

March 2007

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Ideas and material for WCPT News can be sent to Simon Crompton, Editor of WCPT News, [mail@simoncrompton.com](mailto:mail@simoncrompton.com)



Physical therapists attending the global workforce conference (see below) included, from left to right: Diem Tran, Canada; Zola Dantile, South Africa; Maria Ruiz, Philippines; Wilma Erasmus, South Africa; Brenda Myers, WCPT Secretary General; Fleur Kitzel, United Kingdom; Manikandan Ellangovin, Bangladesh.

## A PT perspective on global health workforce issues

Physical therapists were well represented at an international conference looking at health workforce issues and how they affect global health.

WCPT Secretary General Brenda Myers was among those attending "A Call to Action: Ensuring Global Human Resources for Health" at the International Conference Centre in Geneva on March 22-23. Also present was Zola Dantile, WCPT Executive Committee Member, who presented a paper on the way countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been

disadvantaged by the aggressive recruitment of overseas workers. Also speaking were physical therapists Maria Ruiz from the Philippines, Fleur Kitzell (UK), Manikandran Ellangovin (Bangladesh) and Diem Tran (Canada).

"It was wonderful to see them all there," says Brenda Myers. "Discussions on these subjects often revolve around doctors and nurses, and we feel strongly that it's important that physical therapists have a profile when health human resources and migration issues are talked about. We'd like to start a network of physical

therapists interested in the subject."

The conference addressed the global health care workforce shortage, and the difficulties of building sustainable health systems while filling workforce gaps relied on emigration from one country to another.

Organised by bodies including the International Hospital Federation, the International Council of Nurses and the Health Research and Educational Trust, it examined ways of building, retaining and sustaining a workforce, nationally and internationally.

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**The World Confederation for Physical Therapy**

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**Mission**

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy aims to improve global health by:

- Representing** the profession of physical therapy internationally;
- Collaborating** with international and national organisations;
- Encouraging** high standards of physical therapy research, education and practice;
- Supporting** communication and exchange of information among Regions and Member Organisations of WCPT.



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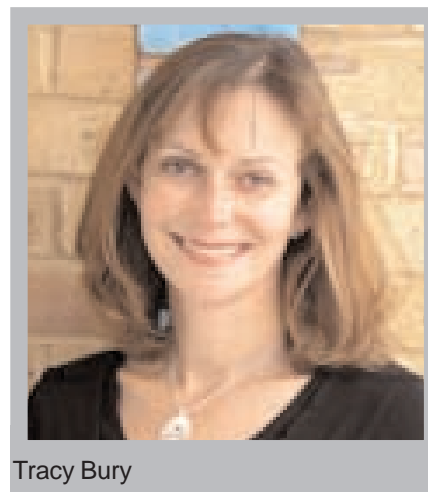
# WCPT

## Beyond Congress: how networks will keep physical therapists talking worldwide

Networking will be a key theme for the forthcoming WCPT Congress in Vancouver – and WCPT is establishing new structures to enable those new professional relationships continue long after the Congress is over.

During the Congress, there will be networking sessions – informal events of one and a half hours where physical therapists with a common interest will be able to turn up and raise whatever issues they want. But WCPT wants to enable physical therapists to make the most of the momentum generated by such events, and to enable groups to continue their networking on a long-term basis via WCPT’s website (see also WCPT News March 2006, p 1).

Some subject areas are already planned for networking sessions in Vancouver: global health, professional issues, professional practice, education, and research and development. There are already discussion forums on these subjects on the WCPT website (www.wcpt.org). But with the Congress, the aim is that more specialist and detailed areas will emerge, sparking new online networking groups.



Tracy Bury

The International Society of Journal Editors will hold its inaugural meeting in Vancouver, and is anticipating that this will be the starting point for a continuing online network.

“This will be a new model for involvement with WCPT,” says Tracy Bury, WCPT project manager with responsibility for policy. “We can increasingly support international collaboration by recognising networks. Like Sub Groups, they will be affiliated to WCPT, but it will be a much less formal arrangement.”

### Website development

WCPT is intending to completely re-design its website following the Congress – allowing users to interact far more easily with the Confederation.

“We’re hoping it’s going to be much more dynamic, and will improve online communication and collaboration,” says Rachel Moore, WCPT project manager responsible for IT. “The new website will have capacity to allocate space to a growing number of WCPT online networks, and will give them more control over their content.”



Rachel Moore

# WCPT joins campaign for better working conditions

There is growing worldwide concern about the appalling conditions that many healthcare professionals have to work in when treating patients in some countries.

Many professionals are working in unsafe environments, where they might be injured, physically or verbally attacked according to a group of organisations including WCPT.

