

## Congress theme and programme tracks

The overall congress theme for 2011 is *Moving Physical Therapy Forward*. This continues the theme used in previous congresses and reflects the vision of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT), encompassing global change, challenges and opportunities for physical therapists and the governments, professionals and populations we work with. Where better to *move physical therapy forward* than at its prestigious international congress?

World Physical Therapy 2011 (WPT2011) will be structured around five core programme tracks. These will be used to draw together different sessions that complement each other.

### Track 1: Global health

Congress provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on international health priorities and policies and their implications for physical therapists and the people with whom they work. Physical therapists have a vital role to play in working with individuals and populations to promote health and wellbeing and provide rehabilitation. Many opportunities exist for physical therapists to implement strategies to tackle the consequences of physical inactivity, an ageing population and the functional limitations arising from violence, injuries from road traffic accidents, HIV/AIDS and preventable chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease. WCPT is working with governmental and non-governmental international organisations to address many of these issues.

### Track 2: Professional issues

The profession of physical therapy is evolving all the time, learning from the past and looking to the future. The status and profile of the profession varies internationally as does the context within which physical therapists work. The way in which health services are delivered is continually changing with new models developing, opportunities for physical therapists emerging, and service users placed at the centre of service provision. And yet in some countries physical therapists continue to face a struggle for autonomy, often working in difficult and hostile environments. Wherever physical therapists practise, they share common goals: putting service users first, providing high quality services, maintaining professional standards and adapting to change. This track focuses on the many issues that affect health policy, service provision and the context and scope of practice.

### **Track 3: Professional practice**

This track will focus on the practice of physical therapy from referral through assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention and evaluation. Encompassing health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation throughout the lifespan and across different service settings, this track concentrates on the everyday clinical practice of physical therapists working with service users. Underpinning this is knowledge derived from the biological, physical, behavioural and clinical sciences. Using the latest research and innovation to inform practice is vital if the profession is to develop, and its work to be evidence based. Congress provides an excellent opportunity to present and discuss the latest advances and the implications for practising clinicians in their daily practice.

### **Track 4: Education**

Physical therapy education is a continuum of life-long learning, beginning with admission to an accredited physical therapy programme and ending with retirement from active practice. It includes post-qualifying education and specialisation opportunities as well as formal and informal learning opportunities. How educational provision is organised, delivered and evaluated are important issues. In striving to meet the need to educate physical therapists for practice in a changing environment and in different practice contexts, new models of education and continuing professional development are continually evolving. This track will examine how to ensure that physical therapists are appropriately prepared and become fit for practice, and what roles they take on as their career paths progress.

### **Track 5: Research methodology**

This track will focus on research methodological issues. Generating evidence through research is essential for developing evidence based practice. The methods used to generate, disseminate and implement this evidence require scrutiny and evaluation. Innovative ways to build research networks, define research agendas and to develop capacity and capability within the profession are critical to delivering the evidence required. Additionally, data derived from practice can be used as a source of evidence and as a means of generating questions to be addressed through research. The challenges for new researchers are well known and there is much to be learnt from collaboration and sharing good practice. There is a need to recognise that the needs of high resource and low resource countries vary if we are to develop strategies for continued research growth that produces clinically and context-relevant evidence.