The International Association for Physical Therapists working with Older People

Newsletter 4 September 2003

This newsletter is to update everyone on the association. It is sent direct to special interest groups as they become known. A resume is sent to WCPT News. The idea for an association began in 1993 at an international course in Malta, was discussed at WCPT Washington in 1995 and at WCPT Yokohama in 1999 where a shadow committee and steering group were formed. The Foundation Meeting was held in Birmingham, UK, 2002. At WCPT Barcelona 2003, IPTOP was accepted as a WCPT subgroup and held its first general meeting. Membership currently stands at 18 countries representing over 7,500 physical therapists.

Message from the chairman.

Dear Colleague,

At WCPT Barcelona in June, IPTOP achieved its first goal when it was accepted as an affiliated recognized sub-group of WCPT providing the opportunity to formally work together. At the WCPT general meeting I acknowledged on your behalf all the help and support we had received from Brenda Myers, WCPT Secretary General, in helping us get established.

One of the first questions I have been asked is “what is your vision for the association?”. Special interest groups in different countries may have much in common but there are important differences in delivering services. Much can be learnt from each other, hence the benefit of an international perspective. IPTOP can also promote world-wide excellence when working with older people, providing increased focus and recognition of the specialist skills required by physical therapists working in this field. IPTOP should also be seen as a resource for providing advice on age care issues.

Elections were held at the IPTOP general meeting in Barcelona with the following outcome:

Chair--- Olwen Finlay (UK)
Vice Chair--- Dr Annette Brown (Australia)
Treasurer--- Nancy Prickett (US),
Secretary /Newsletter ---Professor Amanda Squires (UK)
Regional reps--Aine O’Riordan (Ireland), Jill McClintock (UK), Felix Can (Turkey), Tuula Ekhololm (Finland).

Already the committee has commenced planning on several fronts: an IPTOP logo has been produced; two information leaflets have been prepared; and the first conference will be held in Dublin, Ireland at the invitation of the Irish association from 6th -8th May 2004.

As part of the social programme for the Dublin conference, the President of Ireland has graciously invited a group to the Aras an Uachtarain (the home of the President) and if available she will meet the group. Places will be allocated pro rata to the size of the Special Interest Group and IPTOP representatives will be contacted concerning the formalities to be followed. The pre-conference reception on Thursday 6th will be hosted by Senator Mary White in the Senate building, Leinster House (the home of the Irish Parliament). All delegates will be welcome. An IPTOP delegates meeting will be held that afternoon and observers may attend. Conference commences on Friday morning. The conference dinner on Friday evening will be held in Blackwall Place, the home of the Law Society of Ireland. The conference will give delegates the opportunity to experience Irish hospitality; exchange scientific information; examine evidence based practice, professional experiences and ideas, all helping us move forward in an effective manner and better equipped to cope with the expectations and challenges of an ageing society.

I hope to see you all in Dublin, in May 2003.

Olwen Finlay
Main Feature---Australia

Annette Brown

Australia, like many other countries, is experiencing the start of an unprecedented ageing of the population that will continue over several decades. Australians enjoy one of the highest life expectancies in the world at birth of 81.9 years for females and 76.5 years for males. Of the total population of almost 19 million people, 12.5 per cent are classified as ‘older’. Just over half of all older people are aged between 65 and 74 years, about one-third are between 75 and 84 and 11% are aged 85 years and over. By the middle of this century, it is projected that older Australians will comprise about 25% of the total population.

Indigenous Australians have a much lower life expectancy—approximately 20 years lower than for the total population—a factor which must be incorporated in service planning.

Specific health and care services for older Australians funded by Federal and/or State governments include—

**Residential aged care** provides accommodation and other support services, such as domestic services, help with daily tasks, nursing, therapy and medical care at both high care and low care levels. Dementia specific care is also available. Residential aged care is for older people with physical, medical, psychological or social care needs which cannot be met in the community.

**Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs)** support people who prefer to remain at home but who require care equivalent to low level care provided in residential aged care.

**The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program** provides community-based support services, such as home nursing, personal care, respite, domestic help, meals and transport, to people supported within the community and remaining at home.

**Day therapy centres** provide a range of services, such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy, to residents of aged care services and people living in the community.

**Flexible care services** are intended for people whose needs are not easily met in mainstream services. These include Multipurpose Services which operate in small rural communities lacking the population to support stand-alone services, and which provide a range of aged care services.

**Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) Packages** support people who prefer to remain at home but who require care equivalent to high level care provided in residential aged care.

**Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs)** are responsible for determining eligibility for residential aged care, CACPs and EACH Package. They also recommend HACC services. There are 127 ACATs providing services across Australia as part of a national assessment program for aged care services.

**Physiotherapy and Older Australians**

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is the peak body representing the physiotherapy profession in Australia and has around 12,000 members. The APA is the only allied health organisation represented on the National Aged Care Alliance, an organization of service providers that advises government on aged care issues. In recent years, the APA’s agenda has increasingly focused on the inclusion of physiotherapy services across the spectrum of age care services and advocated specific funding.

The National Gerontology Group (NGG) of the APA has approximately 420 members, in 6 state chapters. Primary communication is by regular newsletter to members, including electronic newsletters. In addition, the group provides information, resources, and professional development to members and advises the APA in relation to aged care issues. The APA has made several submissions to the Federal government on the issues of funding arrangements and resident classification scales in residential aged care, as well as lobbying for inclusion in enhanced primary care programs for older Australians.

The NGG is currently developing a titled membership category in recognition of advanced clinical skills in gerontology and has ratified the Physiotherapy Practice Standards in this area. Australia is experiencing a workforce shortage of physiotherapists, which is particularly evident in aged care services. It is hoped that recognition of specialist skills and knowledge in gerontology will encourage the development of further opportunities for physiotherapists to contribute to the quality of life for all older Australians.

