



*Africa Region of the
World Confederation for
Physical Therapy*



**WCPT AFRICA
NEWSLETTER
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1. WCPT Congress 2017

**Did you save the date for the first ever
WCPT congress in Africa!**

Yes you heard correctly, the first WCPT congress to be held in Africa will be held in **Cape Town**, South Africa, from **2-4 July 2017**. Please make sure that you start planning and saving NOW already for this event and let us showcase the research and wealth of physiotherapy services in Africa! Watch this space as information becomes available! For updated information, please link to www.wcpt.org/congress

World Confederation for Physical Therapy
CONGRESS 2017
Cape Town
2-4 July 2017

Where the world of physical therapy meets

www.wcpt.org/congress

 **World Confederation
for Physical Therapy**
The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT)
represents the physical therapy profession worldwide

Hosted by:  **South African Society
of Physiotherapy**



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2. WCPT 2017 Scientific Committee

Planning for the 2017 WCPT congress began in September when the International Scientific Committee (ISC) met for the first time. The Committee comprises of representatives from the five WCPT regions, sub-groups, Catherine Sykes - WCPT's Professional Policy Consultant, and the SASP as the host organisation.

Dina Brooks from Canada was elected as chair.

The rest of the committee is:

- Witness Mudzi - SASP
- Jonathan Quartey - Africa
- Leigh Hale - Asia Western Pacific
- Charlotte Häger - Europe
- Dianne Millette - North America
- Edgar Hernandez - South America
- WCPT sub-groups - Hans Hobbelen

Although the idea is to build on previous successes, each congress brings its own flavor and in this case we hope to bring an African flavor with new ideas and challenges faced in Africa to the congress delegates. Hopefully you all completed the survey WCPT conducted to hear what the members want!

Some of the strengths of the 2015 Singapore congress the ISC wants to build on include: the networking opportunities, rapid five abstract presentations and the poster presentations.



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Be on the lookout from the beginning of December for the call for focused symposia, and a news article that will be written which will be forwarded (as part of the first congress media pack) to all MOs, Regions, subgroups and networks for us all to reproduce in our own newsletters.

Call for abstracts will be in June 2016 and the early bird registrations opens in September 2016.

3. Zambia Society Physiotherapy Awareness Week 2015

Zambia Society of Physiotherapy recognizes the importance of the WCPT Physiotherapy International Day, which falls on 8th September. In 2015, ZSP organized various activities throughout the country in realizing the 2014 WCPT- A Congress Theme of "From advocacy to action against NCD's".



Movement for Health-Maximising potential, WCPT DAY 2015 at Levy Mwanawasa District Hospital, Lusaka 2015: Physiotherapists conducting skipping rope exercises to keep fit.



The Copperbelt Province Physiotherapy Practitioners in action at Mukuba Mall 2015



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Movement for Health and maximizing potential for all - SCREENING IN PROGRESS at the WCPT Day 2015 in Chipata- Eastern



Eastern province Physiotherapy Practitioners at Chipata Shoprite chain store ready to start an open clinic for the public with the ZSP President



Physiotherapy Practitioners from Kalulushi (Copper Belt Province) at work!



Physiotherapy Association of Malawi (PAM) joined the world in celebrating the role of physiotherapy across the world population



4. Physiotherapy Profession In Malawi: Current Position And Direction

Introduction

Until the mid-1990s, there were only 5 Malawian Physiotherapists in the civil service and one in Private Practice. Many were expatriate physiotherapists, the majority of whom were employed by Malawi against Physical Disabilities (MAP) at a time when Malawi had many persons with post-polio paralysis. Physiotherapists started meeting as a support group until in 1996 when a constitution was developed and PAM was established. Although PAM membership has never moved far beyond 30 physiotherapists at any one given time, the difference is that we now have more Malawian Physiotherapists than we've ever had. Thanks to Malawi Against Physical Disabilities (MAP), for training and sustaining the majority of the Physiotherapists in the country. PAM applauds MAP for the work well done towards physiotherapy profession in Malawi.

