

EDITORIAL

IS SPORT PHYSICAL THERAPY MOVING FORWARD? REFLECTIONS FROM WORLD PHYSICAL THERAPY 2007

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Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada recently hosted the World Confederation for Physical Therapy's (WCPT) 15th International Congress (June 2-6, 2007), the largest professional gathering of physical therapists from around the globe, taking place just once every four years. This year's event attracted more than 4000 professionals from 89 countries.

SIGNIFICANT STRIDES FOR SPORT PHYSICAL THERAPY

In sporting terms, you could call this the biggest professional "pep rally" of the year, as the world congress represents the physical therapy profession worldwide! Congress is on par with a Major International Sporting Event. But, rather than focusing on competition, the event is a celebration of how far our profession has come and an opportunity to envision how far we can still grow.

As Chair of Sport Physiotherapy Canada (SPC) I had the honor of representing our Canadian colleagues in the promotion of sport physical therapy amongst colleagues internationally. The theme for this year's congress was "Moving Physical Therapy Forward." The quality and breadth of research presented and evidence-based focus reflected the clear evolution of sport physiotherapy!

Sport Physiotherapy Canada was proud to host a well-attended pre-congress course "Groin Pain, Knee Pain, and Recurrent Hamstring Injuries: The Role of the Pelvis" with Canadian expert instructors Linda-Joy Lee and Diane Lee. This course was an example of the critical integration of research findings and evidence-based clinical practice.

Sport-related programming continued throughout the week of congress including a round table discussion "The Role of the Olympic Physical Therapist" which highlighted the interdisciplinary approach to care of the athlete. This networking session was chaired by Rick Celebrini, Chief Therapist for the local 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games Organizing Committee (VANOC) and Dr. Jack Taunton, VANOC Chief Medical Officer.

The importance of establishing and maintaining high standards of practice and clinical competencies in sport physiotherapy was promoted through a global sport physiotherapy competencies session. This session was organized by the International Federation of Sports Physiotherapy (IFSP) featuring a panel of international speakers including Laetitia Dekker-Bakker, President of the IFSP, Mark De Carlo from the American Sports Physical Therapy Section (SPTS), Dr. Jack Taunton and Rick Celebrini from VANOC.

Attention was also focused on the area of paralympic sport. Sport Physiotherapy Canada member Nancy Quinn lead a presentation called "Feel the Rush: Athletes with a Physical Difference" which highlighted the paralympic movement and featured two paralympic athletes. The athletes discussed what sport participation has meant to them, shared their performance goals for the future, and discussed how sport physiotherapy has changed their lives for the better. With the world of physiotherapy represented at congress, the global climate of war was highlighted. We were reminded that many soldiers are returning home with significant physical impairments. Has the need for physiotherapists to promote sport participation at all

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levels of ability ever been more essential to the future health and wellness of all the world's citizens?

Congress allowed for opportunities to take in the extensive scientific program, the rare opportunity to view over 1000 scientific posters, observe the latest therapy products and trends in the exhibit hall, and participate in specialty-specific meetings. Local clinical facilities also warmly welcomed visitors from around the world, to share and exchange ideas regarding various areas of clinical practice.

Experiencing WCPT first-hand evokes an energized sense of professional pride and spirit. Although my congress highlights are many, I would like to share a few to provide particular insight and relevance to sport physical therapy.

KEYNOTE MESSAGE FOR THE PROFESSION

One of the earliest highlights was an opening keynote address by Dr. Martha Piper, well-known throughout international physiotherapy circles as an exceptional leader and motivational speaker. Dr. Piper has worn many professional hats, including the 11th President and Vice Chancellor of the University of British Columbia, epidemiologist, biostatistician, researcher, teacher, pediatric specialist, author, Officer of the Order of Canada, Educator of the Year, and most importantly is a very proud physiotherapist!

This inspirational opening speech was very timely as we move toward specialization in sport physiotherapy, presenting the view that physical therapy is well equipped to promote "Moving Forward" and realize the "Coming of Age" for our profession. Dr. Piper emphasized five qualities to help chart our course as a profession over the next decade. These qualities are characteristics that physical therapists are already well known for, but that require review and a deeper commitment in order to achieve our highest professional potential.

Hope

To be hopeful requires a belief in our future and commitment to engage in our profession as global citizens. We are encouraged to broaden our horizons through ever-expanding education and research opportunities.

Nerve

We need nerve as a profession to expand our boundaries in areas of global health concern such as advocating for persons with physical differences/disabilities, supporting areas of research that have the potential to benefit our clients (such as stem cell research), doing our part in reducing the spread of infectious disease, and showing our support for issues of human rights (like the banning of land mines). This keynote address was a timely reminder that besides talent, professional growth requires the nerve to persevere during difficult times and to envision a better tomorrow.

Hard Work

Dr. Piper heartily acknowledged physiotherapists' reputation as hard workers! The ability to work hard isn't difficult because of the energy required, but can be challenging because working hard requires courage to put new ideas into practice and to assume the responsibility for tasks that need to be done. According to Dr. Piper, in order to move forward as a profession in the 21st Century, "we will require the intellectual wisdom to conceive a task that needs doing, the skill to enlist others support in the effort, and the personal fortitude and the courage to act."

