



International Federation of
Physical Therapists working in
Occupational Health and Ergonomics

Annual Report

2022 – 2023

March 2023





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IFPTOHE Chair Update 2022-23

The Executive Committee has been busy and is working well together as a progressive team. Our activities over the past year have been diverse. In brief, they have included but are not limited to:

- Being involved in the Lighten the Load campaign
- Working towards developing global practice/ competency standards
- Reviewing a new guidelines from The World Health Organisation on Mental Health at Work
- Hosting webinars as continuing education sessions
- Developing a revised governance document to update our existing IFPTOHE Constitution
- Each of these projects are described in more detail in this report.

Name change and New Governance Document

Our name is changing from IFPTOHE to IFPOHE (from physical therapy to physiotherapy) to align with the new name of World Physiotherapy. We will start using the new name at the IFPOHE General Meeting on May 16th this year.

World Physiotherapy has been working with subgroups to develop a new governance document to replace their existing constitution, and provided a suggested template for subgroups to follow. This was adapted, with minimal changes, to suit the anticipated future needs of IFPOHE. It was shared with Member Organisations early in 2023, seeking their feedback. Following this consultation process, the new Governance document will be voted on prior to the upcoming General Meeting.



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Committee

IFPTOHE Committee

There have been six Executive Committee members serving the IFPTOHE committee for the past two years. The elected committee members, their position and role are detailed on the following page.

The committee meets digitally on a regular basis. In 2021 there were seven scheduled committee meetings and in 2022 there were six such meetings. Between these scheduled meetings there have been other types of meetings in smaller groups, for planning different activities and other types of work. All documentation is saved at Dropbox and we communicate with our member organizations by sending out newsletters on a regular basis. We also have a [homepage](#) where we provide updated information regarding the subgroup.

We are sad to farewell our colleague Nicola Suckley. We sincerely thank her for all her good work for IFPTOHE and wish her well for her new position as Chair of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists working in Occupational Health and Ergonomics (UK), which is a Member Organisation of IFPTOHE.

Executive Committee Membership Nominee 2023

There are currently several vacant positions on the Executive Committee, and we are delighted to have three candidates who have nominated for these including:







Name	Country	Member Organisation
Beatriz Sanz-Bustillo Aguirre	Spain	The Spanish Association of Physiotherapists', Advanced Formation in Occupational Health Physiotherapy
Daijo Shiratsuchi	Japan	Japanese Society of Physical Therapy section on Occupational Health
Tracey Atkinson	UK	Association of Chartered PhysiotherapistsIn Occupational Health and Ergonomics (ACPOHE)

Voting for candidates will take place electronically prior to the General Meeting and results will be shared at that meeting. New candidates will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the committee, and we look forward to new executive committee members joining our team.



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IFPTOHE Committee Members

	Name	Country	Position
	Rose Boucaut	Australia	Chair Person
	Yvonne de Leeuw	The Netherlands	Vice Chair Person
	Marisa Coetzee	South Africa	Secretary
	Nicola Suckley	UK	Committee Member
	Kjerstin Stigmar	Sweden	Committee Member
	Vasiliki Sakellari	Greece	Committee Member

Email: rose.boucaut@unisa.edu.au (president)
marisacoetzee@outlook.com(secretary)

