Nursing article, highlighted by News Author: Laurie Barclay, MD, references the therapeutic techniques of physiotherapists and suggests that nurses apply these techniques to their clients without mentioning the physiotherapy profession. I am pleased that Medscape has chosen to highlight the efficacy of pelvic floor rehabilitation techniques, developed and researched by physiotherapists, but are disappointed that the article fails to acknowledge the role of these professionals who possess the clinical skills necessary to provide neuromuscular assessment and treatment. Only physiotherapists are specifically trained in the assessment of muscle strength, coordination, muscle function, therapeutic exercise and neuromuscular re-education skills which are unique to the training of physiotherapists.*

*Rebecca Stephenson PT, DPT, MS*

*President IOPTWH*

*International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health*

Please help us with your volunteer efforts for the IOPTWH committees. There are vacancies on the Program, Communication/Publication, Research/ Education, and Practice Committees. Through our work together, we can foster communication, help establish women's health practices where PT services are minimal, and set standards for education and research. Please look at the committees listed in this newsletter or view the committees on the web page and volunteer. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or suggestions.

With warm regards,

**Rebecca Stephenson**  
**IOPTWH President**  
**[rgspt@comcast.net](mailto:rgspt@comcast.net)**



## TREASURER'S REPORT

Dues are still coming in! Some countries have not yet contributed but I hope to have caught up with you before you read this newsletter.

We have had some problems with our Bank in the UK, which has confused and delayed the entire accounting process. This explains why I have not as yet confirmed payment from some countries. I apologize on the Bank's behalf and I am sure that the situation will be resolved soon.

Expenditure has been on final expenses from Vancouver, the website and newsletter.

Income and expenditure since 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008 are as follows:-

Income:

i) from dues	£4,518.61
ii) from Bank interest	£71.50

Expenditure: £987.79

Funds at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008: £14,028.08

**Ros Thomas**  
**IOPTWH Treasurer**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since my last report I have been in regular communication with Maria Fatima Sancho and, as you will see from our update on pages 7-10, plans for our Conference 2009 in Portugal are advancing well.

In addition I regularly receive messages from around the world some of which I shall summarise below:

- I have had several requests to find physiotherapists/physical therapists in the UK and other countries. These are normally sent by PTs whose patient is moving abroad or travelling. If this happens to you, remember to check our lists of members on the website. This often has a link to that member country's own site. Alternatively, contact the delegates directly. Through our network two PTs in the United States have been able to locate physiotherapists for patients travelling to the UK, and I have done the same for a British woman living in Austria.
- A women's health physiotherapist in Greece requested information on continence physiotherapist and continence advisor education as a higher education institute in the country wishes to establish a training programme.
- A subgroup of physiotherapists with an interest in women's health is being established in Nigeria, and it is hoped that they will be in a position to apply for IOPTWH membership before too long
- A physiotherapist from Singapore has secured sponsorship for an overseas women's health placement and is currently arranging this with clinicians in the UK. At the same time, a UK women's health physiotherapist currently living in Singapore is trying to establish links with others and I have been able to supply her with contact details for one of our IOPTWH 'friends' there.

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- The University of Bradford which runs a postgraduate certificate in women's health, and another in continence management (visit [www.bradford.ac.uk](http://www.bradford.ac.uk) for further details) has recently welcomed students from Saudi Arabia and India who will complete both Post Graduate Certificates and further modules to complete a full time MSc within the academic year.
- Our fellow sub-group IFOMT (the International Federation of Manual Therapists) invites you to visit its website [www.ifomt.org](http://www.ifomt.org) for information on the group, and to access their newsletter.
- Fellow IOPTWH executive committee member Darija Scepanovic and I have been invited to participate in a conference in Croatia in April 2009. Details have yet to be confirmed.
- Over recent months there has been some debate on the IOPTWH listservs about publicising courses. Whilst the listservs offer an ideal forum through which to share clinical information of common interest, I am sure you will understand why IOPTWH believes that anything which might be construed as advertising could compromise its independence and objectivity. Therefore the executive committee asks users to adhere to the following guidance below
  1. **If you would like information about education / training / courses, please post a message which includes your name and email address.**
  2. **If you wish to reply to such a message, please reply to the individual directly; do not click on 'reply' (which sends a message to all users).**

I hope this guidance is acceptable to all users. It may be necessary to modify it. If so, I shall send out another message. Further information on listserv use is available on the listserv page of the website (under Listserv Rules and Instructions).

I hope you will agree that these communications and activities indicate that our organization is an active and important member of the international physiotherapy/physical therapy community.

