The International Association for Physical Therapists working with Older People

Newsletter 6 July 2004

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. General meetings have been held in Barcelona 2004; and Dublin 2004. Membership currently stands at 18 countries representing 7,500 physical therapists. The efforts of the association are directed towards member associations and their individual members working with older people through excellence, research, practice and clinical specialisation.

Message from the chairman.

Dear Colleague,

I have just returned from the last committee meeting after the Dublin conference. The feedback the committee received from speakers, delegates, sponsors and guests indicated that the event had been very successful. Fifteen countries participated with over 300 delegates and was the largest physiotherapy meeting ever held in the Republic of Ireland. The accounts should be finalised by mid-July.

Many delegates commented on the success of the social programme with the highlight being the visit to the Áras an Uachtaráin, where they had the opportunity to meet the President of Ireland and Dr McAleese in their beautiful home in Phoenix Park. On behalf of the conference, I presented a tree to the President.

During the three day visit I had the opportunity to get to know members of each delegation. WCPT was represented by Vice President Inger Bronstead, providing an opportunity for IPTOP to increase its links with WCPT and appreciate the guidance provided by Inger at the meeting of members held before the conference.

The conference dinner was held at the Law Society, hosted by Professor Denis Moloney, with the drinks reception accompanied by traditional Irish music hosted by the Irish Physiotherapy Society.

Much has been achieved since Barcelona where IPTOP suggested this conference and with planning and vision helped to ensure its success. We must now start working for the next conference in Melbourne in November 2005 when we join the Australian Gerontology Association at their bi-annual event.

Yours Sincerely

Olwen Finlay

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Over 300 delegates representing 15 countries attended the IPTOP/CPNG/AGILE conference in Dublin from 6th –8th May 2004. The conference, which was a hugely successful event both socially and educationally, was entitled “Advances in Balance and Falls Management in Older People” and was co-hosted by the Irish neurology/gerontology clinical interest group (CPNG), IPTOP and the gerontology clinical interest group of Northern Ireland (AGILE).

On Friday morning the conference was opened by Esther-Mary D’Arcy, President of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and Inger Bronstead, WCPT Vice Chair. Jennifer Bottomley (USA) started the ball rolling and the conference continued on Friday and Saturday with speakers from Ireland (Niamh Maher, Mimi Fan, Eileen Moriarty), UK (Jed Rowe, John Marsden, Prof Rose-Ann Kenny, Dawn Skelton, Jill McClintock) and Australia (Annette Brown, Tamara Tse) giving excellent presentations on everything from physiological basis of balance to the prevention and management of falls in the elderly. A range of professions were represented: OT, nursing, doctors, and of course physiotherapists.

There were free paper sessions on both days again reflecting the international dimension with speakers from Ireland, Turkey, USA and Australia. Prizes for the free paper presentations were awarded by Minister Ivor Callely (see his speech below) to Sue Hourigan (AUS), Ruth O’Connell (IRL) and Aoife Collins (IRL). There were also a number of poster presentations on display during the conference, the prize for which was awarded to Suzanne Noel (IRL). The conference provided significant information on the huge topic of balance and falls and everyone left with new enthusiasm and ideas to take back to their area of practice. The abstracts of presentations and posters can be found at www.iscp.ie (click on news in the top menu, then conferences).

On the social side the conference was preceded on Thursday by a visit to the Dáil and Seanad, the houses of parliament of the Republic of Ireland where delegates had a tour hosted by Senator Mary White. On Friday national representatives were entertained by Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland following a tour of her residence, Áras an Uachtaráin (see photo page 1). Dinner on Friday was in the beautiful surroundings of the Law Society where after dinner we were entertained by traditional Irish musicians who got the feet tapping and the dancing started, with several new “Riverdance” stars being discovered on the night!

Huge congratulations and thanks must go to the organising committee, chaired by Frances Horgan and her Dublin team of Mary Lyons, Aine O’Riordan (CPNG Chair), Emma Stokes, Olive Lennon, Catherine Blake, Lisa Ngan-Hing and Wendy Juner, who were ably assisted by Olwen Finlay (IPTOP Chair) and Jill McClintock (AGILE Chair). Looking forward already to the 2nd IPTOP conference in Australia in 2005. They have a hard act to follow but I’m sure will meet the challenge ably!