A Strong Sense of Self

Another important aspect of "coming of age" as a profession is associated with a level of self-doubt, especially during the challenging times in which we live. However, we should find courage and confidence in the fact that physiotherapy is already well positioned and has a very strong history. "We are well-defined, recognized, and globally connected," she said, noting that there are now 101 WCPT member countries, representing all areas of the world. As physiotherapists involved in sport, we can be proud of our expertise and true to ourselves when challenged by the politics of sport.

A Sense of Interconnectedness

"I am because you are." This powerful concept shared by Dr. Piper begs the question, can physiotherapists accomplish more by acknowledging that we are part of a larger health care community? If physiotherapy exists because other health professions exist, rather than focusing on our

professional differences, I am encouraged to recognize that our similarities far outweigh the differences. I am committed to the view that physiotherapists must construct a future with other partners such as universities and colleges, government agencies, sport equipment providers, pharmaceutical companies and environmental agencies to name a few. "Collaboration will be the name of the game in the 21st Century," according to Dr. Piper. "We are far too small to go it alone!" Sport physiotherapists must also make a commitment to embrace professional diversity and work with others to ensure that we continue to evolve as an integrated specialty.

A commitment to these five success factors will definitely keep sport physiotherapy and our profession as a whole on the right course for the next decade and beyond.

FOUNDING MEMBER REFLECTIONS

Another highlight from WCPT was witnessing Dr. Elizabeth Harrison, one of SPC's founding members receive the Enid Graham Memorial Lecture Award, the highest honor that can be bestowed to a member of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) for outstanding professional contribution. Dr. Harrison is currently the Associate Dean in the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. She has been actively engaged in SPC for many years, including the role of SPC Chief Examiner for over 10 years. Dr. Harrison's professional dedication is vast and included Chairing the International Scientific Committee for the world congress. In addition to her roots in sport physiotherapy, she continues to be a visionary for the future of our global profession, in sport, and well beyond. Following world congress, Dr. Harrison shared these thoughts on the scope of sport physical therapy with NAJSPT:

What are some of your highlights from WCPT?

- I enjoyed networking with people from all over the world.
- I valued the high quality presentations, the opportunity to discuss research findings with other colleagues, and the range of programming.

What advice would you give physiotherapists interested in pursuing post-graduate education and specialization in sport physiotherapy?

- Determine your primary and secondary goals for specialization.
- Investigate the options in your own country and in others to see what best aligns with your goals.
- Consider an area that you are interested in pursuing relative to increasing evidence/knowledge through your own research agenda.
- Find a collaborative team to work with on your educational pursuits. Be sure to consider including other health professionals and researchers, along with physical therapists.

What are some health promotion/sport medicine research trends we should be aware of as a profession?

- Looking at national health profiles: the prevalence of certain chronic diseases that we should consider when approaching sport medicine benefits (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer).
- Consider the role of sport/activity in preventing diseases, as well as promoting the health benefits.
- Examine our role in promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Linking our clinical research to improved health status and lifestyle.

With the focus on the upcoming 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, where can you see sport physiotherapists contributing?

- Through 2010 Games, physiotherapists have an opportunity to promote the profession and the various roles that physical therapists have in health care.
- High quality care for athletes, considering the continuum of their life and not just during the games.
- Advancing knowledge of injury management, as the Games are premier events with opportunities to work with health care professionals from across the globe.

CLINICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Trish Hopkins is a long-standing SPC Diploma holder employed at the Allan McGavin Sport Medicine Clinic at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. She was one of the clinic facility tour hosts at congress. Her clinical perspective is equally compelling:

What were some of your highlights from WCPT?

- Networking and reconnecting with colleagues from the past, seeing Liz Harrison honored with the well-deserved Enid Graham Memorial Lecture Award, and hearing how

much Laetitia Dekker-Bakker and the IFSP has accomplished since it first started.

Your sport medicine facility opened its doors to physiotherapists from around the world for on-site visits during congress. How did it go and what did you learn from a global physical therapy perspective?

- It was a wonderful exchange with therapists visiting from Iceland, Finland, Romania, Japan, Korea, and even Williams Lake British Columbia! There were 5-6 therapists each day, as that was the limit allowed. Some therapists found our open, gym-like setting very different from what they were used to back home, especially with our focus on exercise. This was quite different from the single room settings that many were used to back home. In speaking with one of the Japanese therapists, we came to discuss anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) post-operative repair management and I learned that the length of hospital stay is much shorter in Canada. According to the Japanese therapist, ACL reconstruction patients in Japan often stay in hospital for a month post-surgically! This is a direct result of the home situation in Japan in which floor mats are traditionally used to sleep on and even toilets are sunk below floor level. This style of living poses some functional challenges for post-operative patients with their activities of daily living. In addition, above ground beds and toilets are often only available at local hospitals in Japan. This was something that we don't have to consider in North America and I found very interesting.

What advice would you give physiotherapists interested in pursuing post-graduate education and specialization in sport physiotherapy?

