Dear Colleagues,

The International Organisation of Physical Therapy in Mental Health (IOPTMH) has the wind in his sails. This newsletter brings extensive information about physiotherapy in mental health from all over the world. 185 colleagues attended the 7th International Conference of Physiotherapy in Psychiatry and Mental Health (ICPPMH) in Iceland with the theme “physiotherapy is all physio’s business”. Networking between colleagues from different countries is growing. New upcoming activities are planned (Mexico, 2018; Geneva, 2019; Finland, 2020; World Physiotherapy Day, World Mental Health Day, ...). As in all organization, some Executive Committee members leave and new members are elected. The IOPTMH thanks Anne Parker, Rutger Ijntema and Amanda Gyllensten for their commitment during the last years and specially the last two years. With their efforts, the IOPTMH was able to grow and to realize a part of our dreams. The General Meeting elected three new members: Jo Connaughton, Emanuel Brunner and Merja Sallinen. We welcome them. For the first time in the young history of the IOPTMH a candidate from another continent (Jo Connaughton, Australia) will be seated in the Executive Committee. Together with the Mexican subsection of physiotherapy in mental health, the IOPTMH will organize in September 2018 a satellite conference on the American continent.

We wish you all a good summer holiday!

Kind regards,
Prof. dr. Michel Probst, President of the IOPTMH
Prof. Liv Skjaerven, Vice-president of the IOPTMH
The Icelandic Physiotherapy Association (IPA) and the Icelandic subgroup of Physiotherapy in Mental Health, supported by Iceland Travel organized the 7th International Conference of Physiotherapy in Psychiatry and Mental Health (ICPPMH) in Reykjavik, Iceland, in April 2018. Thema of the conference was ‘mental health is all physio’s business’.

The IOPTMH thanks Unnur Pétursdóttir from the Icelandic Physiotherapy Association, Sigrun Gudjonsdottir and her colleagues from the Icelandic subgroup of Physiotherapy in Mental Health and Tinna Ýrr Arnardóttir and her team from Iceland Travel for the well organized conference.

The IOPTMH also wants to thank Lene Nyboe for her work as coordinator of the scientific committee, and acknowledges the work of all members of the scientific committee.

The abstracts of the conference in Iceland are available on the website: http://www.icppmh.org

185 participants from 27 countries and six different continents attended the conference.
Michel Landry (PT, PhD, USA) and Stephanie Saenger (OT, NL) were the invited keynote speakers and presented two important and interesting topics about humanitarian aid and the relation between occupational therapy and physiotherapy in mental health respectively.

Besides the two keynote speakers, the program offered 47 oral presentations, 12 workshops and 14 posters. There was time for networking during the opening ceremony, the conference diner and between the shifts.

The attendees choose for the **Poster award**: Conny Blauwendraat: *One-year follow-up of basic body awareness therapy in patients with posttraumatic stress disorder. A small intervention study of effects on movement quality, PTSD symptoms, and movement experiences,* for the **Oral presentation award**: Graciela Rovner: *Active Assessment: A clinically useful method of pain acceptance clustering,* and for the **Workshop award**: Tiina Tikkanen & Jelekäinen Kati: *Psychophysical physiotherapy – Stabilizing trauma-group.*

![Photo: Graciela Rovner](image1.jpg)

A remarkable fact; Caroline Griffiths (UK), Liv Skjaerven (N), Anne Parker (UK), Mikko Patovirta (Fi), Michel Probst (B), and Roija Jaakkola (Fi) attended all the 7 conferences of the ICPPMH.

In the margin of the 7th ICPPMH conference, the Executive Committee of the IOPTMH organised a General Meeting (see section General Meeting).
THANK YOU
Executive Committee 2016-2017: official farewell to Rutger Ijntema (secretary since 2014), Anne Parker (treasurer since 2006) and Prof. dr. Amanda Gyllensten (member since 2006). The IOPTMH invited them to write a message.