As I write this report I await the arrival of a physiotherapist from the fistula hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [www.fistulafoundation.org](http://www.fistulafoundation.org) who will spend a week with me and my colleagues before visiting another women's health team in Glasgow. I am sure this will be a mutually rewarding and educational experience in keeping with the mission of IOPTWH, and I shall report on it in a later newsletter.

**Gill Brook**  
**IOPTWH Secretary**

## AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION REPORT

Last year in October, The Australian Physiotherapy Association hosted the inaugural National Conference involving all of the special groups. It was a week long conference held in Cairns, Queensland, and over 2 days the National Continence and Women's Health Group held their first National Conference. This included plenary sessions, presentations from new researchers and workshops. One highlight amongst many was the Breakfast Meeting which included a presentation the Two Heads of Janus, looking back and looking forward. A historical perspective of the past was presented by Dr Pauline Chiarelli. Her longstanding contributions to the Association and Continence and Women's Health Physiotherapy were acknowledged. Also acknowledged was Pauline's recent passing of the requirements Fellowship of the Australian College of Physiotherapists by monograph, and her welcoming in as a member of the College.

Pauline heads up the Scientific Convenor of the next Biennial Conference to be held in 2010 in Sydney. Details of this conference can be found on the website of The Australian Physiotherapy Association at [www.physiotherapy.asn.au](http://www.physiotherapy.asn.au)

**Dianne Edmonds**  
**IOPTWH Representative, Australia**



## IOPTWH Conference 2009

Oeiras, Portugal - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009

The International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health will host a conference in Portugal on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The venue will be Oeiras, by the river Tagus, just 20 kilometres west from Lisbon and the focus will be on the role of 'The Core' in women's health.

The exact title and full programme are being finalised, but we are delighted and honoured to announce that the speakers featured on pages 9-10 have accepted our invitation to participate and will cover a range of topics including the anatomical and biomechanical evidence for the pelvic floor and transversus abdominis as core stabilising muscles (Susan Mercer), the pelvic floor muscles in relation to low back pain (Kari Bø), stabilising exercises for pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain (Britt Stuge) and the core in relation to sexual dysfunction (Talli Rosenbaum).

Full details will be available on the Organization's website [www.ioptwh.org](http://www.ioptwh.org) from January 2009, or from secretary Gill Brook [gill.brook@lineone.net](mailto:gill.brook@lineone.net)



## IOPTWH Conference 2009

### The Portuguese Association of Physiotherapists

Dear Colleagues all over the world

The Portuguese Association of Physiotherapists through its interest group of Physiotherapy in Women’s Health will be hosting the next IOPTWH Conference in Lisbon-Oeiras, in October. Though a small country and a small interest group we will try to do our best to make your stay worthwhile.

This year we are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and have a number of physiotherapists working in women’s health, and doing a great job. We are still new to some aspects of the specialty. We started 25 years ago with pre natal education, and later with post natal education. Ten years ago we started with incontinence education and then breast surgery rehabilitation. Since 2007, we have had a partnership with a recognized High School in Health Science and run a Post Graduation in Physiotherapy in Women’s Health which has been very successful.

Since the very beginning, one of our main goals has been to have an updated and high standard of education. We are grateful for all the help we have received from our colleagues all over the world and those that have contributed to our growth.

We have always believed that we learn more and enhance our knowledge if we are able to enjoy the exchange and sharing of experiences and expertise.

I hope to see you all in Portugal next year and I am sure you will enjoy your stay as much as we shall enjoy you coming.

See you in October 2009.

**Fátima Sancho**

**President of the Portuguese Interest Group of Physiotherapy in Women’s Health**



Portuguese Association of Physiotherapists  
in Women’s Health Logo



Oeiras, Portugal



## IOPTWH Conference 2009 - Featured Speakers

### **Kari Bø** Norway



Professor Kari Bø is a physical therapist and exercise scientist at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo. She holds an MSc on body posture and a PhD on pelvic floor muscle training and was appointed professor of exercise science at the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education in 1997, achieving the status of vice chancellor from 1999-2001. She was the first vice president of IOPTWH and has been the vice president of the Norwegian Council for Physical Activity for 8 years, directly advising the Norwegian Minister of Health. Kari has written numerous scientific papers and systematic reviews as well as articles, videos/DVDs and books for the lay public. Her main area of interest and research is pelvic floor function and dysfunction, exercise science and women's health. She is in the Cochrane review group for conservative treatment of incontinence, has been a member of the first two International Consultations on Incontinence (conservative treatment) and is an appointed member of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy evidence based practice advisory group as well as an elected member of the International Continence Society scientific committee. Kari is a renowned and popular presenter worldwide.

