

IX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WCPT — X COUNCIL MEETING WCPT STOCKHOLM, MAY 1982

The IX WCPT Congress and X Council Meeting were held concurrently in Stockholm, Sweden, during the last week in May. Ten physiotherapists from South Africa attended and six papers were presented by physiotherapists from this country, namely P. Blake, M. Bosman, A. Wenham (all from Johannesburg) E. Freeland (Cape Town) G. Oosthuizen (Pretoria) and P. Gounden (Durban).

The meetings were held in the Stockholm International Fairs, a magnificent venue for holding a congress. The organisation of the entire proceedings was outstanding, beginning with the very impressive opening ceremony conducted by Princess Christina of Sweden, to the scholarly closing address by Heidi Paatero of Finland.

In his welcoming address Eugene Michels, President of WCPT, encouraged delegates at the congress to attend some of the council meetings in order to learn more about the structure, policies and work of the world confederation. The international concerns of physiotherapy would then become more meaningful. Mr. Michels urged delegates to increase their commitment and responsibility to international affairs.

The congress with its theme, Man in Action, was attended by approximately 2000 delegates. Margareta Nordin of Sweden delivered the opening keynote lecture. In answering the question what physiotherapy is, she defined it as a profession, as an applied science and possibly as an art. Physiotherapy could therefore be seen as a specialised health and medical care. The field is wide because the profession is old and the skills are diversified. As yet no precise distinction has been made to profile the profession. Yet the field is narrow because of short education, lack of research and lack of financial backing. Ms Nordin emphasized how important it was for the profession to become a scientific art and not an artificial science.

The congress week was a very busy and full one. The main topics of the congress were: man's response to muscular training and exercise; health and nursing care; research; pain treatment and pedagogics. Over 150 papers were read, making it possible to hear only a few. In addition there were special interest groups, workshops and professional visits. Two new features this year were film studios and poster exhibitions. The film studios proved to be very popular indeed and were crowded out. On the whole the standard of papers was higher than in previous years, with a far stronger slant towards research. In fact those in the audience with no knowledge of statistics found themselves struggling to understand many papers. Several interesting papers were delivered on ethical principles and health care. One of the most popular sessions of the whole week was the sunrise session 7h30-9h30 on the acute care of low back pain, where the audience was fortunate to hear amongst others papers from Dr. Nachemson and Ms Zachicsson-Forsell. This was a very informative session and was well worth the early rise from bed!

The trade exhibition was vast, showing a huge range of equipment available to physiotherapists in Europe and the U.S.A. It is most unfortunate that the price makes it virtually impossible to purchase them in South Africa. Of particular interest was the huge variety of wheelchairs that are available and the different types of materials that are now being used to manufacture them.

Unfortunately the Council Meetings were held concurrently with the Congress, which resulted in delegates missing much of the scientific programme. It is to be hoped

that in following years the Council Meeting will be held either before or after Congress. The Council Meeting was extremely lengthy and not all the business was concluded. Hopefully this will also be rectified at future meetings. Matters discussed were ethical principles, articles of association and finance.

Margrit List was elected the new president of WCPT and Ingrid Odin was elected 1st Vice President.

Heidi Paatero of Finland delivered the concluding lecture, taking a look at the future with its rapidly developing technology and specialisation as a characteristic of contemporary society. A challenge set by WHO is health for all by the year 2000. In order to attain this, Ms Paatero says physiotherapists will need to adapt activities to culture and health care of their countries. The profession of the future will need to construct their everyday practice on a scientific foundation. Physiotherapy should be defined so that it corresponds to reality.

For those who were fortunate enough to attend this congress, it was indeed a most memorable week. Stockholm is a very beautiful city and few will forget the reception held in the magnificent Stockholm City Hall, the evening boat trip around the Stockholm archipelago, the wonderful hospitality at the home visit, the demonstrations objecting to South Africa's presence at the congress and most of all the warmth and friendliness of the Swedish physiotherapists.

P. BOWERBANK — SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATE

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

A list of physiotherapists interested in research has been compiled, together with their fields of interest where this is known. This list plus any information on research which comes to hand is available from the Research Committee on request.

In order to cover costs a subscription of R1.00 a year has been decided upon and should be sent to the Chairman, Research Committee, PO Box 11151, Johannesburg, 2000

MANIPULATIVE THERAPISTS GROUP

The National Executive of the M.T.G. has been transferred to the Transvaal.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Joy Edeling, 311 Medical Hill, Kotze Street, Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Telephone: 642-2422.

The Transvaal Branch will continue to present a monthly programme of teaching, discussion and clinical presentations. These are held on the second Monday of every month excepting July and December at the Johannesburg Hospital, Physiotherapy Department at 20h00.

All members of the S.A.S.P. are eligible for membership of the M.T.G. Prospective M.T.G. members are invited to attend two such evenings, after which they should join the M.T.G.

The entrance fee is R5 and annual subscription is R5. Application for membership forms must be made to the Hon. Secretary.