As a physiotherapist in mental health, head of the Dutch master programme, organizer of the Utrecht 2014 conference (with generous support of the Dutch association of physiotherapy in mental health) I was deeply involved in our field. Even more so since the members of the IOPTMH allowed me to become executive board member and take up the task of secretary. After having enjoyed our wonderful international conference in Iceland 2018, it is time for me to become less involved in the IOPTMH. To be clear, for me there is no doubt that our subgroup will move further in the direction of the frontline of healthcare.

Based on my 4,5 year experience as IOPTMH secretary I can say that our organization is growing and maturing. This progress can be seen by the level of our conferences and by the way we organize meetings with our 21 members. Knowledge is shared increasingly. More time is spend on communication between members and the Executive Committee. In addition, a physiotherapy in mental health book was published by Elsevier, a definition was published, a consensus statement is being worked on and the first outlines for education standards are being discussed. Also, international institutions like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) see the potential of our specialisation. Although I am convinced that this development will not stop, there are two points of attention for future purposes.

First, physiotherapists have the tendency to discuss issues internally, like evidence based practice, techniques and treatment modalities. This of course is a good thing. However, a pitfall can be that we forget to keep our eyes on society. In my opinion there is a need for us to learn to adapt and influence society. For example, since healthcare is shifting to focus on primary care and patient-centeredness in many countries, we could ask the question: are we prepared for this? Second, patient-centered care is increasingly related to efficient stakeholder collaboration. Many parties are involved in providing healthcare: healthcare managers, healthcare professionals that work inside or outside the organization, financers, policy makers and patient representatives. They all have a say in the work you do. It is evident that we matter. But can we explain to our collaborators that we matter? Is the IOPTMH capable of explaining our healthcare value to stakeholders? What do we really add to society and the personal lives of our patients? And is it really worth investing in physiotherapy financially? I think, so far we did a marvellous job and look forward to our future success. Thank you all and goodbye,

Rutger IJntema, [Rutger.ijntema@hu.nl]
This is a short reflection from a retired member of the executive committee (in Reykjavik April 2018). I have been active in the executive committee for many years, since 2007. At that time I started as a board member of the International Council of Physical Therapists in Mental Health (ICPPMH). There has been an enormous development since then, I am happy to say. We have become part of the WCPT as a subgroup. International Organization of Physical Therapists in Mental Health (IOPTMH) was established in Amsterdam 2011. We have seen the organization grow from just a few countries to today including 20 member countries, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK.

I am proud and thankful to have been part of this process and think that it is very important to develop Mental Health Physiotherapy globally. The interest for Mental Health Physical Therapy is enormous and growing. This is true not only within the field of Physical Therapy as such but also in society and with policy makers. In IOPTMH, there is presently a network of individual Physical Therapists, representing 59 nations from 6 continents. The network includes practitioners, educators and researchers.

The IOPTMH have been organizing Conferences and Symposiums in many places since the first Conference in Leuven University, Belgium 2006, followed by Bergen University College, Norway 2008, Lund University, Sweden 2010, Edinburgh, UK, 2012, University of Applied Science Utrecht, the Netherlands 2014, University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain, 2016. The last conference was held in Reykjavik, Iceland in April 2018.

I thank all my colleagues in the executive committee especially Michel Probst, Liv Helvik Skjaerven and Anne Parker who also have been working since 2006/2007 and done a great job of spreading our message to Physical Therapist internationally. I also thank Merja Sallinen and Rutger JIntema for nice problem solving and work together.

I am very satisfied with the work that has been done in the IOPTMH. We have besides the scientific and practice orientated conferences e.g. inspired several nations to organized subsections of Physical Therapy in Mental Health and worked on the publication of the definition and content of Mental Health Physiotherapy as well as published a book in the field of PMH.

I hope for the IOPTMH to continue to develop and grow both in quality and quantity. I will finish quoting one of our main aims. “Foster co-operation between physical therapists practicing in mental health throughout the world”. I am certain that we will do that.

Mny greetings

Amanda Lundvik Gyllensten, Ass Prof. Lund University, Sweden

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**NEWS FROM THE 6TH GENERAL MEETNG OF THE IOPTMH 2018**

The General Meeting of the IOPTMH was hold on 11 April 2018 during the ICPPMH conference in Iceland.
Two countries considered organizing the next International Conference of Physiotherapy in Psychiatry and Mental Health (ICPPMH) in 2020: Finland and Mexico. Finland was proposed for the next 8th ICPPMH conference from the 12.05.2020 - 14.05.2020.