Website: <https://ifptohe.wixsite.com/ifptohe>



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Membership

Current Member Organisations of IFPTOHE

Country	Member Organisation
Australia	Occupational Health Physiotherapy Australia
Brazil	Nacional subgroup Associacao Brasileira de Fisioterapeutas do Trabalho
Denmark	Danish Society for Physiotherapy in Occupational Health
Estonia	Estonian Association of Physiotherapists; occupational health physiotherapy working group
Finland	The Association of Finnish Physiotherapists in Occupational Health
Ghana	The Ghana Physiotherapy Association
Greece	Panhellenic Association of Physiotherapists; Hellenic Occupational Health and Ergonomics (HOHE)
Iceland	The Icelandic Physiotherapy Association (no national subgroup)
Ireland	Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics
Japan	Japanese Society of Physical Therapy section on Occupational Health
Kenya	Kenya Society of Physiotherapists (no national subgroup)
Malta	Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics
The Netherlands	Dutch Association for occupational and work-related physical therapy
New Zealand	Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group
Norway	Norwegian Physiotherapist Associations' occupational health and ergonomics interest group
Peru	The Asociacion Peruana de Teraistas Fisicos (no national subgroup)
Slovenia	The Slovenian Association of Physiotherapists (no national subgroup)
South Africa	Occupational Health Special Interest Group
Spain	The Spanish Association of Physiotherapists Advanced Formation in Occupational Health Physiotherapy
Sudan	The Sudanese Physiotherapy Association (no national subgroup)
Sweden	The Swedish Section of Ergonomics
Switzerland	Physio Swiss (no national subgroup); not a member as of October 2022
Uganda	The Uganda Association of Physiotherapy (no national subgroup)
United Kingdom	The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics

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Current Associate Members of IFPTOHE

No of Associate Members	Country
1	Canada
1	France
1	The Philippines

Member Organisation Election 2023

IFPTOHE have 23 member organizations, representing the WP-regions Africa, Asia and South Pacific, Europe, and South America.

Voting results, for two new member-elect organisations of IFPOHE, will be announced at the General Meeting

- Colombia Asociación Colombiana de Fisioterapia
- Philippine Physical Therapy Association

Communication with New and Existing Member Organisations

At two conferences of our Member Organisations, namely: the Panhellenic Association of Physiotherapists in May 2022, and the Japanese Society of Physical Therapy Section on Occupational Health (JSPTSOH) in December 2022, Rose Boucaut delivered a virtual short presentation on IFPTOHE activities.

If a member organisation would like IFPTOHE to present and/or provide information about the organisation for their Member Organisation, please get in touch.



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IFPTOHE Achievements 2022-23

EU-OSHA 'Lighten the Load' Campaign

In 2020 IFPTOHE decided to apply to become an official campaign partner of the EU-OSHA 'Lighten the load' campaign regarding prevention and management of work-related musculoskeletal disorders. In 2021 IFPTOHE was accepted as a campaign partner. On the Healthy-Workplaces EU website you can find the IFPTOHE [mission statement and campaign pledge](#).

By becoming a campaign partner our first aim was to support our fourteen European Member Organisations with their contribution towards the improvement of the health and wellbeing of their national workforce through supporting, developing and promoting the practice of Physiotherapists working in Occupational Health and Ergonomics. The second aim was to share the resources with the wider profession. An IFPTOHE 'working together webinar' was dedicated to this theme in November 2021 (see webinars).

IFPTOHE's Vice President (Yvonne de Leeuw-van Zaanen) who led partnership with the campaign was invited to a webinar about the Lighten the Load campaign of the European Region of World Physiotherapy (as campaign partner) in April 2022. The title of their webinar was: A healthy workforce, cost effective options to tackle musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in telework.

IFPTOHE was invited by EU-OSHA to give a statement at the closing summary of the campaign in November 2022, Bilbao, Spain. This presented a wonderful opportunity to profile our profession in a [parallel session 2 - Working with chronic MSDs](#) (at 1:26 hour:minutes) which was reported back as one of [the main findings at the closing plenary session](#) (at 22:10 you can find Prof. Anthony Woolf referring to our presentation regarding timely and probably more tailored advice for workers with MSDs)

After the campaign had ended, our executive committee member Vasiliki Sakellari was given the opportunity to present campaign materials and findings in Pretoria, South Africa through an (European) Erasmus+ support for teaching in higher education abroad (February 2023).

Please note that all campaign materials remain in place at the EU-OSHA website and the next campaign from 2023 – 2025 will focus on 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age'.

