



## Introduction

Twenty eighteen was my last full year as president of the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health (IOPTWH). My term of office ends in May 2019, when I shall finally leave the Executive Committee after 20 years as an officer. It is going to be strange, and I am sure that I will miss my involvement with IOPTWH. However, I know that I shall be leaving the Executive Committee in good hands. We have received nominations for all offices from a truly international range of excellent candidates, and a vote will take place at our general business meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in May.

## Nineteenth World Confederation for Physical Therapy Congress

Since my last report in the Autumn 2018 edition (Brook 2018), our attention has continued to focus on the 2019 World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) Congress, which runs from 10 to 13 May in Geneva (Fig. 1).

### *Pre-Congress course, 10 May 2019: "Pelvic Health: Sports and Exercise"*

In November 2018, WCPT confirmed that this course, which was proposed by IOPTWH in collaboration with Pelvisuisse, the Swiss pelvic physiotherapy group, will definitely go ahead. Enough applications have already been received to ensure that it is financially viable. We did not expect to receive this affirmation until January this year, so the course is certainly proving popular! As reported in Autumn 2018 (Brook 2018), this course will be a mixture of presentations and workshops from renowned researchers and speakers, including Kari Bø (Norway), Paul Hodges (Australia), Patricia Mota (Portugal), and Jacqueline De Jong and Helena Luginbühl (Switzerland).

More delights for women's and pelvic health physiotherapists in the Congress programme (WCPT 2019) are highlighted below.

The image is a promotional poster for the 2019 World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) Congress. At the top left, it says 'World Confederation for Physical Therapy' above the 'CONGRESS 2019' logo, which features a stylized globe icon. To the right of the logo, the date '10-13 May' is displayed. Below the text is a silhouette of the Geneva skyline, including the Swiss Re Tower. The slogan 'Where the world of physical therapy meets' is centered below the skyline. A dark grey banner at the bottom of the poster contains the text 'Register now for Early Bird' in large white letters, with 'Deadline: 31 January' below it. At the very bottom, the website 'www.wcpt.org/wcpt2019' is listed. Logos for the World Confederation for Physical Therapy and physio swiss 100 YEARS are also present.

**Figure 1.** Call for registration for the 2019 World Confederation for Physical Therapy Congress.

### *Seminar, 12 May 2019: "Knowledge transfer across borders: ripple effect of providing gender health education"*

Former IOPTWH president Rebecca Stephenson will lead this seminar. Although women's and pelvic health physiotherapy has undergone significant growth, people continue to suffer from a diminished level of care in underserved parts of the world. Significant variation exists in educational curricula globally, including exclusion of the topic in some developing countries. There are opportunities to expand education and services to advance the level of competent care. The panel will represent multiple regions, and they will seek to start a conversation in order to advance women's and pelvic health education.

They will evaluate the opportunities and challenges facing academic institutions, organizational societies and non-profit organizations providing education to improve quality of care. The seminar will include real-world case examples of knowledge transfer in Chile and Ethiopia.

***Seminar, 12 May 2019: "Pregnancy, childbirth, and pelvic floor damage: prevention and management"***

Current IOPTWH secretary Melissa Davidson will lead this seminar. Maternity care and birth outcomes vary widely between different countries, with low-income nations experiencing the poorest outcomes. On a global scale, many women do not have access to physiotherapy services. This seminar will promote physiotherapy involvement in maternity care by focusing on pregnancy, birth, and the prevention and management of pelvic floor trauma immediately postpartum. It will present recent evidence and management controversies, providing a unique and integrated perspective. Physiotherapists will gain new insights and strategies to support their involvement in maternity care in their local context. The speakers will be Siv Mørkved (Norway), Heather Pierce (Australia), Cornelia Betschart (Switzerland) and Cristine Homs Jorge Ferreira (Brazil).

***Networking session, 13 May 2019: "Women's health"***

As reported in the Autumn 2018 journal (Brook 2018), I shall chair this session on behalf of IOPTWH. The WCPT Congress networking sessions address topical issues, challenges, opportunities and directions for the physiotherapy profession. These offer an informal opportunity to meet and talk with colleagues who share a common interest.

Further details are available on the Congress website ([www.wcpt.org/wcpt2019](http://www.wcpt.org/wcpt2019)).

**Change of name consultation**

In November 2018, IOPTWH secretary Melissa Davidson circulated a shortlist of new names

for the organization. These had been agreed by the Executive Committee following consultation with WCPT, and were based on our comprehensive membership consultation. Each country has been asked to vote ahead of ratification at the IOPTWH delegates' general business meeting in May.

**Representing IOPTWH overseas**

In November 2018, I had the honour and pleasure of attending an international congress on pelvic health in Antwerp, Belgium. Since this was organized and hosted by BICAP: Birth Core and Pelvic Therapy, members-elect of IOPTWH, I was invited to make a presentation, which I entitled "Think big! Women's health and pelvic physiotherapy beyond national borders". It was a great opportunity to share information about the history and evolution of our specialty, national organizations (N.B. POGP is the oldest by far!), and the development of IOPTWH.

In February 2019, I shall attend another conference: 7èmes Journées Francophones de Kinésithérapie in Montpellier, France. This time, I have been asked to participate in a round table session, "State of knowledge in pelvic floor physical therapy", where I shall report on an IOPTWH survey of pelvic floor physiotherapy in our member countries. In addition, I shall make a presentation on postnatal physiotherapy practice in IOPTWH member countries. It will be an interesting experience since my knowledge of French is limited. . . . Fortunately, I will be presenting in English!

**Gill Brook**

*IOPTWH President*

**References**

- Brook G. (2018) International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health. *Journal of Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy* **123** (Autumn), 57–58.
- World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) (2019) *Programme*. [WWW document.] URL <https://www.wcpt.org/wcpt2019/programme>