- There are many new opportunities opening up with various university programs and future internet learning through the IFSP. Find a mentor in your local area if possible and get involved with local teams and events as much as possible.

With the focus on the upcoming 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, where can you see sport physiotherapists contributing?

- Getting involved with winter sports teams and events leading up to the Olympics and Paralympics.

SPORTS MEDICINE TEAMS OF THE FUTURE

As Chief Medical Officer for the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, Dr. Jack Taunton is a strong support-

er of sport physical therapy. He eagerly accepted our invitation to participate in the educational programming at the world congress and has been working tirelessly with his local medical organizing team on the pre-Olympic preparations. Dr. Taunton's vision is to establish an integrated model of sport medicine, including all health professions that will result in optimal athlete care. More broadly, the goal is to leave a sport medicine legacy that will go beyond 2010. Dr. Taunton's post-congress reflections include practical advice for physiotherapists exploring major sporting event opportunities:

From your experiences at WCPT, what did you learn about sport physiotherapy from a global perspective?

- In some countries that are less developed in sport medicine, the interaction between physiotherapy and physicians, physiatrists and orthopaedic surgeons is more instruction-specific. In North America, the sport medicine team has evolved so that physiotherapists are more self-directed with athlete management. Physiotherapists from countries that have already experienced multi-event Games are more familiar with multi-facility and integrated sport medicine care that includes other allied health professionals. Countries in which sport physiotherapy is less-developed have therapists working more in isolation. The concept of an integrated model of athlete care is the foundation of the sport medicine team's preparations for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games.

What advice would you give physiotherapists interested in pursuing post-graduate education and specialization in sport physiotherapy?

- Gain as much sport coverage experience as you can through local teams, specific events, and multi-sport games.
- Search out programs that will provide the opportunity to work with developmental and high performance athletes (e.g. a National Training Centre)
- Integrate with exercise physiologists and strength and conditioning experts to learn more about these areas of sport performance.
- Consider participating in graduate level research that focuses on performance-oriented topics.
- Develop your sport-specific physiotherapy skills and interact with other sport medicine professionals.
- Contribute to a performance enhancement team.

What are some health promotion/sport medicine research trends we should be aware of as a profession?

- The need to get the general population physically active and fit for health benefits.
- The need to develop specific and individualized exercise prescription for a diverse population of active Americans and Canadians that covers a spectrum of ability (e.g. those with a physical difference/disability vs. developmental vs. high performance athletes) and age ranges (e.g. children and seniors).
- The ability to modify exercise prescription for special populations (e.g. patients with cancer, those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and osteoarthritis).
- Knowledge of protective equipment that can enhance sport participation, prevent injury, and improve performance. (e.g. athletic footwear).
- The concept of prehabilitation is critical. Developing programs to prepare individuals before they start specific sports/training programs has many benefits. Research suggests that a previous injury that was poorly managed is a strong risk factor for future injury. Physiotherapists can help identify deficiencies (e.g. strength or flexibility) in a preventative/proactive manner.
- Return to sport safely—moving from the clinic to the field is always a challenge. Physiotherapists have a role in specific exercise prescription for cross-training, progressing activity in a graduated manner, and monitoring activity patterns. Also, understanding special populations (e.g. people with diabetes) who may have other factors that affect their rate of return to sport.

With the focus on the upcoming 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, where can you see sport physiotherapists contributing?

- Learn more about the unique needs and demands of various winter sports, especially those involving para-athletes.
- Leading up to the Games, sport physiotherapists will be needed to assist with training and test events for the various sports.
- Physical therapists will be used in all facets of the Games, such as in the athletes' warm-up areas, integrated into the poly-clinic with other health professionals, on the playing field, and assisting in the athletes' recovery areas.

- Sport physiotherapists can contribute their emergency care skills on-field and will work collaboratively with ski patrol, paramedics, and other first responders.
- The integrated model of athlete care will require collaboration with other sport medicine professionals such as massage therapists, athletic therapists, chiropractors, dedicated team therapists, acupuncturists, and physicians, to name a few.
- The ability to speak another language(s) will be helpful when care is required for visiting athletes.
- Contributing to the care of athletes at practices, tests events, and the eventual competitions will provide an opportunity for mentorship of both athletes and sport medicine professionals at different stages of career development.
- The goal is to leave a sport medicine/sport physiotherapy legacy not just for 2010, but that will extend far beyond.

In short, WCPT's 15th International Congress strongly confirmed that sport physical therapy is making significant contributions to moving the profession forward. Review your professional check list today and keep the global momentum going!

AN APOLOGY TO ONE OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS...

An article authored by Kathleen Pantano, PT, PhD, was published in the Prevention edition of the *North American Journal of Sports Physical Therapy* in November of 2006. Her affiliation was mistakenly listed as Rocky Mountain University. Kathleen Pantano is actually an Assistant Professor at Cleveland State University, and performed her research for this article at that institution.

Her correspondence information was correctly listed at the end of the article, but her affiliation listed at the beginning of the article was incorrect.

We sincerely apologize for this oversight and any confusion it may have caused.

Mary Wilkinson
Managing Editor