Update on the International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy
In June 2011 APA Sports Physiotherapist Maria Constantinou attended a series of International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy (IFSPT) Executive Board meetings in Amsterdam in her new role as Secretary. She also attended the IFSPT biennial General Meeting as the delegate for Sports Physiotherapy Australia. Here, she provides an IFSPT update.

For those of you not familiar, the IFSPT is a subgroup of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT). It is important to note that the IFSPT has recently had a change of name from International Federation of Sports Physiotherapy (IFSP) to International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy, in line with the WCPT nomenclature. The IFSPT is a worldwide federation which represents national sports physiotherapy organisations from 21 member countries. On 20 June 2011, 21 delegates from around the globe met in Amstelveen (Netherlands) to hear a report on IFSPT activities from the outgoing President, Laetitia Dekker-Bakker (Netherlands), as well as the Treasurer, Mark De Carlo (USA), and the Secretary, Jan Gildea-Smith (Australia), who were completing their final term on the Executive Board. At the General Meeting we heard a brief history of the IFSPT, the efforts from various countries to start a group in 1998 and how it was established officially in 2000 through a grant awarded by the Dutch government, before finally being recognised as a subgroup of the WCPT in Barcelona in 2003. Other major points for discussion and voting at the General Meeting were the need to update the Articles of the IFSPT, which are held in the Netherlands under Dutch Law. This included the mission statement (described below), which was presented to the membership and unanimously accepted. A summary of the IFSPT governance and activities presented at the General Meeting are also described in the sections that follow.

Mission statement

The IFSPT is a worldwide federation and recognised subgroup of the WCPT, representing national organisations of sports physical therapy. The intention of the IFSPT is to be the international resource for sports physical therapists.

The IFSPT works with member organisations and their individual members to provide services to people and athletes of all ages and abilities for safe participation in sport and physical activity, through excellence in education, research, practice, and clinical specialisation.

Governance

Executive Board

Policies and procedures of the IFSPT are guided by the Articles of the organisation, which set the structure of the Executive Board and the committees. The structure of the IFSPT includes the Executive Board, which must have representatives from at least three continents and must meet annually. The newly elected Executive Board includes Nicki Phillips (UK) as President, Maria Constantinou (Australia) as Secretary, Gordon Eiland (USA) as Treasurer and four members at large: Tony Schneiders (NZ), Craig Smith (South Africa), Bente Anderson (Denmark) and Mario Bizzini (Switzerland). All members of the Executive Board have extensive knowledge and experience in sports physiotherapy practice, research and education, and aim at driving sports physiotherapy forwards at an international level.

General members

The IFSPT has a general membership which includes a delegate nominated by each member organisation. To date there are 21 member organisations with the potential for more joining in the near future.

Committees

The IFSPT contains a number of teams of committees, which are:

- Administrative Services Team (Finance, Audit and Strategic planning committees)
- Governance Services Team (Articles, Ethics, and Nominating committees)
- Education Services Team (Professional Development, Research and Scientific congress committees)
- Membership Services Team (Awards, Membership and Marketing/Public Relations committees)
- IFSPT Registration Board (for sports physiotherapy registration).

More information on the committee members and structure can be obtained from the IFSPT website: sportsphysiotherapyforall.org

Current activities

The Sports Physiotherapy for All Project

The IFSPT Sports Physiotherapy for All (SPA) was a Leonardo Da Vinci-funded project through the European Union (EU) conducted from 2004 to 2006. The SPA project’s main aims were to develop a career pathway for sports physiotherapists and to ensure all people exercising had access to sports physiotherapy for injury prevention and management. Significant outcomes of the SPA project include the development of Sports Physiotherapy Competencies and Standards and Doping in Sport Guidelines for sports physiotherapists, which were achieved through an international collaborative research project with input from sports physiotherapy educators, researchers and clinicians. The Sports Physiotherapy Competencies and Standards and Doping in Sport Guidelines can be downloaded from the IFSPT website. The IFSPT has a responsibility to the EU to demonstrate that the outcomes of the SPA project are being utilised effectively until 2017. The SPA project has an allocated webpage on the IFSPT website, which can be accessed and viewed for more detailed information.

Journal

In January 2011 the IFSPT developed a partnership with the USA Sports Physical Therapy...
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Section (SPTS) and adopted the International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy (IJSPPT) as an official IFSPT journal. The IJSPPT is indexed in Medline, PubMed, CINAHL and Sport Discus. IFSPT member organisations and their members now have a number of low-cost subscription choices in accessing the IJSPPT.

Marketing
As the name for the IFSPT has only recently changed, it has become necessary to develop a new branding and corporate identity program. A marketing plan has been developed and presented to the IFSPT by OPUS design (USA), which was accepted by the EB in 2011. In summary, the marketing plan includes the Branding and Corporate Identity Program of redesigning the logo and stationery, an e-marketing calendar for July 2011 through to December 2012 with the production of regular email blasts, quarterly newsletters, website design based on IFSPT corporate identity, and building a completely new website under the www.ifspt.org domain name.

Communication
The IFSPT has been delivering and will continue to deliver its regular eNews, informing the membership of their activities. The IFSPT eNews will be forwarded to Australian members via Sports Physiotherapy Australia, whose members can register directly to receive the IFSPT eNews via the website www.ifsp-world.org. Current and past IFSPT eNews can also be accessed on the IFSPT website. Sports Physiotherapy Australia will communicate regularly through electronic updates or SportsPhysio so that all members will be kept informed of the activities of the IFSPT and of sports physiotherapy on the international front.

Upcoming activities
Conferences and professional development courses
The IFSPT is aiming to have the next conference in 2015; the place and date are yet to be determined. The IFSPT also plans to align and/or co-host sessions of conferences with other member organisations. The IFSPT encourages advertising of member organisations’ conferences on the website provided all IFSPT members can attend at that particular organisation’s member rates.

Education portal
An education portal is planned for the IFSPT website where members can attend e-courses provided by IFSPT members or member organisations.

Course accreditation
IFSPT member organisations and their members will be able to have certain developed courses accredited by the IFSPT.

Course advertising
As a service to IFSPT member organisations, they and their individual members will be able to advertise their courses on the IFSPT website.

A note of thanks
Jan Gildea-Smith has been the Sports Physiotherapy Australia delegate to the IFSPT since the beginning of the organisation and has represented the WCPT Asia Western Pacific region on the Executive Board of the IFSPT for more than 10 years. She was instrumental in the development of the IFSPT from the beginning. I would like to acknowledge the work and the significant contribution Jan Gildea-Smith has made to sports physiotherapy internationally and nationally. Thank you, Jan.