Susan Coote MISCP

Speech by Minister Ivor Callely at the closing of the Conference

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a pleasure for me to be here at the closing of this Conference on Advances in Balance & Falls Management in older people. It is one of the great achievements of our times that most of us are living longer and staying more active than ever before. As we continue to live longer, healthy ageing is of course more and more important to us. For many, old age can be a time of freedom, of new challenges, of finally getting time to devote to a hobby or pastime. Most older people are healthy and independent and, for them, mature age offers a new lease of life.

However, it has to be acknowledged that falls are common in people over 65, with a higher risk among elderly hospitalised patients. Such falls are preventable and this is essential because of the impact on the life of the patient, the family and also on the health service. Given our ageing population more falls and resulting injuries can be expected. Prevention is therefore most worthwhile.
Health promotion in older people.
While the rationale for health promotion is usually set in the context of programmes for children and young and middle-aged adults, health promotion also has an essential role to play in improving the health and well-being of older people. However, it is important that older people themselves, health professionals and society in general are convinced of the value of health promotion in the lives of older people. Negative attitudes to ageing among people of all ages, and beliefs that older people cannot benefit from changes in behaviour, must be overcome. Older people must not be excluded from health promotion activities and preventive measures routinely offered to younger people. Older people must be encouraged and enabled to participate in all aspects of life which promote their health and well being. The arguments for health promotion for older people are compelling. They include the following:

- a good quality of life will be maintained in well older people
- the effects of illness or disability in older people will be lessened
- the contribution of older people to society will be maximised
- escalating health care costs associated with an ageing population will be partly offset.

The National Health Promotion Strategy is intended as a resource and guide for all relevant stakeholder and interested parties concerned with promoting health in the new millennium. The purpose of this strategy is to set out a broad framework within which action can be carried out at an appropriate level to advance the strategic aims and objectives. Its aim is to enhance the quality of life and improve longevity for older people.

The National Council for Ageing and Older People
The National Council is a statutory body funded by the Department of Health and Children. The Primary function of the Council is to develop a comprehensive understanding of ageing and the older population in Ireland, with a view to providing the best possible advice to all concerned with the welfare of older people in Ireland.

The first strand of the National Council’s Healthy Ageing Programme was the development of “Adding Years to Life, Life to Years: A Health Promotion Strategy for Older People” (1998) developed in conjunction with the Health Promotion Unit. The Unit continues to support the National Council for Ageing and Older People in the development of further strands of the programme. The second and third strands involve supporting the implementation of the strategy through various means including the development of an information and support network for promoting the health, welfare and autonomy of older people and identifying and promoting models of good practice for healthy ageing.

The programme also aims to support a range of sectors with a role to play in healthy ageing through development and capacity-building practice in the areas of networking, training, materials, models of good practice, national partnership initiatives, public awareness and evaluation of initiatives.

To date the programme has
- developed the Healthy Ageing Database, through widespread consultation with relevant stakeholders. This database is valuable information for sharing information and experience on healthy ageing initiatives
- published “Healthy Ageing in Ireland: Policy, Practice and Evaluation” Report, analysing current healthy ageing initiatives around the country and presenting models of best practice
- published a “Directory of Healthy Ageing Information Resources for Older People”, to provide older people with information on leaflets, videos and posters relevant to healthy ageing (produced by both statutory and voluntary organisations)

Regional Initiatives
The Health Promotion Unit of my Department is also heavily involved in the support of various initiatives at community level in almost all health board regions.

National Health Strategy
In my Department’s National Health Strategy: “Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You”, it is acknowledged that the Irish population is ageing at a rapid rate, and it emphasises the need to support older people in their own homes in independence and dignity, for as long as possible, to restore them to that state, where this is required, and to provide high standard extended care when they need it. These aspirations are expressed in very concrete terms and of specific interest to this conference is the aspiration to provide 600 additional day hospital beds with facilities encompassing specialist areas such as falls, osteoporosis treatment, fracture prevention, Parkinson’s Disease, stroke prevention, heart failure and continence promotion clinics.

Conclusion
Investing in health promotion for older people is effective and affordable and is beneficial both for society and for government. It helps to achieve better health for all older people whether living independently or in residential care and it allow them to participate in, and contribute to, society for longer. I would like to conclude by thanking you for your participation here, and for your most valuable contributions and I offer my sincere congratulations to the organizers of this most worthwhile and informative conference.
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.

(Please note that countries reporting at the General Meeting have been included in the attached minutes)

Iceland  (please respond on this article to Sigrún Jóhannsdóttir )

Promoting awareness regarding health issues in the elderly population.