### **Susan Mercer** Australia



Susan Mercer has a broad background to her approach to teaching and research in physiotherapy. She has a Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours - Ergonomics) from the University of Queensland, Australia, a Masters of Science (Health Behaviour – Chronic Pain) from the University of Waterloo, Canada and a PhD (Functional Morphology) from the University of Pittsburgh, USA. She is currently employed as an Associate Professor in the School of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Queensland, Australia where she contributes to the undergraduate and postgraduate Physiotherapy programmes. Her research is concerned with clinical anatomy of the musculoskeletal system, in particular the anatomy underlying common assessment and treatment techniques. In addition, she is interested in the fascicular architecture of muscles.

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**Talli Rosenbaum**  
Israel



Talli Yehuda Rosenbaum is a private practice physiotherapist and certified sexuality counselor who graduated from Northwestern University in 1984 and is currently completing her Masters in Clinical Sociology and Counseling. Ms. Rosenbaum serves on the board of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) and currently chairs both the International Outreach and the Counselor Certification committees for the American Association of Sexual Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT). She is on the board of the Women's Health Section of the Israeli Physiotherapy Society and is an Israeli delegate to the IOPTWH . She also serves on the Professional Advisory Board of several organizations including the Women's Sexual Health Foundation. Ms. Rosenbaum has published several book chapters and many peer reviewed and invited journal articles on the topics of the role of the pelvic floor in sexual health, the role of physiotherapy in the treatment of pelvic pain and sexual pain disorders, the treatment of unconsummated marriage, and Judaism and sexuality. In addition to treating patients and couples, she lectures in the Sex Therapy program at Bar Ilan University and participates in the pelvic floor rehabilitation training program in Israel.

**Britt Stuge**  
Norway



Britt Stuge is currently a senior researcher at Ullevål University Hospital, Oslo, Norway. She has practised as a physiotherapist since 1982, completing an MSc in 2001 and a PhD in 2005. Britt has worked in clinical practice with women experiencing pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain for nearly 20 years. Amongst other published works she is co-author of the European guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of pelvic girdle pain (2008) having been a member of the European Commission group exploring the subject. Britt has presented and led workshops on pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain and stabilizing exercises internationally.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

Physiotherapists involved in women's health, particularly those who treat the pelvic floor, are often called upon to be part of a multi-disciplinary team involved in the evaluation and treatment of sexual problems. Sexual health is vital component of overall wellness and physiotherapists should be visible members of professional organizations and conferences where sexuality and treatment of sexual problems are addressed.

The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT) is a not-for-profit, interdisciplinary professional organization. In addition to sexuality educators, sexuality counselors and sex therapists, AASECT members include physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, allied health professionals, clergy members, lawyers, sociologists, marriage and family counselors and therapists, family planning specialists and researchers, as well as students in relevant professional disciplines. These individuals share an interest in promoting understanding of human sexuality and healthy sexual behavior.

Pelvic floor physiotherapists are in a great position to be eligible for counselor certification through AASECT. AASECT is working on becoming an international organization, so physiotherapists from all countries can join and apply for certification. If you are interested in certification, read carefully through the AASECT website ([www.aasect.org](http://www.aasect.org)) in order to discover the various opportunities available to enrich your knowledge in sexuality. Specific requirements for certification for sexuality counselor, sexual therapist or educator are described on the page: <http://www.aasect.org/certification.asp>. Please refer the FAQs which will hopefully answer some of your questions. These can be found on the site at <http://www.aasect.org/faqs.asp>.

Joining AASECT is a great start. It is a good idea to begin to take academic level coursework or AASECT sponsored or approved continuing education courses given through workshops and conferences.

The International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) is a multidisciplinary, academic, and scientific organization whose purposes are:

*To provide opportunities for communication among scholars, researchers, and practitioners about women's sexual function and sexual experience,*

*To support the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in research, education, and clinical practice of women's sexuality, and*

*To provide the public with accurate information about women's sexuality and sexual health.*

This year, the annual ISSWSH conference will take place in Florence, Italy. Information about this conference can be downloaded here: <http://www.isswsh.org/meetings/2009/default.aspx>. If you are involved in any research, please consider sending an abstracts for either poster or oral presentation.

Over the past several years I have had the opportunity to present lectures and workshops at AASECT, ISSWSH and SSTAR (Society for Sex Therapy and Research) conferences. These organizations are very interested in our research and what we have to offer to the community of sexual health professionals. My personal experience has been that they are very welcoming toward our profession and our professionals.

