

Summary of the IOAPT participation at the World Physiotherapy Congress 2025 (Tokyo) – 29 till 31 May 2025

Dear IOAPT Members,

We are pleased to share a brief summary of the IOAPT participation at the World Physiotherapy Congress 2025, held in Tokyo. It was an inspiring and highly productive event, showcasing the global relevance and growing interest in physiotherapy.

1. IOAPT Clinical Seminar

The IOAPT hosted a well-attended clinical seminar titled "Effectiveness of Aquatic Physiotherapy", moderated by César Sá, IOAPT President and with the speakers Sophie Heywood (Australia), Yasser Salem (United States) and Kostas Chandolias (Greece). Each of them shared clinical practices and approaches with specific populations in aquatic environment. The session was completely full, with strong participation and engagement from attendees.





2. Aquatic Physiotherapy Networking Session

Also chaired by César Sá (Portugal) and Billy So (Hong Kong), this session provided an opportunity for attendees to discuss key themes in aquatic physiotherapy, such as education, research, and regional development. The open dialogue format encouraged exchange and cross-cultural collaboration.

The session began with a roundtable setup where each participant introduced themselves, their country of origin, and their clinical involvement in aquatic physiotherapy. To foster interaction, four quick questions were asked, with participants raising their hands in response:

- Is this your first time attending the aquatic physiotherapy networking session at the World Physiotherapy Congress?
- Is there a national special interest group in aquatic physiotherapy in your country?
- Are you a member of that national group?
- Is aquatic physiotherapy included in undergraduate physiotherapy education in your country?

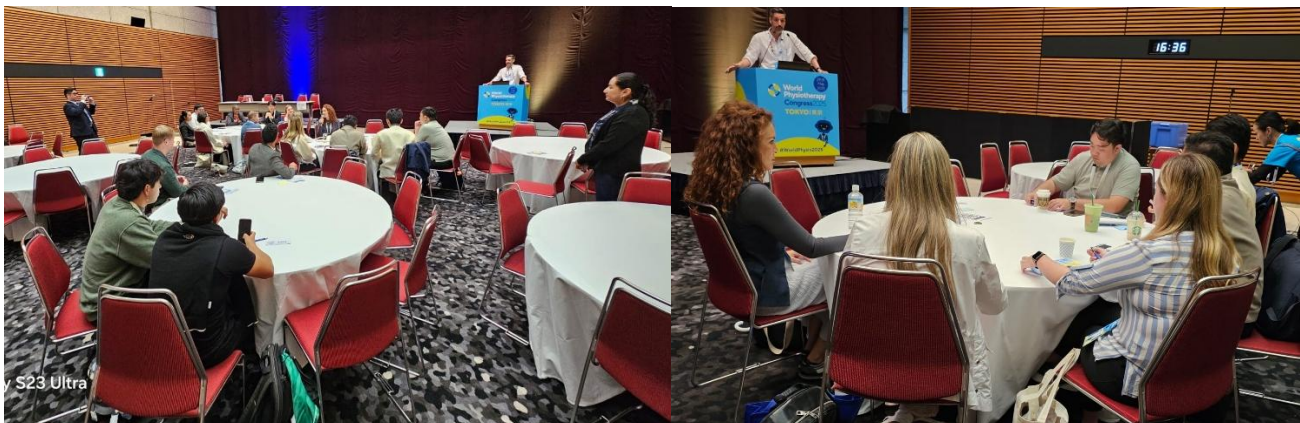
Following this, each table group was invited to discuss key questions and present their conclusions.

Main Discussion Points:

- The need for international guidelines and a defined skills profile for aquatic physiotherapists. In response, IOAPT has released two strategic documents, available for free on their website:
 - Aquatic Physiotherapist's Skills Profile;
 - International Guidelines and Good Practice Standards for Aquatic Physiotherapy Intervention.
- Future focus areas for IOAPT include:
 - Standardizing education from entry-level to postgraduate.
 - Promoting research and sharing knowledge through webinars.
 - Establishing an Education Committee to coordinate activities.

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- Communication strategies suggested: Enhanced use of social media and newsletters, regular webinars and journal clubs, as well as online events and the celebration of World Aquatic Physiotherapy Day to increase engagement.
- Standardization of basic to advanced training using the IOAPT documents, with involvement from World Physiotherapy member organisations.
- Recognition of existing postgraduate programs in countries like Portugal, Brazil, Australia, and the USA, and the need to support regions like Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Emphasis on community-based aquatic programs combining land and water therapy to improve public health.
- Commitment to future congresses and events, including plans for a global IOAPT conference.



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3. IOAPT Informal Meeting

An informal meeting of the IOAPT was held during the World Physiotherapy Congress 2025. The purpose of the session was to bring together individuals interested in aquatic physiotherapy, to share updates on their work, and to explore opportunities for collaboration. The one-hour session was supported by World Physiotherapy, which kindly provided a meeting room.

Participants represented a wide range of countries:

- César Sá (Portugal) – IOAPT President
- Yara Humaran (Puerto Rico)
- Andrea Brenes (Costa Rica)
- Kostas Chandolias (Greece)
- Yasser Salem (USA)
- Késia Castro (Brazil)
- Etienne Byiringiro (Rwanda)
- Ting Zhang (China) – joined by colleagues and potential investors

Each attendee briefly introduced themselves and their contributions to the development of aquatic physiotherapy in their respective countries.

