

IFSPT International Perspective**Sports Physiotherapy for All**Kristian Thorborg¹, Luciana Mendonça²¹ Sports Orthopedic Research Center – Copenhagen (SORC-C), Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Amager-Hvidovre Hospital, Copenhagen University,² Physical Therapy Department, Universidade Federal dos Vales do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri (UFVJM)

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Sports physical therapy has been a recognized specialty since the early 1970s. The International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy (IFSPT) has further expanded and promoted this specialty since IFSPT was established in 2000. The IFSPT's European Union-funded Sports Physiotherapy for All (SPA) project describes effective professional behaviour and the integration of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes for the context of practice as a sports physical therapist for the first time. As of August 2021, the IFSPT includes 34 member countries, and currently 13 of these member organizations have approved educational pathways to allow international sports physical therapist recognition. This has led to more than 300 sports physical therapists globally who now hold the recognition of being an IFSPT Registered International Sports Physical Therapist (RISPT) (<https://ifspt.org/rispt/>). This aligns perfectly with the mission of the IFSPT, which is to be the international resource for sports physical therapists, with the vision of promoting sports physical therapy to advance and improve the quality of care of athletes worldwide.

IFSPT has created a culture of executive board excellence through good governance. Good governance relies on eight major principles, including participation, consensus, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, equality and inclusivity, and following the rule of law. The IFSPT board divides their work into Research, Education, Membership and Communications in separate working groups. For the first time in IFSPT history, an annual report was published in 2020 to describe our work and achievements. IFSPT also conducted a member survey to make sure we align with the mission and values of the IFSPT, and to understand what member benefits our Member Organizations would like IFSPT to provide. The main feedback from our member countries was more focus on engagement, knowledge sharing and global networking.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, no face-to-face meeting has been possible since 2019. Our main communications have occurred via official IFSPT email communications, social media and Zoom meetings with reports of all official Executive Board meetings. The General Meeting in 2021 was also held online for the first time. In June 2021 we had our first networking session with Member Organizations and invited guests. This was a huge success and a great way to keep more regularly in touch and sharing experiences. So, while COVID-19 has kept us physically apart, it has also improved the opportunity to be in more regular contact due to technological advances and global familiarization with

online engagement and knowledge sharing. While we all miss meeting our colleagues physically, the opportunity to meet and participate online have created more equal opportunities for countries which are less financially viable, and also increases the opportunity to better fulfill the wishes of our member countries in relation to global engagement, sharing and networking. During the pandemic IFSPT has worked hard to establish resources for members through research dissemination in different languages, especially targeting countries that are non-English speaking.

IFSPT has always maintained a good professional and respectful collaboration with World Physiotherapy (WP) (<https://world.physio/subgroups/sports>). IFSPT has initiated an increased focus and collaboration with WP on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in relation to the physiotherapy profession and IFSPT is represented in the congress program committee of the World Physiotherapy Congress 2023, which will be held in Tokyo. Gender bias in sports physical therapy has also been addressed by IFSPT, and since 2019, speakers at our flagship event—the World Congress of Sports Physical Therapy (WCSPT)—represents genders evenly. A strong point in these conferences is IFSPT's leading role in research dissemination and consensus meetings/statements on sports injury prevention, return to play guidelines,¹⁻³ and promotion of physical activity, as these are all extremely important working areas for sports physical therapists to master in the future.³ Speakers, content and structure of the scientific program for the 2-day WCSPT in Denmark will be available on the Congress website by September/October 2021.

Together with the International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy (*IJSPT*), who will also be present and engaged with the WCSPT, the focus on clinically relevant research for sports physical therapists has never been bigger. A continued relationship with the IJSPT has now been strengthened through collaboration, including international board members, reviewers, and associate editors. Furthermore, the first four IJSPT International Perspectives have been published in 2021.⁴⁻⁷ The relationship with IJSPT, and IJSPT itself, is stronger than ever, and will play a very important role as the main IFSPT associated journal going forward including IFSPT executive board members with research and publication expertise on the IJSPT Editorial board.

IFSPT encourage all member organizations and local research environments to work together more closely on future sports physical therapy research, to break down bar-

riers and silos between and within clinical and research environments. We hope to see everyone come together, engage and share knowledge at the next WCSPT, August 26-27, 2022 in Denmark, under the topic of “Translating Science into Action”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As immediate past and present presidents, we wish to acknowledge the contributions of all the individuals who have helped build the IFSPT and have brought it to this level of growth and impact.

Laetitia Dekker-Bakker (Netherlands) was the founding president and provided leadership for eleven years (2000-2011), as well as supporting the IFSPT with wisdom and advice in subsequent years. During her term, she spearheaded the SPA Project and set the stage for the development of the Registration program, along with shouldering the pressures of founding a new global organization. Without her tireless work and guidance, there would be no IFSPT.

Nicola Phillips (United Kingdom) served the IFSPT as a board member for two years and as president for six (2009-2017). During her term, the RISPT program became reality, and the World Congress of Sports Physical Therapy was founded, along with extensive progress in branding, communication and knowledge sharing. Nicola has always been generous with her time before, during and after her term, serving as an ambassador for IFSPT and a role model for sports physical therapists globally.

Anthony Schneiders (New Zealand) served as member at large, vice president and president during his eight years on the Executive Board (2009-2017). Tony’s accomplishments were seen in the realm of education, research and negotiation within and without the IFSPT. Tony traveled many miles to represent IFSPT within and outside our member organizations, expanded relationships with WP (then WCPT), and brought awareness to some of our more remote partners in Asia, Africa and Pan-Pacific regions.

Other board members in the past twenty years have contributed immense amounts of time toward the development

of the IFSPT. The original board under Laetitia Dekker-Bakker included Secretary Jan Gildea-Smith (Australia), Treasurer Mark DeCarlo (US), Members at Large Gül Baltacı (Turkey), Vibeke Bechtold (Denmark), Jose Esteves (Portugal), Jose Antonio Martin Urrialde (Spain), Henning Langberg (Denmark) and Mike Voight (US). Maria Constantinou (Australia), secretary; Gordon Eiland (United States), treasurer; Bente Andersen (Denmark), Mario Bizzini (Switzerland), Craig Smith (South Africa) and Nevin Ergun (Turkey), members at large, all made their mark in the growth of the IFSPT.

The most recent executive board has included the work of Colin Paterson (UK), who chaired the Education and Registration committee with great energy and skill and brought in several new member organizations as certified for RISPT (2017-2021). Walt Jenkins (US) served capably as treasurer and John Fitzgerald (Australia), member at large, chaired the Membership Committee (2019-2021). Remaining board members Carlo Ramponi (Italy), who now takes the position of vice president after assisting with membership committee duties, and Bakare Ummukulthoum (Nigeria), who has expanded the IFSPT’s awareness on the African continent and well beyond, continue their work with the IFSPT.

Last, but certainly not least we want to acknowledge Mary Wilkinson, who has served in the capacity of Marketing and Communications Director, has tirelessly supported IFSPT presidents and boards since 2005, filling in where assistance is needed along with her sizable marketing responsibilities.

The IFSPT was founded with an impressive and hard-working team and has continued to be fortunate to have talented and passionate individuals to lead. The new executive board is comprised of Luciana de Michelis Mendonça, president (Brazil); Carlo Ramponi, vice president (Italy); Suzanne Gard, treasurer (Switzerland); Chris Napier, secretary (Canada); and Kenneth Watts (UK), Aleksander Killingmo (Norway) and Bakare Ummukulthoum (Nigeria), representatives at large. We look forward to the next four years and how this organization will soar in the future, bringing Sports Physiotherapy for All.

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