

Progress on education among Asia Western Pacific members



Member organisations in WCPT's Asia Pacific Region have been making important progress on educational and strategic issues. Margot Skinner, The WCPT Executive Committee member for the region, reports on some of the important developments she has been discussing with member organisations during recent travels.

It has been great to have the opportunity to meet with executive committees and members of many member organisations in the region this year. Member organisations in Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, New Zealand and Singapore have all made time to meet with me, and other member organisations have stayed regularly in touch.

Several are busy making submissions on educational issues, planning strategically and preparing for national conferences. It is encouraging to hear that many of these conferences are becoming international and that new physical therapy degree programmes are being established at universities in Fiji, Indonesia and Nepal.

Cambodian Physical Therapy Association

In April, I spent two days with the CPTA President, Ung Sambath, and Board of Directors members, visiting hospitals and discussing the way forward for the profession – including advances in undergraduate education, continuing education opportunities and plans for improving the profile of physical therapy in Cambodia.

The CPTA is continuing to build relationships with Singapore, so that Cambodian physical therapists can undertake training to upgrade their skills in Singapore. The CPTA has arranged a course for physical therapists on functional movement in stroke. The course is being held in July and conducted by Liz Bainbridge from Curtin University of Technology in Australia.

Singapore Physiotherapy Association

At a SPA seminar in April, Jonathon Kruger, the Australian Physiotherapy Association's Manager of Policy and National Standards, gave a pre-seminar workshop on advocating for change. I gave a presentation stressing the need to advocate for degree level physiotherapy education, and the role SPA can play in WCPT's Asia Western Pacific Region.

Fiji Physiotherapy Association

The Bachelor of Physiotherapy Programme has been endorsed by the Fiji National University Senate and students have now enrolled into the programme. A Senior Lecturer position for the programme has now been advertised – if you are interested, please contact the Programme Co-ordinator, Maria Waloki m.waloki@fsm.ac.fj. The 24th AGM was held on 27th March in Suva, and was followed by a half-day workshop. A new Executive Committee was elected and the President is Philomena Ramoala.

Indonesian Physiotherapy Association

The IPA has received exciting news that the government has approved more degree-based education programmes in Indonesia. This is in line with one of the association's objectives to improve the educational base of the profession, and the number of physiotherapists holding post-graduate qualifications. In April, I spent a day with members of the IPA Executive Committee discussing strategic directives and ways to enhance the contribution of the IPA to the region. AWP Executive Member Gillian Webb represented the region and gave a workshop at the IPA National Conference held in June.

Physiotherapy New Zealand

At its biennial conference in May, the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists changed its name to Physiotherapy New Zealand, launching a new corporate image, a new logo, and a new corporate message: "Movement for Life". Details can be found on the website www.physiotherapy.org.nz

Sri Lanka Society of Physiotherapy

The SLSP, which is celebrating its Silver Jubilee, is involved in official discussions about the length of the university undergraduate degree programmes. The WCPT region has given its support to a four-year programme that meets the WCPT's declaration of principle on education and position statement on guidelines for physical therapist professional entry level education. A bridging programme for physiotherapists trained under the Ministry of Health programme is likely to start soon at the University of Peradeniya.

The SLSP, in collaboration with Home Start Lanka, has held a three-day workshop for physiotherapists on motor development in children with Down's syndrome and another on comprehensive rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

The Malaysian Physiotherapy Association



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At the MPA's annual conference in April, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia indicated that he supports the move by the profession to improve standards by moving towards degree-based entry-level education. The MPA is also keen to improve the research outputs of the profession and has made submissions to enable physiotherapists to access government grants to fund research projects.

During her visit to Cambodia, Margot Skinner talking to Ung Sambath, President of the CPTA and Bak Tokyo in Phnom Penh