To extent the IOPTMH ideas worldwide, the Executive Committee support Mexico to organize a satellite conference of the ICPPMH in America (see news from Mexico).

Photo: the Finnish delegation in Iceland and organizers of the next conference in 2020.

NEW MEMBER OF THE IOPTMH

The Executive Committee gave on 11 April 2018 a positive advice on the application of the Columbia Group of Physiotherapy in Mental Health to become a member of the IOPTMH. The General Meeting approved with unanimity the advice of the Executive Committee.

The IOPTMH welcomes the Columbia Group of Physiotherapy in Mental Health as 21th member of the IOPTMH and thanks N.M. Achury (National Chair elected), K.M. Alvis Gomez (Coordinator International Affairs), O.L. Montoya Hurtado (Chair of the subsection), and S. A. Gomez Motta (vice-chair of the subsection) for their effort.

ELECTION FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2018

During the Iceland conference, an election was organized for the 3 open places in the Executive Committee of the IOPTMH. Joanne Connaughton (Australia), Emanuel Brunner (Swizerland) and Merja Sallinen (Finland) were elected by the General Meeting for the next four years.
CONSTITUTION
At all times, the constitution is easily available for all interested colleagues (see website icppmh.org).

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World Physiotherapy day
8 September 2018
Theme: Physiotherapy, Physical Activity and Mental Health
WCPT CONFERENCE IN GENEVA 2019

The IOPTMH will be represented at the General Meeting of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT) in Geneva.

During the WCPT congress in Geneva the 7th open General Meeting of the IOPTMH will be held. Additionally, a networking meeting will be organized.

A focus symposium with Prof. Michel Probst (Belgium), Prof Jo Connaughton (Australia), dr. Brendon Stubbs (UK), dr. Lene Nyboe (Denmark) and dr. Emanuel Brunner (Switzerland) was accepted. Only 26 of 103 applications for a focus symposium made the final selection. Emma Stokes, President of the WCPT, congratulated us with the selection and thanks the IOPTMH so much for their support of and commitment to WCPT and #globalpt (mail 14/05/2018).

The IOPTMH warmly invites colleagues to send abstracts for the conference in Geneva. The closing day of the call for abstracts is on 6th September 2018.

WCPT accepted the proposal of the IOPTMH (subgroup of the WCPT) to enlarge the field of specialties of physiotherapy with mental health. In the call of abstracts, mental health will be one of the specialties which the authors can indicate.
WCPT CONGRESS 2021 IN DUBAI, hosted by the Emirates Physiotherapy Society

Dubai offers the chance for the global physical therapy community to meet in a destination that links Europe, Asia and Africa,” says Emma Stokes, president of the WCPT

Dubai is the largest and most populous city in the United Arab Emirates, located on the southeast coast of the Persian Gulf. The WCPT Congress will welcome more than 2,000 physical therapists to a city known for its striking skyline and cutting-edge architecture, delivering a world-class scientific programme featuring the latest research, innovations and debate.

ANNOUNCEMENT: 27TH INTERNATIONAL JUBILEUM CONGRESS: EATING DISORDERS CONGRESS
19-21 oktober 2018, Alpbach, Tirol, Austria


NEWS FROM THE UK
- We all know how difficult it is to acquire as non psychiatrist or psychologist a place in mental health and psychiatry. In a world where psychiatrists and psychologists rule the field, physiotherapists have to prove with evidence based arguments that what we do has more value for persons with mental health problems.
Brendon Stubbs (UK) is nominated by Schizophrenia Research for the 2018 Elsevier Schizophrenia research award. He will receive this award at the Schizophrenia International Research Society in Florence Italy.

_Schizophrenia Research_ brings together biological, clinical and psychological research in order to stimulate the synthesis of findings from all disciplines involved in improving patient outcomes in schizophrenia. More than 6000 institutes have online or print access to Schizophrenia Research, the largest specialist journal in the field with the largest readership and with a five years impact factor 4.3.


