

THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING PHYSICAL THERAPISTS AND WCPT
ADVANCING THE PROFESSION AROUND THE WORLD

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This keynote address will look at the history and activities of WCPT related to global health initiatives, professional issues, practice issues, education issues, and research issues. Recent activities of the WCPT Executive Committee will be highlighted. This address will further examine the important roles of physiotherapists in the prevention and management of the “life-style related diseases”, namely obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease/smoking. Throughout the world, 350 million people are obese ($BMI \geq 30.0$); by 2015 almost 20 million people will die from cardiovascular diseases; 180 million people worldwide have diabetes, and it is projected to double by 2030; deaths due to tobacco are projected to be 8.3 million by 2030; and 210 million people worldwide have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and 300 million have asthma. For each of these life-style diseases, the knowledge and expertise of physiotherapists will be highlighted in prescribing exercise programs that can enhance lifelong behavior changes to promote wellness and prevent illness and disability.