They have raised their concerns with the World Health Organization. At WHO's Executive Board session in January the International Council of Nurses presented a statement on behalf of itself, WCPT, the World Dental Federation, the International Confederation of Midwives, the

International Pharmaceutical Federation and the World Medical Association.

It said that under-investment in the health sector, coupled with poor employment conditions – such as exposure to occupational hazards, discrimination, physical and psychological violence, and unreasonable workloads – had resulted in a deterioration of working conditions in many countries.

“This has had a serious negative impact on the recruitment and retention of health personnel, the productivity and performance of health facilities and, ultimately, on patient outcomes,” said the statement.

The organisations announced that they are launching a three-year campaign to promote safe and healthy workplaces for all health workers. To do this, the campaign will raise awareness of the positive impact of healthy working environments, and promote positive practice.

It asked for a commitment from WHO that it would join the organisations in their attempts to improve the delivery of care.

The campaign, which is likely to be funded through the Global Workforce Alliance, is expected to launch a website, develop a charter for action, and launch a campaign kit and newsletter.

## Health workforce issues

*Continued from page 1*

“What was clear to the physical therapists at the conference,” says Brenda Myers, was that we lack good data on movement of the profession internationally.”

“One of the things we're hoping to do in the next four years is to look at the profile of the profession around the world, and the way physical therapists are migrating from one country to another is part of that.”

*If you are interested in becoming involved in a network on international workforce and migration issues, contact [info@wcpt.org](mailto:info@wcpt.org)*



The logo of the conference calling for action on human resources for health.

## Why global events enrich us all

An Editorial article in the latest issue of *Physiotherapy*, the journal of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy says that international conferences, like the forthcoming WCPT World Congress, promote the growth of the profession on a global scale - as well as providing individuals with a means to enrich their practice.

Written by Tracy Bury, WCPT's Project Manager, who is also as Associate Editor of the *Physiotherapy* journal, the editorial

“What value can be placed on the interaction between internationally respected researchers, practitioners, managers, policy makers and educators?” she asks. Physical therapists from developing countries can enlighten others with their knowledge, as well as gain from the knowledge of physical therapists in developed countries.

## WCPT membership nears 100

By the end of its General Meeting in Vancouver in June, WCPT may notched up a major landmark in its history – 100 Member Organisations.

The General Meeting is due to consider membership applications from physical therapy organisations in Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bahamas, a new organisation in Brazil, and the

United Arab Emirates. Other applications have recently been received and are being processed for presentation at the General Meeting. If all are accepted, that will bring the total number of Member Organisations to over 100. When WCPT was established in 1951 it had 11 Member Organisations.

*Cambodian Physical Therapy Association*

## Cambodian delegates demonstrate their drive

The Cambodian Physical Therapy Association's (CPTA) 6th National Physiotherapy Congress was held in December, in Phnom Penh Cambodia. It was officially opened by Lokchamteav Uk Mona, the Secretary of State from the Ministry of Health. Other guests speaking at the opening ceremony were Ung Sambath, President of the CPTA, Sandra Mercer Moore, WCPT President and Celia Tan, President of the Singapore Physiotherapy Association.

Abdu Rashid Jailani, Head of the PT Dept at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH), Cindy Ng, Principal Physiotherapist at SGH and Christine Pickard from the School of Physiotherapy, Curtin University of Technology Australia, provided the main teaching seminars for the first day of the Congress.

It was attended by more than 100 Cambodian and expatriate physiotherapists from all over Cambodia. Some participants had to travel for a day to get to the event. Attendance was provided free of



WCPT President Sandra Mercer Moore (in blue) pictured with other delegates at the Congress opening ceremony.

charge for CPTA members, and financial support for the Congress was provided by local non-profit governmental organisations (NGO),

the Australian Physiotherapy Association and the Singapore Physiotherapy Association.

The feedback from lecturers was that although the translation needed made their teaching sessions tiring and long, the experience was rewarding because the participants showed great interest and enthusiasm in the lessons.

"The experience to teach in Cambodia has been wonderful due to the warm response accorded by the Cambodian people as well as the course participants and NGO representatives," said Abdul Rashid Jailani, Head of the Physiotherapy Department at Singapore General Hospital.

"The drive of the Cambodian participants will certainly help in the growth of physiotherapy practice in Cambodia and this will be apparent in the next few years."



(Left) Mr Dien, Vice President, Vietnamese Physical Therapy Association  
Mr Ung Sambath, President, Cambodian Physical Therapy Association  
Dr Sandra Mercer Moore, President, World Confederation of Physical Therapy  
Dr Celia Tan, President, Singapore Physiotherapy Association

## Korean Physical Therapy Association

# Historic sharing of expertise between North and South

Professor Park Rae Joon was elected as the 25th president of The Korean Physical Therapy Association in December, 2006. He announced that The Korean Physical Therapy Association (KPTA) is planning to promote the use of physical therapists and the opening of physical therapists' centres. It is also planning to develop a Korean physical therapists' model. Using the slogan "The Pride of Physical Therapists", The Korean Physical Therapy Association will promote global and justifiable business according to the association, and believes members of The Korean Physical Therapy Association will see many changes in the next few years.