A new global study from King’s College London has provided the strongest evidence yet that physical activity can help the emergence of depression. The research included more than 200,000 people and found the same outcome across all ages and geographical regions. Co-author Dr Brendon Stubbs said: "We found consistently that people who engage in high levels of physical activity were 15% to 16% less likely to develop depression in the future compared with the least active people. We found this in children, working age adults, and older adults as well.

"Even when you adjust for other important lifestyle factors - such as how much people smoke or their body mass index - the protective effects of physical activity on depression remained evident." While the physical advantages of exercise are well-documented, Dr Stubbs said this is the largest study of its kind to establish a link to mental health and should add to pressing calls to prioritise physical activity in people's lives. "It doesn't have to be structured exercise.” he said. "Physical activity of any type is beneficial for health and well-being. So for young people it might be playing in the playground, or older people it might be gardening. Some is better than none, more is better than some."

Congratulations on receiving this outstanding recognition and thank you for your continued contributions to the field of physiotherapy in mental health. As a physiotherapist this is a tremendous performance.

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**NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA:**

Update on Australian Physiotherapy Association National Group - Mental Health.
The APA introduced a National Mental Health group in 2017. As a new group we have spent some time discussing our focus and intent. The APA website includes this information

“The Mental Health Physiotherapy group is made up of physiotherapists who work or have an interest in the area of mental health. This is a newly formed national group of the APA.
The APA has recently joined International Organization of Physical Therapists in Mental Health (IOMPTH), a World Confederation of Physical Therapy sub-group, and echoes the group’s sentiment that the contribution of physiotherapists working in this area needs to be brought into the spotlight. There needs to be recognition of the
importance of physiotherapy for the client, society and the physiotherapy profession to create a culture of physiotherapy in mental health care. Our group aims to help achieve this for Australian physiotherapists.”

There are currently 78 members registered with this group across Australia. We are a big country with vast distances to cross to connect with each other. Perth and Sydney are about 4,000km apart by road or 4 hours by plane so connecting members is a challenge. Our activities in 2017 include:

• Developed and delivered a Webinar on Engaging patients with depression. This webinar is available to all APA members, not just the mental health group. It covered the pathophysiology associated with depressive disorders and explored how these can impact an individual. We provided tips and strategies to help establish a therapeutic relationship with patients, leading to positive clinical outcomes.

• An article in the APA InMotion magazine entitled Mental Health Begins with You. This is a short article about looking after your own mental health. This coincided with International Mental Health Week and the theme was about looking after your own mental health. (InMotion is the flagship publication of the APA and serves as a key platform for communicating the latest national and local news within the APA and the broader physiotherapy profession. The editorial elements of InMotion combine to inform and engage, deliver value, provide knowledge, and give voice to members.)

• An article in the APA In Touch magazine entitled Schizophrenia, Headache and You. This article raised awareness of the role musculoskeletal physiotherapists could play in helping people with schizophrenia who experience headaches. It provided facts about schizophrenia and information about psychosis to try and dispel some commonly held myths and stigmas. (In Touch provides musculoskeletal physiotherapists with cutting edge information on clinical practice and professional issues.)

• The group have been invited to write another article for InMotion focusing on 5 key clinical areas or treatment approaches. We are currently working on this.

• We have organised a meet and greet at the APA conference in October where current and interested members can come along and meet the chair and some members of the committee.

• Future events include more webinars and greater involvement in the APA symposium in 2018.

NEWS FROM LITHUANIA

Prof. dr. Michel Probst was invited by Assoc. Prof. Andrejeva Julia (Physiotherapist at Klaipeda University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Rehabilitation Department) at the Klaipeda university on 23-24 November 2017 to give a presentation of physiotherapy in mental health and a workshop with the title “Eating disorders: the body in motion, from a health related, psychosocial related and psychotherapeutic related (physiotherapy) approach.”
NEWS FROM ICELAND
The physiotherapy subgroup in mental health has a journal with two interviews in Icelandic language: Anna Kristín Kristjánsdóttir (founder of the mental health subsection in Iceland and Liv Skjaerven (N).