Development of Global Competency Standards

Working towards setting global standards is an ambitious project which is currently underway. Over the past six months a number of keen volunteers have worked collaboratively on this. To suit varied world times there are two groups. The Northern Hemisphere group includes: Sanna Garam, Marika Heiskanen, Sari Sutukorva and Pia Haapala (Finland), Vasiliki Sakellari (Greece), Yvonne de Leeuw (The Netherlands), Tracey Atkinson (UK), Barb McPhee and Rose Boucaut. (Australia). The Southern Hemisphere Group includes: Amanda Alves da Silva (Brazil), Claudia Rojas Silva and Maria Trillos Chacon (Colombia), Shane Meyers (NZ), Barb McPhee and Rose Boucaut (Australia).

Email: rose.boucaut@unisa.edu.au (president)
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Thanks to all who are contributing to this project. We are finding from working together that we are making new professional friends and learning about each others ways of working in occupational health physiotherapy practice. We hope to share more information about this towards the middle/later half of the year.

WHO Mental Health at Work Guidelines

Early in 2022, our chair Rose Boucaut was involved in reviewing the WHO mental health at work guidelines. Consequently, a connection between IFPTOHE and the World Physiotherapy Mental Health group was made which will lead to a joint IFPTOHE-Mental Health seminar at the Dubai 2023 congress.

Education/ Webinars

IFPTOHE has established a regular 'Working Together Webinar' series. These webinars have been popular amongst our member organisations and those interested in work and health. The webinars aim to educate and inform attendees, bringing our community together to discuss topics on work and health.

The following webinars have been hosted in this period:

1. Lighten the Load

The webinar focused on sharing experiences and practices regarding the 'Lighten the load' campaign among Member Organisations from Europe.

- Held on Nov 23th 2021.
- Speakers Sarah Copsey from EU-OSHA, Minke Wersäll from the Swedish Work Environment Authority, and experiences of IFPTOHE MO's; Greece (Vasiliki Sakkelari & Elefterios Bournousouzis), Estonia (Liina Pablo), Netherlands (Yvonne van Zaanen).
- Attended by 18 participants coming from 7 Member Organisations.

2. Competencies for Occupational Health Physiotherapy Practice

The webinar focused on Education and Competencies required for Physiotherapists in Occupational Health-Ergonomics

- Held on Feb 22nd 2022.
- Speakers Barb McPhee (Australia), Claudia Rojas Silva (Colombia), Tracey Atkinson (UK). Marisa Coetzee (co- moderator, South Africa)
- Attended by members of the World Association of Physiotherapists with participants coming from 13 countries Colombia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Greece , Netherlands, Japan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Ghana, Spain.



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3. Competencies and Practice standards discussion,
Focused on Standards for physiotherapists working in OHE practice,
 - Held on 16th May 2022
 - Beatriz Sanz-Bustillo Aguirre (Spain) started off the session with a summary of key points from our prior webinar, and gave us some direction for further discussion which was held in breakout rooms.
 - Two of our past speakers on this topic Barbara McPhee (Australia) and Tracey Atkinson (UK) joined the panel discussion.
 - Zoom discussion of 14 interested colleagues
4. “Successful return to work”
 - Held in September 2022
 - Presenters; Doug Gross (Canada), Michiel Reneman (The Netherlands) and Cassandra Zaina (Australia), facilitated by Dr Sjan-Mari van Niekerk (currently in Doha)

If you missed any of these sessions you can view them on the IFPTOHE website at:
<https://ifptohe.wixsite.com/ifptohe/events>

Should you have a topic/speaker to suggest for the future please advise the committee.

Financial Report

At present IFPTOHE does not charge Member Organisations a membership fee. Therefore, currently there is no IFPTOHE financial report.

The Executive Committee is carefully considering the introduction of membership fees. Our considerations include: monies required for future activities, ground work that needs to be covered to prepare for fee-paying membership, how to administer fees e.g. fee structure, location of bank accounts, and currency to use.

We are slowly learning about how other WP subgroups manage their finances and the costs and benefits of this. It is fair to say that we are some way off having fees, so we welcome Member Organisations views on this topic.