After his election, Dr. Park Rae Joon went to the opening ceremony of the Pyongyang Joongang Red Cross Hospital Respiratory Unit. He also attended the South and North Korea Physical Therapy and Chinese Medical Science Learning Discussion with the international director, Dr. Kim Kyoung. The meeting took place with



Dr Park Rae Joon, President of the Korean Physical Therapy Association, addresses the audience at the ground-breaking learning discussion for physical therapists from both South and North Korea.

the help of the Korean Government. Three North Korean recovery (rehabilitation) doctors presented their research on "How water temperature has influence on blood coagulation during spa therapy", "Comparisons between the effect of liquid therapy and paraffin therapy" and "Knee joint pain awareness according to resistance and time". South Korean member, Dr Kim Kyoung presented an introduction on physical therapy for people who are experiencing pain and Dr Park Rae Joon talked about the use of electric therapy equipment and the present conditions of physical therapists in Korea and worldwide.

Physical therapy is in its infancy in North Korea. North Korea has yet to train any physical therapists, with some medical doctors carrying out physical therapy on patients. These treatments are mainly water therapy (spa therapy) and sports therapy (it is called PE therapy in North Korea).

This was the first time South Korean physical therapy members and North Korean physical therapy members had a learning discussion together, which made it a historical meaning.

The Korean Physical Therapy Association now offers support to North Korea with physical therapy techniques. The North Korean members were interested in various equipment described by Dr Park in his presentation, and said that they wanted to promote the relationship on a continuing basis. Unfortunately, there was not enough discussion on this occasion because of the time limit.

Do you have any news from your Member Organisation or Sub Group that you'd like to see in WCPT News?

You don't have to write the piece yourself. Just send ideas and material to Simon Crompton, Editor of WCPT News, [mail@simoncrompton.com](mailto:mail@simoncrompton.com)



Some of the speakers from the learning discussion meeting, including Dr Park Rae Joon (third from right)

*Philippine Physical Therapy Association*

## New President welcomes a new outlook in the Philippines

At its General Assembly last year, the Philippine Physical Therapy Association (PPTA) elected Dr Carmelo Cunanan its new President of the association and a new set of officers and directors which will hold office until September 2008.

Dr Cunanan was one of the first physical therapists to qualify at one of the leading universities in the Philippines, Angeles University Foundation in 1995, and was then hired by the university to be a faculty member. At the same time, he kept up her clinical practice as a home health care provider, and despite original plans to go to America, he decided to stay in the Philippines to impart whatever knowledge and skills to would-be physical therapists.

"I believe that being in academe is more fulfilling compared to practising my profession outside of the Philippines, which most of my batchmates have done," he says. "This way I could have a hand in improving the physical therapy profession in the country through my students and my active involvement in the PPTA. I hold the distinction of actually being the first PPTA president that did not graduate from a university in Manila or that practices in Manila."

He takes over the Presidency of the PPTA at a time of great activity. The association held its national



Delegates at the Philippine Physical Therapy Association National Convention, held last October.

convention last October at Clark Pampanga – the first national convention held outside of Metro Manila. "At first, we were hesitant about the plan thinking that we wouldn't have enough PTs to attend the convention," says Dr Cunanan. "But to our surprise, many came to attend, others coming as far as Mindanao and Visayas. Since it was a huge success, we now plan to have the national convention to be held at different parts of the country every year."

Last November, the new board of directors discussed a strategic plan, reviewing the mission and vision of the association and planning strategies to achieve the association's short-term goals. Activities over the next two years will be prioritised so as not to unnecessarily deplete resources. The association will focus in the short-term on providing continuing professional education programmes, targeting particular areas of practice that need updating or improving.

The association is also considering compiling a research

agenda for professionals and would-be physical therapists – coordinated with schools requiring research studies for undergraduates as a requirement for graduation. "This would dramatically improve awareness on clinical evidence and roles of professionals in research," says Dr Cunanan. "We also have plans to re-write or revise the PT-OT law of 1969 which actually limits our professional independence as physical therapists. Only by passing a revised law can improve the physical therapy practice here. We plan to do this after the elections are held in May 2007, when we could lobby for a passage of a revised bill."

"We also want to see more members being involved in our activities. We have started doing this by reviving our special-interest groups (SIGs). There was a re-launching of all SIGs last December. Despite communication difficulties with our members because of geography, members of the different SIGs are meeting in groups either personally, or through emails and cellphones to update themselves of their activities."



Carmelo Cunanan