NEWS FROM IRELAND:
Prof. dr. Michel Probst gave on 23 February 2018 a workshop in Trinity College, Dublin “The body”: a challenge for patients with eating disorders and their therapists.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND
Schweizerische Arbeitsgruppe für Physiotherapie in der Psychosomatik und Psychiatrie has sent their 6th Newsletter (December 2017).

Symposium in Winterthur, Switzerland, 29 June, 2018
The Kantonsspital Winterthur (KSW) and the Swiss Association for Physiotherapists in Psychosomatics and Psychiatry (SAG PPP) organize a 1-day Symposium with the title «Integration of psychological aspects in physiotherapy». The program includes presentations and workshops on current clinical topics including sleep disorders, body image, chronic pain and therapeutic relationship. https://anmelden.kswgo.ch/symposium-physio/
October 2017, Bergen

BBAT physiotherapists from all over the world came together in Bergen on 26 & 27 October 2017 for a conference to honor Prof. Liv Skjaerven (see photo) as a result of her retirement at the Bergen University College.

R. Ijntema, Michel Probst, Anne Parker and Amanda Gyllensten represented the IOPTMH

Report from Liv Helvik Skjærven

Physiotherapy in Mental Health: Movement Quality and Movement Awareness Learning. State of the Art of Basic Body Awareness Methodology 2003-2017

The Symposium was a closing of the postgraduate education through 14 years and, at the same time, an introduction to the Master of PT in MH of BBAM, 2018, at University of Almeria, Spain. In the period of BBAT at HVL, 157 physiotherapists from 20 countries have graduated from BBAM, focusing on promoting movement quality through a movement awareness learning in physiotherapy.

135 physiotherapists, clinicians, educators and researchers participated. As the symposium was a closing of BBAM 2015-2017, 27 physiotherapists at BBAM attended, representing 15 countries and 4 continents (Norway, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brasil, Mexico, Canada, Turkey, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Netherland, Belgium, UK, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Faro Island, Iceland, Danmark, Sweden. Jyväskylä University, Finland, Tromsø University, Subsection of Norwegian Psychomotor Physiotherapy, University of Bergen, Haukeland University Hospital, and Community Health Care, Bergen, Norway, were attending.

BBAM had a stable ERASMUS network for teacher-exchange. All partners were present at the symposium: Leuven University (Belgium), University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (Nederland), Lund Universitet (Sverige), Arcada Yrkeshøskola (Finland), Metropolia Universitetet (Finland) and Almeria University, Spain, representing education at Bachelor, Master and PhD in physiotherapy.

The aim of the Symposium was to present research, clinical practice and education within the field. The Symposium opened with *Film of BBAM at HVL, *Historic Overview of Mental Health Physiotherapy, *Movement as Core Phenomenon in PT and *Movement Quality and the Movement Awareness Domain, followed by *Sociocultural and Salutogenic Perspective on Mental Health. The content of the sessions were on Physiotherapy for *Schizophrenia, *Anxiety, *Depression, *Fibromyalgia and *Hip Arthrosis. In addition glimpses of *Teaching BBAM internationally, and *presentation of MSc and PhD thesis, *Development of Clinical Guidelines, *WHO`s consensus statement, and *Communication strategies for health professionals, society and politician. As the Symposium centered around "promoting movement quality through movement awareness learning", a floorwork session was provided: 80 participated.
As the Symposium intended to be an arena for development in the field of movement awareness, the socialisation was given priority during the two days of the symposium. The Thursday evening social event was accompanied by a performance of local Tango-dancers. Various rhythms were presented by musicians both at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Symposium.

**NEWS FROM AUSTRIA**

The 25th Jubilee International Conference Eating Disorders, in Albach took place on 19-21 October 2017.

Sonja Beye (PT) gave a workshop with the title „Physiotherapie bei Patientinnen mit Anorexia“ (physiotherapy in patients with anorexia) and presented a poster „Wirkungsbereiche der Physiotherapie bei Patientinnen mit Anorexie“ (The field of physiotherapy in patients with anorexia).

Astrid Kathrein (Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt) presented a paper “Vom verhungerten zum erfüllten Selbst: Entwicklungspfade von Menschen mit überwundener Essstörung“.