Hope to meet you in Florence.

**Talli Rosenbaum**

## ABSTRACTS

### **Physiotherapists and prolapse: who's doing what, how and why?**

S. Hagen & D. Stark. *Journal of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health*, Autumn 2008, **103**, 5–11.

#### **Abstract**

This paper reviews currently available research evidence that supports physiotherapy practice in relation to the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse (POP), in particular the use of pelvic floor muscle (PFM) training. Evidence from Cochrane systematic reviews, a physiotherapy practice survey, and a number of interlinked randomized controlled trials and satellite studies is presented. There is insufficient research evidence to inform physiotherapy practice regarding the use of PFM training for women with POP. However, specialist physiotherapists in the UK are routinely treating women with prolapse, and specifically, they are using the methods of PFM training that are recognized as effective in the treatment of urinary incontinence. Research is now underway to provide rigorous evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions for this population. The important issue of the standardization of outcome measures for the profession is also being addressed.

### **Recent advances in the management of urinary incontinence in the female**

K. M. Khashia & S. Prashar. *Journal of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health*, Autumn 2008, **103**, 17–20.

#### **Abstract**

Urinary incontinence is a distressing problem that has a significant impact on quality of life. Physiotherapy should be tried prior to considering surgical treatment for this condition. Mid-urethral sling procedures are recommended when conservative treatment fails in women with stress urinary incontinence. Primary surgical procedures offer the best success rates, and therefore, proper selection of the patient, along with appropriate counselling regarding success rates and the risks attending the procedure, should help to meet the patient's goals and expectations following surgery. Overactive bladder symptoms are treated conservatively with lifestyle modifications, bladder training and anticholinergic agents. When there is no improvement after anticholinergic treatment, botulinum toxin A (Botox) can be considered, but this has not been licensed for this indication. Sacral or ankle nerve stimulation can be an effective alternative when medical treatment fails.



(Continued on page 13)

## **The benefits of pelvic floor muscle training in people with multiple sclerosis and lower urinary tract dysfunction**

D. McLurg, A. Lowe-Strong & R. G. Ashe. *Journal of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health*, Autumn 2008, **103**, 21–28.

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to determine whether pelvic floor muscle (PFM) training (PFMT) improves lower urinary tract function in people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Thirty-seven subjects (11 males and 26 females) with a definite diagnosis of MS were recruited from neurological outpatient departments and MS charities throughout Northern Ireland. The participants received individualized PFMT combined with electromyography (EMG) biofeedback for 9 weeks. These individuals served as the control group in a double-blind randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the effects of neuromuscular electrical stimulation on bladder dysfunction in people with MS. The outcome measures included: digital and EMG biofeedback assessment of the PFMs; the number of leakage episodes (bladder diary); the amount of leakage (pad test); uroflowmetry; the International Prostate Symptom Score; and a Visual Analogue Scale relating to the problems associated with the symptoms. The results of the RCT demonstrated that improvement in the strength and endurance of these muscles was possible, and a significant reduction in symptoms was evident. A 9-week PFMT programme improved the function of the PFMs, reduced the symptoms associated with lower urinary tract dysfunction and increased quality of life in people with MS.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

These Abstracts were published in the Journal for the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health, thanks goes to Ros Thomas for gaining permission to publish.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

### INTERNATIONAL CONTINENCE SOCIETY

#### COURSES

##### **5th PACS Congress**

Date: December 18th, 2008

Where: Jordan

More Information: [www.icsoffice.org](http://www.icsoffice.org)

### IOPTWH

#### CONFERENCE

Date: October 9-10, 2009

Where: Oerias, Portugal

More Information: [www.ioptwh.org](http://www.ioptwh.org) (after January 2009).

#### **Birth Announcement**

**Meena Sran on November 18th, 2008 welcomed a new baby boy named Kai Sran Lawrence into her family. He weighed in at 8lbs, 1oz and was 21 inches long.**

**A big congratulations from IOPTWH!**



## IOPTWH CONTACT LIST

WWW.IOPTWH.ORG

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### **SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER**

**Deadline for Submission: March 06, 2009**

**Publication Date: March 31, 2009**

I am always looking for member contributions (or if you know of anyone that I can contact that would also be helpful):

- ⇒ Book Reviews.
- ⇒ Articles.
- ⇒ Highlights from courses and conferences.
- ⇒ Interesting member profiles.

There is no minimum length and it can be in any format.