

The General Meeting and Congress of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) has come and gone, and the twenty South African participants will have given feedback of their experiences to other members of the Society.

Fourteen of our members delivered papers or presented posters, and the Congress organisers thanked the South Africans for their participation in both the formal presentations and the informal discussion groups, and congratulated our delegates on the high standard maintained.

The proceedings of the General Meeting are presented in detail in this journal while the Congress is briefly summarised. Information regarding the Special Interest Group discussions is requested and delegates who attended these are urged to give some feedback to the National Executive Committee.

The stand of the SASP which was planned, executed and assembled by Sheena Irwin-Carruthers made a great impact and it was a pity that so few of the 20 South Africans offered their assistance in manning the stand. It is important to make our presence felt at international events and to answer queries regarding our Society and our country. It should be seen as an honour to represent our Society and not as an apparent chore. We did learn a lot about public relations from other member organisations. For example, Norway produced a special edition in English of their journal which they gave to all participants, while other countries gave out stickers and pamphlets regarding their countries and/or Societies. We will need to come up with some good ideas for the next Congress to be held in Washington from 25 - 30 June 1995. Let us get together to formulate ideas for this event and start planning now. This will enable us to act as ambassadors and give back something to our Society.

The social programme of Congress was very hectic and participants were kept on their toes.

It started with an impressive opening ceremony and welcoming party on the Sunday for approximately 3000 delegates. On Monday a reception was held at the Science Museum which was attended by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, Prince Philip of Edinburgh. Four of the South Africans were selected to meet officially with their Royal Highnesses which was a great honour. Delegates were also most impressed by the Minister of Health's welcoming address at a function at Lancaster House, at which she

spoke most knowledgeably about physiotherapy and physiotherapists. In addition several special interest group suppers were held where one could meet informally to discuss matters of common interest with physiotherapists from all over the world. This was a most valuable experience and many new friendships were formed.

At a meeting of Editors held during Congress it was interesting to note that many Societies employed full time editorial staff, who were not physiotherapists. Our Society is indeed fortunate to have people who have given of their time and effort over the years without thought of any compensation. Some of the problems experienced by our journal were also known by other editorial staff, especially as regards the unwillingness of physiotherapists to write articles for their own journals. Even sadder is the fact that when articles are reviewed and returned to authors for minor amendments umbrage is taken and the articles are often not resubmitted. Authors should realise that a great deal of time is spent by the review committee in going through the articles and making suggestions as to how the article may be improved. We have been aiming for a top class scientific journal and therefore do need a bank of good articles for publication. But even more important is the need for physiotherapists to accept the fact that they have a vast source of information to share but they do need some editorial assistance as they are usually far better practitioners than they are scribes.

English was the official language at the General Meeting and at Congress, which was not always easy for those delegates for whom English may only be a third or fourth language. A similar problem is being experienced by members of our Society where only about 33% of members have English as their home language. However, in order to be able to communicate with one another at meetings, lectures and courses, one common language is essential and that is the reason for making English the official language of the SASP. This means that if there is even one physiotherapist who is unable to understand the language being used, the meeting or lecture will have to be conducted in English. It is going to require an effort on the part of the majority of our members to use English only, but hopefully this will create even greater unity in our Society when we are able to communicate effectively with each other. ♦

GUIDELINES CONCERNING TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

As approved by the Twelfth General Meeting of WCPT

Preamble

It is the privilege of the physiotherapist to practise his/her profession in the service of humanity, to preserve and restore bodily and mental health without distinction as to persons, to comfort and to ease the suffering of his or her patients. The utmost respect for human life is to be maintained even under threat, and no use made of any medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity. For the purpose of this Declaration, torture is defined as the deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons acting alone or on the orders of any authority, to force another person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason.

Declaration

1. The physiotherapist shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offence of which the victim of such procedures

is suspected, accused or guilty and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife.

2. The physiotherapist shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.
3. The physiotherapist shall not be present during any procedure during which torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are used or threatened.
4. The physiotherapist's fundamental role is to alleviate the distress of his or her fellow men, and no motive whether personal, collective or political shall prevail against this higher purpose.
5. The World Confederation for Physical Therapy will support and should encourage the international community, the national physiotherapy associations and fellow physiotherapists to support the physiotherapist and his or her family in the face of threats or reprisals resulting from a refusal to condone the use of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.
6. Education and information regarding the prevention and prohibition of torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment should be included in the undergraduate and postgraduate training of physiotherapists. ♦