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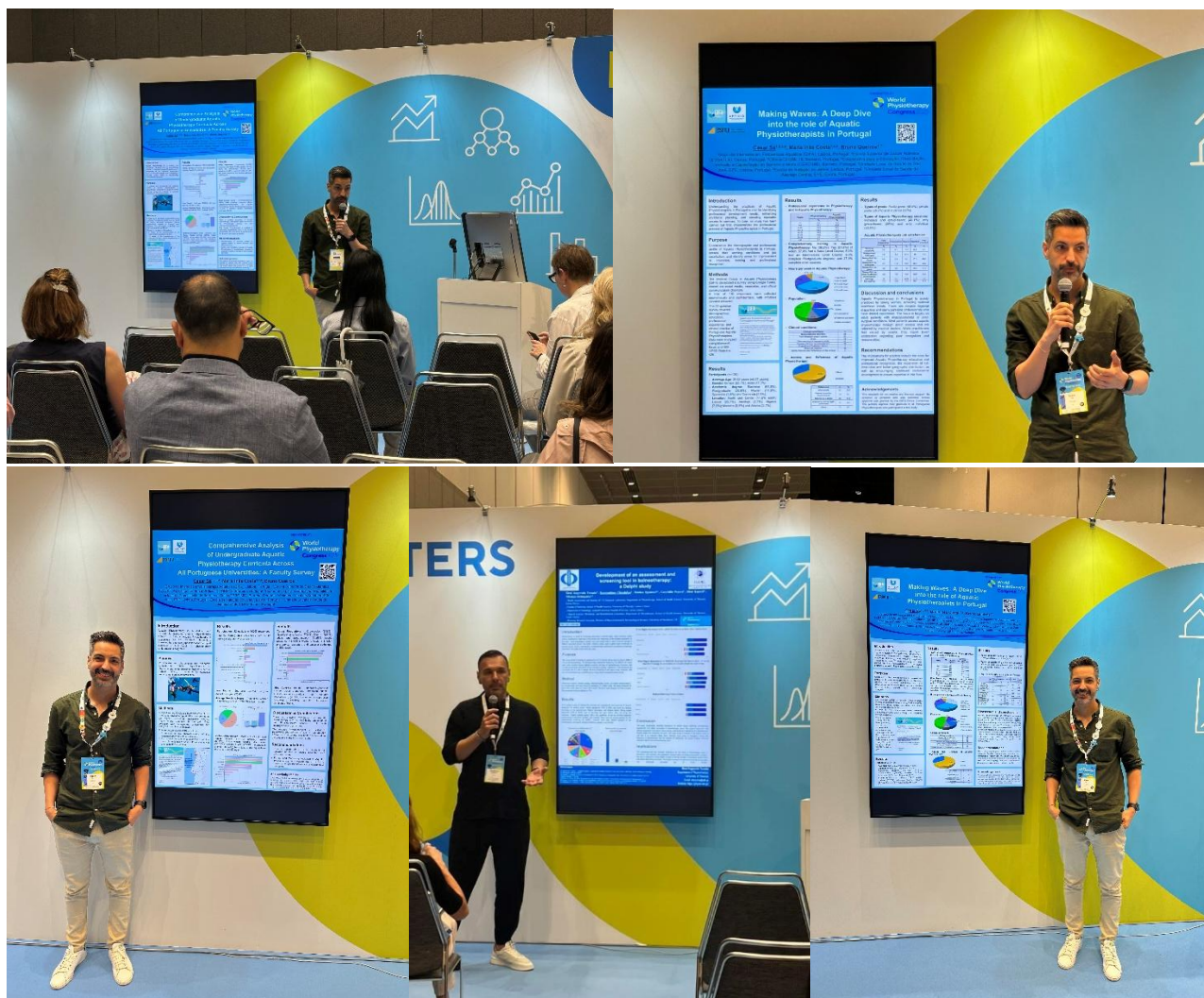
Key Topics and Takeaways:

- The need to standardize aquatic physiotherapy education globally—at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels—was a central theme. Participants showed interest in replicating the successful training model developed in Latin America across regions such as Africa and Asia.
- Ting Zhang, representing China, expressed her willingness to support educational development through her connections with hospital rehabilitation centers in China.
- The group also discussed the potential of creating community-based aquatic programs that integrate land-based and educational components, aiming to promote public health and enhance the quality of life through accessible aquatic interventions.
- The presence of interested investors opened the door to future collaborations and research, especially around the use of underutilized swimming facilities in urban areas for structured therapeutic programs.
- The meeting was a valuable moment of exchange, connection, and vision for future partnerships, reinforcing IOAPT's global network and its leadership in advancing aquatic physiotherapy worldwide.



4. Poster and E-Poster Presentations

Several Posters and E-Posters related to aquatic physiotherapy were presented throughout the congress, generating considerable interest and interaction among participants.



5. IOAPT Stand

Throughout the congress, IOAPT maintained a stand in the Exhibition Hall, which attracted significant attention. A QR code linked to a form allowed interested participants to join our mailing list, express interest in membership, partnerships, or volunteer opportunities. The stand served as an excellent platform to connect with physiotherapists from around the world.

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6. IOAPT Specialty Group Award

The IOAPT Specialty Group Award was given to Billy So (Hong Kong) with the abstract title “Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Aquatic Exercise: Applications of the Underwater Analysis System and Wearable Sensors”. We would like to congratulate Billy So for the excellent work!



7. IOAPT Friends Photos

Finally, here are some photos from the 3 days of Congress with some IOAPT friends and the Opening and Closing Cerimony of the Congress!



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We thank all members who contributed to making our presence at the Congress a success and look forward to building on this momentum.

Best regards,

César Sá

IOAPT President