Key Milestones for PAM

Even though training PTs in the country had been on our agenda for many years, the real inspiration came from attending the 2nd WCPT Africa in Pretoria. We were inspired by the progress the profession had made in the region and globally. During a PAM executive meeting, the chairperson then, Mrs Mtafu, made a commitment to get Malawian Physiotherapists out of the Diploma bracket. To this end, she picked up a phone and asked why the Ministry of health supported further training for doctors and nurses but not Physiotherapists. The rest is now history, but that is how Sylvia, Rex



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and Dr. Wazakili got supported to go and upgrade to BSc and MSc level. The bigger picture and goal was always to establish a school of physiotherapy in Malawi.

Although the vision of PAM was always to train PTs at degree level, one of our expatriate colleagues, Johan Baudewijns who had worked in Zimbabwe, felt strongly about a need to train mid-level rehabilitation workers modeling on his Zimbabwe experience. Amidst divided support within PAM, a two-year Rehabilitation Assistants' certificate programme was established and later upgraded to a three-year Rehab Technicians' programme. The latter continues to run at Diploma level, thereby allowing this group to work with minimum supervision from PTs or OTs. At the moment, we have over 100 Rehabilitation Technicians serving in different parts of the country.

we are actually proud that all Rehab Assistants who trained at certificate level have now upgraded to Diploma level and close to 10 have gone on to obtain either Diplomas or first degrees in PT and OT. Five others have gone on to upgrade to MSc degrees in PT and some are aspiring for their PhDs. This is the kind of career progression we hope to see continue not only for Rehab Techs, but also for our new crop of BSc Physiotherapists. We wish to see them develop to MSc and PhDs at the earliest possibility and opportunity.

It is important for PAM to remember that the establishment of the school of Physiotherapy was a brain-child of Diploma qualified PT's. In the midst



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of a myriad obstacles, the Association remained focused and uncompromising on the need for training of Malawian PTs at BSc level.

Thus, the setting up of the school at College of Medicine was and remains a major milestone for this Association. It is critical to remember that PAM would not have achieved this exercise alone. The College of Medicine was instrumental in helping PAM realize its dream. There are progressive professionals like Professor Mkandawire, Professor Msamati and Professor Broadhead among others, who shared the vision with us and worked tirelessly to create an enabling environment for the establishment of the school of PT in Malawi.

Talking about major milestones, 2014 is a very special year in the history of this country professionally, where 17 new Malawi-trained physiotherapists graduated. This number is followed by 26 others graduating this year, 2015.

Aspirations

Our history and professional responsibility compels us to do everything in our power to facilitate the upgrading of all Diploma PTs in Malawi to at least BSc level and some clinical specialization. Nothing would stop PAM from supporting them to attain their highest achievable level. We know that such is possible as PAM speaks with one voice on matters of professional interest. The association therefore encourages its members who are longing for the opportunity to upgrade to do so as opportunity arise. Life-long learning is our motto and it shall come to pass for all of us.



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Apart from encouraging all Physiotherapists in Malawi to be active members of the Association; PAM's short, immediate and long term goal is to increase access to PT services in the country. We would achieve such by placing physiotherapists in all central, district and private hospitals; all CBR programmes, old-age homes, institutions for disabled children and sports facilities in Malawi. In addition, we are obliged to support other rehabilitation professions, such as OTs, Orthotists and Prosthetists to form or strengthen their own professional association or indeed join PAM as associate/affiliate members.

For us to cover such a wide range of areas, we need to strengthen the training programme, develop a strong research base as well as clinical specialization. This is the only way we will chart career paths that are commensurate with WCPT standards and what obtains internationally.

In this respect, we endeavor to develop the association to a point where we have a voice. This is where we need input from our Patron and colleagues who have experience from professional associations in their countries to help us with ideas.