

Newsletter: Towards an IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee

IUGA and Physiotherapy

The International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) has expressed her intention to involve more intense and on a broader scale pelvic physiotherapists throughout the world and wants to establish its possible role in female pelvic floor physiotherapy. During the IUGA Executive Board meeting in June 2007 in Cancun, Mexico, it was decided to ask renowned physiotherapists to formulate a role for IUGA regarding female pelvic floor physiotherapy. Prof.dr. Kari Bø from Norway, mrs. Marijke Slieker-ten Hove and dr. Bary Berghmans, both from The Netherlands, prepared a paper that was discussed within the IUGA Executive Board and with dr. Bary Berghmans in Taipei, Taiwan in October 2008. It was decided to ask dr. Bary Berghmans to chair a special IUGA committee to formulate formal proposals on IUGA's role in pelvic floor physiotherapy, which may be discussed with IUGA members through the website and at the upcoming Annual Meeting in Como in June 2009. Other members of this committee are prof. dr. Kari Bø and mrs. Marijke Slieker-ten Hove.

This contribution reflects the thoughts within the IUGA Executive Board on IUGA's role in pelvic floor physiotherapy that form the basis for this committee. The IUGA Executive Board has suggested to adjust these ideas according the committee 's view. Specifically it is stated that topics to be addressed are not limited to incontinence and prolapse, but should also include pregnancy and delivery.

Goals for IUGA

1. IUGA wants to increase awareness and a positive attitude to the significance of pelvic floor physiotherapy as a method of conservative treatment in female pelvic floor disorders.
2. IUGA wants to enhance the scientific knowledge on pelvic floor physiotherapy among IUGA members.
3. IUGA wants to increase the use of pelvic floor physiotherapy among IUGA members.
4. IUGA wants to increase the number of IUGA – physiotherapy members

Methods to achieve realisation of the IUGA goals

Goal 1: Increase awareness and a positive attitude towards the significance of pelvic floor physiotherapy as a method of conservative treatment in female pelvic floor disorders.

- 1.1. The new IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee (IPPC) suggests to implement state-of-the-art lectures on pelvic floor physiotherapy at IUGA annual meetings. Although there are only just a few of these lectures at each annual meeting, the most promising way to realize this goal is
 - a. to increase the number of physiotherapists being an IUGA member
 - b. based on this to contact each year the IUGA Scientific Committee and the local organizer to stimulate introduction of state-of-the-art-lectures at the next annual meeting. The higher the number of physiotherapists being an IUGA member, the more likely these lectures will become part of the program

1.2. Organization of multidisciplinary workshops and demonstrations of pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) /biofeedback/electrical stimulation, protocols etc in workshops or on podium sessions at the annual meetings

1.3. Implementation of pelvic floor physiotherapy as more or less mandatory issues during IUGA educational courses, regional conferences, IUGA exchanges and other educational activities.

The IPPC proposes IUGA to support international high quality theoretical and clinical practical courses under the flag of IUGA, with participation of local keynote speakers and international experts in the field. Accreditation by the national associations and acquisition and promoting through these organizations, using their channels of communication, should be realized. All courses should result in certification.

1.4. The IUGA wants to involve physiotherapists as member of the different committees. As a matter of fact the IUGA Executive Board has invited a pelvic physiotherapist to become a member of the IUGA EXchange Steering Committee, a very important subcommittee of the IUGA Educational Committee, among other tasks involved in the organization of education for underdeveloped countries.

1.5. As mentioned above IUGA Executive Board has decided to create an IUGA committee addressing pelvic floor rehabilitation, the IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee. After acceptance by the IUGA membership this committee will advise about an adequate scientific and clinically relevant representation of physiotherapy during IUGA events. The members of this committee should act as an advisory board for the IUGA Scientific Committee and for presenting physiotherapists. The IPPC wants to be involved in the organization of point-counterpoint discussions regarding pelvic floor rehabilitation, and to organize during IUGA events meet-the-expert/professor sessions, where participating physiotherapists will meet with renowned experts in the field on an individual basis. Besides this, the committee needs to be involved in the IUGA goals specified above and to participate in the development of multidisciplinary (international) guidelines.

The IPPC will collect guidelines and existing care lines of both multidisciplinary and mono-disciplinary physiotherapeutic guidelines for prevention and different pelvic floor dysfunctions. Also inventory of multidisciplinary protocols are in scope.

1.5. An official statement of the IUGA board on the relevance of incorporating conservative treatment can already be found in the current IUGA guidelines (see the IUGA website www.iuga.org).

Goal 2 Enhance the scientific knowledge on pelvic floor physiotherapy among IUGA members.

2.1. Formulation of formal IUGA standardization reports on pelvic floor physiotherapy

2.2. Formulation of a formal IUGA position stand on what is pelvic floor physiotherapy

2.3. the IUGA should organize two 1/2 – day workshops on conservative therapy (theory and practice demonstrations) at each annual IUGA meeting. The audience

must be multidisciplinary, and participation of representatives of underdeveloped countries should be stimulated. These workshops must be of high quality but must still be 'sexy' enough to attract physiotherapists. The IUGA invites the IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee to submit workshops to the IUGA Education Committee. Physiotherapist can also apply individually to the IUGA Educational Committee to hold a workshop, but coordination through the IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee is preferable.