Dr Annette Brown, IPTOP Australian rep and Vice Chair
World update

All IPTOP members are invited to contribute to this section. The following were received for this edition. Please send contributions to Sigrun Johannsdottir coordinator of this section.

Australia (please respond on this item to Annette Brown)

The National Gerontology Group is one of the larger clinical groups of the Australian Physiotherapy Association, with over 400 members. Much of the current work of the group is in two areas—developing a path for recognition of clinical specialists in gerontology; and providing comment on the current funding tool and accreditation methods for residential aged care services funded by the Commonwealth government. The first conference 2 years ago was opened by the Federal minister for Aged Care and was a huge success.

Iceland (please respond on this item to Sigrun Johannsdottir)

The Association of Icelandic Physical Therapists in Geriatric Rehabilitation was established in January 1996. Today there are 50 members. The aims of the Association are:

1. Professional
   To establish contact with international associations working in the same field
   To promote further education and research in the field of geriatric physiotherapy
   To encourage education and preventive work for the elderly

2. Social:
   To strengthen contact between physical therapists working with elderly people throughout the country

The Icelandic Association has published a booklet entitled “Falls and their prevention” (http://www.doktor.is); a booklet, pamphlet and poster on dementia; two lectures with slides on the importance of exercise to improve health among the elderly, and falls and their prevention; a brochure on Osteoporosis and physical activity; and translated and tested the Berg balance scale.

   Over the winter period we organize regular seminars and lectures for members. During autumn and spring we arrange field trips to the various geriatric establishments, where colleagues present their activities and invite members to explore their facilities. The members find this an effective way to share knowledge and strengthen contact with each other.

Turkey (please respond on this item to Filiz Can)

The Turkish Physiotherapy Association “Physiotherapists Working with Older People – Special Interest Group” was established in November 2002. There are 25 registered members. The mission of the association has two aspects:

The professional aspect includes providing further education and clinical specialisation for physical therapists working with geriatrics, developing a model approach for curative and preventative rehabilitation in geriatrics, promoting some research and clinical trials in this field and collaborating with the other associations and staff working with older people.

The social aspect will be focused on giving information about geriatrics and geriatric care and to educate the community.

Our association works in collaboration with the other members of the “Turkish Geriatric Foundation”. We are involved in their education programs and seminars and have been invited to lecturur at their congress. We have established the Geriatric Rehabilitation Unit in our school and have close contact with the Department of Geriatrics in Hacettepe University.

US (please respond on this item to Nancy Prickett)

Celebrating Silver, Going for the Gold was the theme for the Section on Geriatrics 25th anniversary celebration at the APTA Combined Sections Meeting held in Florida in February, 2003. Food, dancing, an anniversary commemorative book and the display of pictures from the past 25 years made the evening rather special for the many in attendance. At the Section's annual meeting new officers were inducted and awards were presented by President Jennifer Bottomley.

The Section on Geriatrics publishes a news letter (Gerinotes) 6 times a year and a peer reviewed journal (Issues on Aging) 4 times a year. The Section's website www.geriatricspt.org keeps members informed of meetings, continuing education opportunities and legislative and regulatory information. The topic for the 2003 Home Study Course is “Cultural Diversity of Older Americans” and information regarding the purchase of this course is available on the web site. A task force to define elements of a clinical residency program for therapists wishing to specialize in geriatric care has been established. The national association (APTA) credentials clinical residency programs in specialties such as orthopaedics, sports physical therapy, neurology etc. To date there are no clinical residency programs in geriatrics for physical therapists.
General Information

Resource base (please send your comments on this to Martin van Gennep)
One of the advantages of the IPTOP is the opportunity to share knowledge. One way this objective can be realized is by constructing a website with links to interesting internet sites for members. If you know of some of these sites please send the complete internet address and a short description to Martin.

Staffing Levels and other issues in residential and nursing homes
Following discussion on this issue at the General Meeting (see above), Annette Brown has agreed to collect, collate and distribute information from members.

Conferences

IPTOP in Ireland 6-8 May 2004
The first Conference will be held in Conjunction with the Irish Gerontology and Neurology group (see P1 of this newsletter).
It is essential that all date deadlines are kept to as late applications cannot be considered.
Contact Aine O’Riordon

IPTOP in Australia 2005
The National Gerontology Group of the Australian Physiotherapy Association has extended an invitation for IPTOP to combine its 2005 meeting with the biennial conference of this group. Enquiries can be forwarded to Annette Brown

IPTOP 2006—offers please

WCPT Canada, 2007—June 1-7
www.wcpt.org or www.physiotherapy.ca

Treasurers report (Please send your comments on this item to Nancy Prickett)
Renewal dues are being received for 2003. Invoices were sent to all members in early 2003. If a member country did not receive the renewal form, please contact the treasurer. Any country interested in joining IPTOP should request a membership application from the treasurer. Dues and renewal dues are able to be paid in US dollars via credit card. Those wishing copies of the finance report given in Barcelona may request a copy from the treasurer.

Future projects for the treasurer include
- establishing financial policies for IPTOP
- establish guidelines and contracts for conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by IPTOP
- considering an individual or associate member category

Nancy Prickett, IPTOP Treasurer, 300A Campus Drive, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060, US.

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Dr Paul Ogbonna (US)
Dr Martin van Gennep (Netherlands)

Next edition details
Copy date for the next edition is February 2004. The editorial board retains editorial rights. Maximum length for a “feature” article is 1,000 words. In addition we would welcome short pieces of world news of 200 words from each member country, a resume of your newsletters, conference information and contributions from the Committee as relevant. Contributions should be in English language and WORD format with references in Harvard Style and either sent by e-mail or by post with disk protected for posting to Amanda Squires.