

## Why should I attend the World Confederation of Physical Therapy Congress in Singapore in 2015?

The WCPT Congress is coming to the Asia Western Pacific region of WCPT for the first time since 1999. It takes place in Singapore on 1st to 4th May 2015. As the Chair of the International Scientific Committee that has been working since December 2012 to develop the congress programme, it seems appropriate that I should encourage the readers of this journal to attend the congress. The big questions are – why should you attend the congress, what will you experience and what will you take away?

This unique event, which takes place every four years, provides physiotherapists with an opportunity to discuss the challenges that confront all of us. We are faced with a global recession resulting in health service cuts, a technological escalation, the growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, an aging population together with a huge population of children and young adults in low income countries. During the congress the profession from across the globe will have the opportunity to discuss these challenges. The congress showcases the latest developments in research and practice from international presenters, and gives clinicians, managers, educators, researchers and policy makers the opportunity to engage with each other to find ways of moving forward as a profession and improving health outcomes.

The congress is planned with the delegates in mind and as such provides many opportunities to engage with fellow professionals. The programme is underpinned by the focused symposia where recognised leaders in the profession from a variety of WCPT regions present their perspective on the topic at hand. Some symposia – such as those on management, pain and global health – will build on the knowledge-sharing from past congresses. Others are new topics in defined clinical areas as well as important generic issues such as exercise, which should appeal across the profession. The full list of the range of topics can be seen on the WCPT website. The symposia by their very nature encourage audience participation so that conversations can be held and ideas and perspectives shared.

Similarly, a number of discussion panels are being planned to address a broad range of topics of professional interest. The emphasis of these discussion panels is on audience participation so that all voices can be heard and different perspectives appreciated. Those participating bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the topic under discussion. As the discussion panels are finalised they will appear on the WCPT website.

Throughout these sessions, it is important that different but equal voices across the different regions and specialties are heard and different challenges and solutions shared. Appreciating and sharing our experiences makes us all the richer and we know that opportunities for networking and discussion are among the most valued aspects of an international congress.

Pre- and post-congress courses have been planned and already appear on the website. As with the focused symposia, there

was a very competitive and rigorous selection process to ensure that they would appeal and offer a focus on applied learning. In addition, delegates will have the opportunity to visit a number of clinical facilities in Singapore giving them the opportunity to see and hear about physiotherapy practice.

Now physiotherapists are encouraged to submit abstracts for platform or poster presentations. Those selected will represent the profession worldwide. We are actively encouraging first time presenters and emerging researchers to consider submitting, and we are planning opportunities for them to engage with those in similar situations in all parts of the world. Details of the abstract submission process are on the WCPT website.

Networking sessions facilitated by international subgroups and others will take place daily allowing for discussion, interactions and hopefully good contacts for the future. These will be integrated into the daily programme and showcase the wide variety of interests in our profession.

Where better then, to catch up with current trends, rub shoulders with the movers and shakers of the profession and meet the leaders of tomorrow? The congress brings together physiotherapists from many countries at all levels – from students and newly qualified to senior researchers and those with huge amounts of clinical experience. It gives everyone the opportunity to engage with people who will make you think and question what you do. Hopefully you will come away with more renewed vigour to develop the profession and service delivery to improve health outcomes for all populations.

The WCPT website and Congress Update give regular information on the congress and I would encourage you to register on the website to keep up-to-date with all the latest news and start planning to attend now. The success of the congress is dependent on all the participants – let's see if we can make it the best and biggest yet.

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[www.wcpt.org/congress](http://www.wcpt.org/congress)