Our jobs as physiotherapists and as a part of multidisciplinary teams working with the elderly population entails finding ways to increase awareness in this age group about various health topics. The Geriatric Division of Landspitali University Hospital recently held an open day for the public in co-operation with the Association of Senior Citizens and the National Association of Senior Citizens. There were several interesting presentations, by various health-care professionals and establishments, addressing various subjects pertaining to the elderly: home care, recreational activities, social security matters, osteoporosis, prevention of falls and memory lapses vs. dementia, to name a few.

Two wards, (the day-center and a 5-day ward) were open, as were the physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments. Guests were able to witness balance assessments, take-part in a group exercise session, see and enquire about various health aids and study informative posters and pamphlets. In other areas of the building guests were invited, among other things, to have their blood pressure taken, have their bone density measured and to take a memory test. A choir of elderly citizens sang a few songs and refreshments were offered.

The open day was advertised in the newspapers and other media and it was a great success – professionals and laymen working together to promote awareness of health issues for elderly citizens.

U.S.A.  (please respond on this article to Jennifer Bottomley )

Educational Opportunities Increase in the Section on Geriatrics, APTA

The Section on Geriatrics provides multiple learning formats for its members to earn continuing education. Different formats offer members the opportunity to travel to a regional course or take a course at home through online or paper format home study courses. These courses are available to both members and nonmembers.

Home study courses are available in paper format. They come in 4 or 6 modules on different topics related to geriatric physical therapy. Sample home study courses include:

- Topics in Geriatrics 2004 is a 4 module series on Issues in Home Care, Alzheimers Disease Part I and Part II, and Diabetes.
- Cultural Diversity of Older Americans is a 6 module series covering a range of issues including Working with Older Adults of Hispanic Origin, East Asian Cultures, Rehabilitation and Native American Elders, Health Care for Alaska Natives, Caribbean Culture, African American Culture, Religious Issues, Working with Clients with Alternative Lifestyles, and Overview of Cultural Competency: Considerations for Older Adults

Additional courses are available in an online or cd rom version. Topics include the following:

- Conservative Pain Management for the Older Patient
- Evaluation & Intervention: Urinary Incontinence in Elderly Men and Women
- Examination and Intervention of Balance Disorders in the Elderly
- Osteoporosis: Recognition and Team Management in the Rehab Setting and Beyond
- Pathological Manifestations of Aging

For more information on these courses and other topics offered through the Section on Geriatrics, please visit the Section’s web site at www.geriatricsapt.org and click on Education.
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

One of the initial projects undertaken by IPTOP in response to a member’s request is the collation of information about physiotherapy staffing levels in aged care. This project was first discussed during the Barcelona AGM in 2003 and a request for information from member countries was made at that time and again in IPTOP newsletters. To date information has been received from Sri Lanka, the UK and Australia. Today I would ask member countries to contribute to this project by answering the following questions:

- What role does physiotherapy have in long term care aged care facilities in your countries? Please include a definition of the type of overall care provided in the facility as well.
- What are the current staffing levels for physiotherapists and aides/assistants?

Dr Annette Brown, Vice Chair, IPTOP

Continuing Professional Development

IPTOP is able to organise a course for interested countries/regions. (See General Meeting Minutes, Appendix 1 attached)

There has been a request to share web sites for relevant courses, especially distance learning. Please send useful links to Amanda for future newsletter.

Conferences

IPTOP in Australia 2005, Melbourne

The National Gerontology Group and the National Neurology Group of the Australian Physiotherapy Association have extended an invitation to IPTOP to combine its 2005 meeting with the biennial conference of these groups to be held 24 to 27 November—the IPTOP day will be the day before or the day after, yet to be confirmed.

Theme: Ageing Australia—Embracing change, promoting independence.

Enquiries can be forwarded to Melanie Farlie, Conference Coordinator at mfarlie@iprimus.com.au

IPTOP 2006—offers please to Olwen

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)

Subscription renewal forms were sent to member countries in April 2004. Financial policies were distributed at the General meeting in Dublin.

IPTOP funds as of December 31, 2003 $1783.62
Income as of May 6, 2004 64.00
Expenses as of May 6, 2004 00
Balance as of May 6, 2004 $1847.62

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

Editorial Committee

Editor—Professor Amanda Squires (UK), 46, Elephant Lane, London SE16 4JD UK.

Committee—Sigrun Johannsdottir (Iceland)
Dr Paul Ogbonna (US)
Dr Martin van Gennep (Netherlands)

Next edition details

Copy date for the next edition is December 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.