

Editorial

How is the IFSPT Bridging the Gap Between Science and Clinical Practice?

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Keywords: IFSPT, sports physiotherapy

<https://doi.org/10.26603/001c.36651>

International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy

Vol. 17, Issue 5, 2022

BACKGROUND

One of the missions of the International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy (IFSPT) is to encourage high standards of sports physical therapy research, education and practice. The IFSPT founded the World Congress of Sports Physical Therapy (WCSPT) in 2015. International congresses are mainly organized to discuss a specific theme, exchange opinions, update knowledge and increase worldwide networking. Professionals and students collaborate and the new generation increases the awareness about the hot topics and gaps of the profession, bridging the gap between science and clinical practice.

Sports Physical Therapy is relatively new, since it was recognized as a Physical Therapy specialty only in the 1970s.¹ During the profession's growth, international congresses have been the best place to raise ideas and indicate future directions to guide clinical practice and research. The initiative from the IFSPT to organize a congress every 2 years started with the desire to increase the exchange of knowledge, develop consensus statements in sports physical therapy, and enhance networking among member organizations. To achieve this, the IFSPT works in collaboration with a member organization, always trying to be as inclusive as possible; Sports Physical Therapy for all is our guiding spirit.¹

FIRST EDITIONS OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY

The Swiss Sports Physiotherapy Association (SSPA), in cooperation with IFSPT and BJSM, organized the 1st World Congress of Sports Physical Therapy in Bern, Switzerland, 2015. The organization was demanding, but thanks to the SSPA committee hard work and dedication and IFSPT's cooperation, this event turned out to be very successful. Almost 800 participants (from 45 countries) gathered in Bern for a two-days conference on "Return to Play" in sport, with a stellar line up of renowned clinicians and researchers, and enjoyed networking and learning with the IFSPT community. Clare Ardern, Karim Khan and Mario Bizzini also coordinated a consensus meeting with the invited speakers, which resulted in a BJSM publication, the "Return to sport consensus statement", which is still considered one of the

most important papers on this topic at today.² It was a brilliant way to start this initiative and prepare for the next editions.

The 2nd World Congress in Sports Physical Therapy was held at the Titanic facility, Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 2017, hosted by Physios in Sport. The conference welcomed over 600 delegates from 40 different countries to explore the theme of "Optimal Loading in Sport". The main purpose was to bring together basic science, clinical research and practical application in a way that would challenge and equip delegates. The programme focused on tissue specific strategies for how sport PTs prescribe load, as lessons from the field of expert practitioners working in high level football and sport. The mix of science and application was a particular highlight - much of the feedback received from delegates following the conference emphasized how great it was to hear what people do in "real life" rather than solely covering research evidence. ACPSEM president and five-time, multiple medals winning Olympian, Dame Kathryn Grainger, shared her experience as an athlete and the role physiotherapy played in her career. Her insightful and entertaining talk reminded attendees of the value of listening to athletes and how sport PTs can enhance their support. On reflection, a key standout was how the IFSPT members were able to connect so effectively as a global community, and the value of attending in-person conferences to share experiences, make new friends and build stronger relationships.

In 2019, Vancouver, Canada, received around 550 participants, from 26 countries and 6 continents, for the Third WCSPT. It was the first time that the WCSPT was hosted on the North American continent. The theme was "From High Performance to Clinical Practice." Kay Crossley presented the opening keynote and she was chosen as someone who has transcended the divide between research and clinical practice and embodied the theme of the conference. The congress opened with Chief Bill Williams from the Squamish Nation welcoming all of the attendees to this land. Over 65 scientific posters were presented and the first WCSPT 5k fun run was promoted and it was won by internationally renowned author/journalist, Alex Hutchinson. Themes that emerged from the conference were mentorship, collaboration, bridging research/practice gaps, sex

& gender in sport, individualized care, and leadership in sport physiotherapy.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE 4TH WCSPT?

The Fourth WCSPT will be held this year in Nyborg, Denmark. The Danish Society of Sports Physical Therapy (DSSF) has a great history and experience organizing #Sportskongres together with the Danish Association of Sports Medicine, and the Scientific committee consists of internationally proven researchers.³ Both IFSPT and DSSF are intentional when it comes to gender equality.⁴ This year's speakers are divided equally between women and men.

As in Belfast, several athletes will be sharing their experiences with physiotherapy and its role in their career.

DSSF and IFSPT acknowledge the importance of bridging the gap between science and clinical practice. The theme at #WCSPT 2022 is "Translating science into practice." Both organizations want to make room for discussion and reflection on how to apply new knowledge into a clinical setting. Five parallel sessions of applied science will run twice during the congress, all focusing on translation and implementation of some of the topics/presentations given in the main auditorium.⁵

At #WCSPT, 2022 abstracts submission are to be followed by an accompanying infographic. The infographics focus on clinical take-home messages in a visually appealing format.

The best-rated infographics will be printed in postcard format for delegates to bring back home for their clinic wall.⁵

DSSF and IFSPT expect active networking during the congress since a two-hour lunch and activity break has been scheduled, where participants are invited to take part in different activities. DSSF has partnered with local organisations to allow participants to engage in physical and social activities such as mountain biking, yoga, paddle-tennis, tennis, running and other kinds of outdoor fitness, or simply enjoy leisurely outings and conversations by the waterfront directly at the Great Belt, where the venue of #WCSPT 2022 is located. Both DSSF and IFSPT hope this facilitates a dynamic combination of physical activity, knowledge-sharing, reflection and networking with peers.⁵

See you in Denmark!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are thankful to Mario Bizzini, Phil Glasgow and Chris Napier who provided information of the first three editions of the WCSPT, respectively.

Submitted: June 01, 2022 CDT, Accepted: June 23, 2022 CDT



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