2.4. During the annual meeting it would be recommendable that the IUGA Scientific Committee should include a greater number of non-surgical oral presentations, posters and video presentations corresponding with the percentage of non-surgical IUGA members. So, if there is a 15% percentage of physiotherapist membership among the IUGA membership then all annual meetings should include at least 15% of contributions related to these subjects to make the programme more attractive for non-surgeons. Up to now the annual programmes contain only very few non surgical scientific contributions. Actually, all presentations have to be based on the submissions of persons visiting the annual meetings and are decided through peer reviewing by the IUGA Scientific Committee. Pelvic physiotherapist should be stimulated to submit their work to IUGA. Only in case of enough submissions with sufficient quality the peer viewers will be able to include a representative non-surgical program. In case of a sufficient fraction of pelvic physiotherapist as IUGA members the pelvic physiotherapists should have a permanent representation within the IUGA Scientific Committee.

2.5. The scientific programme must be made more attractive for non surgeons. Although dependant on the total number of accepted contributions it is desirable that every scientific session should contain at least one oral presentation of conservative or non-surgical therapy, both in the morning as in the evening. In case of video registration these presentations should be made available for the websites of the national associations.

2.6. Workshops on gynaecological diagnostics and treatment must involve a lecture on conservative treatment by a physiotherapist

Goal 3 Increase the use of pelvic floor physiotherapy among IUGA members through internet

3.1. IUGA should organize relevant patient education & information on the IUGA **website** with the IUGA Public Relations Committee

3.2. IUGA should institute a special part of the IUGA **website** for forum discussions or any other means to disseminate knowledge on pelvic floor physiotherapy

3.3. Together with the IUGA Public Relations Committee the IPPC may create an IUGA **webpage** to be published on the website of all relevant pelvic floor physical therapy associations. This webpage will provide all relevant information about the upcoming IUGA events related to conservative treatment, physical therapy, like IUGA educational courses, IUGA supported courses and workshops, the annual meeting,

and all relevant information how these are organized, information of content and logistics. Next to the (near) future events, there should also be information about the last annual meeting, former educational courses, workshops, etc. The home page of the associations should contain a link with the IUGA home page and for physical therapy important web pages on this website (like for instance standardization documents, etc.).

3.4.. The IPPC should create together with the IUGA Public Relations Committee an IUGA **webpage** for publication on websites of relevant institutions, foundations and companies of interest related to pelvic floor physiotherapy.

For this year, topics on this page will be exclusively linked to and related with pelvic physiotherapy and IUGA 2009, furthermore where IUGA (linked) events will be held and where, when and how relevant information can be collected. Also information about presenting physiotherapists and their work will be presented, what subjects will be covered, summaries of workshops for and by physiotherapists, interactive forum debates. The webpage will provide also information about availability of hotels, what they offer, how much discount they will give (this year's subscription fee for physiotherapists is €200 or €300, depending on early or late registration instead of €450 or €650), location of hotels with regard to the congress venues, how much discount participating physiotherapists will be offered with respect to the subscription, etc.

3.5. The IUGA will appoint at least one pelvic physiotherapist to become member of the Public Relations Committee to help to implement the items 3.1 - 3.4.

Goal 4. Increase the number of IUGA – physiotherapy members

4.1. The IUGA Executive Board is willing to appoint in each country, that at this moment is already represented in IUGA, a pelvic physiotherapy ambassador approved by his or her local national association. All ambassadors will join a working (sub)group of the IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee. In their own country they are responsible to focus local physiotherapists on participation in IUGA activities, especially the annual meeting. After every annual meeting a power point presentation will be created with all highlights of the meeting with special attention for the conservative treatment part and which place it took in the total programme. During especially for this goal organized mini-symposia this presentation should demonstrate the progress of scientific work of pelvic physiotherapy within IUGA and indicate the number of non-surgical presentations. The idea is that, besides stimulation of physiotherapist to participate in future IUGA events, the ambassadors will present the annual meeting highlights to physiotherapists unable to come to the annual meeting. Each attendant of these nationally held IUGA highlights mini-symposia in all contributing countries will receive a special issue of IUGJ with the highlights of conservative therapy. It would be helpful if these symposia would be sponsored by industry. IUGA is willing to help to find such sponsors. During the IUGA annual meeting the ambassadors should meet and discuss goals, strategy and results related to pelvic physiotherapy. The minutes of this meeting should be published on the national and the IUGA websites.

4.2. Institute an award for best annual physiotherapy paper, presentation, publication in the IUGJ at the Annual Meeting

IUGA ambassador candidates so far:

At this moment already a number of keynote pelvic physiotherapists are invited and have accepted to be an IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy national representative. For the moment all ambassador candidates were invited as individual persons, not as representatives of their associations. Below the participating countries so far and their representative. The list is not completed yet.

Norway:	Kari Bø	kari.bo@nih.no
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IUGA Pelvic Physiotherapy Committee

Prof.dr. Kari Bø. member

Mrs. Marijke Slieker, member

Dr. Bary Berghmans, chairman