Michel Probst gave a one-day workshop with the title “Body image and exercise in eating disorders. Theory and Practice”.

Michelle Zechner from Rutgers University, the state university of New Jersey, visited Ursula Danner at University at Vienna on 9-13 October 2017 (see photo):
Sonja Beye und Eva Wiesbauer-Resch gave a workshop at the 10. Wiener Fortbildungskongress on Essstörungen & Assoziierte Krankheitsbilder on 16-17 March 2018 in Vienna. The title of the workshop was „Physiotherapie bie Patientinnen mit Anorexia Nervosa: Körpererleben im Rahmen des stationären Aufenthalts an der Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie AKH Wien“.

**NEWS FROM BELGIUM**

Mikko Patovirta (PT) from Finland visited the KU Leuven, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, research group mental health, and the University Psychiatric Center of the KU Leuven, from 2 till 20 October 2017. He participated in seminars, meetings and practical sessions.

Photo: Michel Probst and Mikko Patovirta

Merja Sallinen (PT, PhD), post doc researcher, Marie Curie Fellow atOslo University (N) presented a lecture with the title “What about men? Men’s experiences about living with fibromyalgia”. She was invited on the 21th of November 2017 by the KU Leuven, Departement of Rehabilitation Sciences.

Christina Staub, PT, PhD (CH) presented the 5th december “Sleep: A Pillar of Power – rather with Pillows than with Pills» at the KU Leuven, Departement of Rehabilitation Sciences.

Photo: Cristina Staub

Liv Skjaerven (N) presented an introduction in Basic Body Awareness Therapy at the KU Leuven, Departement of Rehabilitation Sciences (11 & 12 December 2017).

Visit of Gunhild Kjolstad from Lund, Sweden, visits from 27 February 2018 untill 02 March 2018 the eating disorder unit of the University Psychiatric Center in Leuven, Belgium.

Photo: Gunhild Kjolstad
NEWS FROM MEXICO:

The link to the conference in Mexico: www.fisioterapiasm.org
Trust Me, I'm An Expert: ‘Dancing out of depression’ – how Syrian refugees are using exercise to improve mental health.

PHD’S IN PHYSIOTHERAPY RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH

Emanuel Brunner (PT, PhD), Switzerland
Melanie Kleynen (PT, PhD)

The 20th of April 2018, Melanie Kleinen (° Wurselen, Germany, 15 October 1983) successfully defended her PhD-thesis, “Perspectives on theory and application of implicit and explicit motor learning in neurological rehabilitation” at the Faculty of Health| Zuyd University of Applied Sciences Caphri | Maastricht University.

IOPTMH Survey

276 colleagues from 36 countries from all continents filled the survey. 5 Countries had more than 10 responders (Belgium (n=81), Denmark (n=11), Finland (n=16), Norway (n=30) and Sweden (n=34).

The results of the analysis of ethical principles and values in physiotherapy in mental health. 26 Ethical Codes were taken from occupational therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and nurses working in mental health. Each participant could indicate maximum 10 codes. The results were presented in Iceland. Figure below give an overview of the 10 most indicated codes.

- Client centered
- Confidentiality
- Autonomy/self determination
- Compassion
- Empowerment
- Therapeutic relationship
- Health and well being
- Self awareness
- Dignity
- Evidence based treatment
- Integrity
SOME RELEVANT LITERATURE

IOPTMH members open doors to Africa!

Research

Limited interface between physiotherapy primary care and people with severe mental illness: a qualitative study

Samantha Lee¹, Flavie Waters²,³, Kathy Briffa⁴, Robyn E Fary⁵

¹School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science, Curtin University; ²Clinical Research Centre, Greylands Campus, North Metropolitan Health Service, Mental Health; ³School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

KEY WORDS

Physiotherapy
Physical therapy
Physical activity
Mental health

ABSTRACT

Questions: How do mental health professionals perceive the role of physiotherapists in the care of people with severe and persistent mental illness, and what factors do they perceive as influencing access to physiotherapy services? How do people with severe and persistent mental illness understand the potential role of physiotherapists in their healthcare, and what factors do they perceive as influencing

IOPTMH members open doors to Africa!