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World Physiotherapy Congress 2023

IFPTOHE will be participating in the upcoming World Physiotherapy Congress 2023 to be held in Dubai, June 2-4, 2023. Below is a summary of IFPTOHE activities during the congress:

- IN-15 Indaba session; on behalf of IOPTPWH and IFPTOHE subgroups
Title: World Physiotherapy Subgroups: How to set up a National Special Interest Group.
Moderators:

- **Melissa Davidson** New Zealand
- **Yvonne de Leeuw- van Zaanen** Netherlands

Outline: IFPTOHE has been invited by WP to lead to an Indaba session on formation of WP Networks and Network to subgroup, co-chaired with IOPTPWH (International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Pelvic and Women's Health group – Melissa Davidson).

- SEM-07 World Physiotherapy seminar; on behalf IOPTMH and IFPTOHE subgroups
Title: Burnout amongst physiotherapists (SEM-07)

Chairs:

- **Vasiliki Sakellari** Greece
- **Ellen Lake** Australia

Speakers:

- ¹Ellen Lake ³Christina Staub, ⁴Davy Vancampfort ⁵Marlene Lutgert-Boomsma
- ¹ Ellen Lake Physiotherapy; Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy, Mater Private Hospital, Brisbane, Australia.
 - ² University of West Attica (UNIWA), Physiotherapy, Athens, Greece.
 - ³ Pro Dormo, Zurich, Switzerland
 - ⁴ KU Leuven Department of Rehabilitation Services, Belgium
 - ⁵ Marlene Lutgert-Boomsma, Physiotherapy, Netherlands

Outline: The seminar will address the issue of burnout among physiotherapists, looking behind the headlines to present data on burnout; its most common symptoms, trends, causes, most widely used measures and interventions. An interactive voting approach will be used to engage participants in polls and discussion.



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Learning objective 1:

- increase awareness and facilitate recognition of stress and burnout in physiotherapists

Learning objective 2:

- present evidence around effective self-care strategies and interventions for prevention and management of stress and burnout in physiotherapists.

Learning objective 3:

- present contemporary evidence on effective organizational and workplace solutions for prevention and management burnout in physiotherapists.

➤ NWS-14 Occupational health Networking

Chairs:

- **Vasiliki Sakellari** Greece and **Yvonne de Leeuw- van Zaanen** Netherlands

Outline: A chance to network with your colleagues who share a common interest and explore:

- Knowledge gaps, and the challenges and opportunities in the area of interest
- Commonalties and differences in different cultural/health/policy settings and what can be learnt from them
- New developments that might have an impact on your work
- Ways to continue connecting, for example via WP, conferences, subgroups or social media
- Collaborative opportunities, also inter-professionally, to advance education, practice, research and policy
- Plans for future projects

➤ IFPTOHE : Working Together Meeting

Moderators:

- **Vasiliki Sakellari** Greece
- **Yvonne de Leeuw- van Zaanen** Netherlands

Outline: The IFPTOHE: Working Together Meeting will be held on Friday 2nd June 13:00 – 14:00. The aim of these sessions is to bring our member organisations together to share information, research and practice on topics of work and health.

➤ IFPTOHE : Poster Awards

Poster Awards Assessors

Claudia Patricia Rojas Silva, Colombia and **Zyra Mae Villamor Sicat**, Philippines.



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- IFPTOHE will host a display booth during most lunch breaks. If you are attending the congress, please come along to say hello.

General Meeting

IFPTOHE General Meeting will be held virtually on 16th May 2023, 8am London (UK) time. All IFPTOHE member organisations are encouraged to attend and we look forward to seeing you.

Future perspectives

- As a committee we strive to bring together physiotherapists working in occupational health and ergonomics from all over the world. However, we realised that we are not reaching all our member organisations and therefore will aim to improve our communication strategies to ensure that we achieve our goal.
- We envision IFPTOHE providing a space that serves as a repository for information such as guidelines and research articles related to occupational health and ergonomics in different countries as well as encourage collaborative research opportunities to improve evidence based practice.
- IFPTOHE aim to also offer support for countries implementing the guidelines for global standards in occupational health and ergonomics, providing advice and expertise.