DOI: 10.1136/medicines-00031-2

Physiotherapy for people with mental health problems in Sub-Saharan African countries: a systematic review

Davy Vancampfort¹,²,³, Brendon Stubbs²,³, Michel Probst¹ and James Mugisha⁴,⁵

Abstract

Background: There is a need for psychosocial interventions to address the escalating mental health burden in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Physiotherapists could have a central role in reducing the burden and facilitating recovery within the multidisciplinary care of people with mental health problems. The aim of this systematic review was to explore the role of physiotherapists within the current mental health policies of SSA countries and to explore the current research evidence for physiotherapy to improve functional outcomes in people with mental health problems in SSA.

Methods: The Mental Health Atlas and MINDbank of the World Health Organisation were screened for the role of physiotherapy in mental health plans. Next, we systematically searched PubMed from inception until August 1st, 2017 for relevant studies on physiotherapy interventions in people with mental health problems in SSA. The following search strategy was used: “physiotherapy” OR “physical therapy” OR “rehabilitation” AND “mental” OR “depression” OR “psychosis” OR “schizophrenia” AND “African” AND “Saharan” AND “people” AND “history” AND “the name of the country”.

Results: The current systematic review shows that in 22 screened plans only 2 made reference to the importance of considering physiotherapy within the multidisciplinary treatment. The current evidence (N studies = 33, n participants = 94) shows that aerobic exercise might reduce depression and improve psychological quality of life, self-esteem, body image and emotional stress in people with HIV having mental health problems. In people with depression moderate to high but not light intensity aerobic exercise results in significantly less depressive symptoms (N = 1, n = 30). Finally, there is evidence to reduction in post-traumatic stress symptoms (avoidance and arousal) anxiety and depression following body awareness related exercises (N = 1, n = 9).

Conclusions: Our review demonstrated that physiotherapy is still largely neglected in the mental health care systems of SSA. This is probably due to poor knowledge of the benefits of physiotherapy within mental health care by policymakers, training institutes, and other mental health care professionals in SSA. Based on the current scientific evidence, this paper recommends the adoption of physiotherapy within mental health care services and investment in research and Int in training of professionals in SSA.

Keywords: Physiotherapy, Physical therapy, Mental health services, Sub-Saharan Africa
Books:

Physiotherapy in mental health and psychiatry. A scientific and clinical based approach by Michel Probst and Liv Skjaerven (Editors)

London: Elsevier

ISBN 978-07020-7268-0.336

See newsletter 2017, number 2 (www.icppmh.org)

Psychologically informed physiotherapy. Embedding psychosocial perspectives within clinical management.

Stuart Porter (Editor)

London: Elsevier

ISBN 978-0-7020-6817-1

RESEARCHERS PUBLISH NEW BOOK COVERING EXERCISE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

Published: 7 May, 2018

The new book by Dr Brendon Stubbs and Dr Simon Rosenbaum provides health professionals practical strategies to use exercise as a treatment component for mental illness

‘Exercise-Based Interventions for Mental Illness’ is available for pre-order now. See: https://www.elsevier.com/books/exercise-based-interventions-for-people-with-mental-illness/unknown/978-0-12-812605-9
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2018-2019

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Note: the EC is working on to change the official website from www.icppmh.org into ioptmh.org. The EC will inform you asap.

The EC sent this letter also to all the attenders of the Iceland conference.

Dear Colleague,

This is the first IOPTMH-newsletter 2018 and in the future we would like to keep you informed about the IOPTMH. However, due to the implication of the new European Regulation regarding the privacy* or “General Data Protection Regulation” (GDPR) on May 25 2018, we are obliged to ask for your permission in order to be allowed to send you our newsletter or information about the IOPTMH in the future. All colleagues who want to receive further information have to (re-) confirm. More information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/data-protection-eu_en

So if you would like to receive our newsletter in the future, we would kindly ask you give us your confirmation by clicking on the following link.

Don’t forget it, do it today

Sincerely,

*REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)

Website: http://www.wcpt.org/ioptmh & www.icppmh.org

Please, send all information for the next newsletter to Michel Probst

before 15 October 2018