

ABSTRACTS

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Australia
15th Biennial Conference

Science in Motion



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AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Australia (MPA) is proud to present the abstracts of presentations from the 15th MPA Biennial Conference. As it has been 29 years since the first Biennial Conference it may be useful to reflect upon some of the changes that have occurred over time.

The proceedings of the inaugural conference were published in 1978 and since then the proceedings have changed substantially in their nature and content. Originally the proceedings contained full papers and were considered as educational texts in their own right that practitioners and researchers would refer to. This action was no doubt influenced by prevailing publication practices where very few, if any, of the presentations were eventually published in peer-reviewed journals.

The biggest change in the format of the proceedings occurred in 2000 with the joint IFOMT/MPA conference in Perth. Under Professor Kevin Singer's editorship the proceedings were published for the first time as a CD. Additionally, acknowledging the trend for many presenters to want to publish their work in a peer-reviewed journal, Kevin allowed authors the option of providing only an abstract, so that later publication of the full paper would be possible in a journal. Another major change occurs in 2007 with the MPA joining with the other special interest groups to publish the conference abstracts as an eSupplement to the AJP.

The content of the MPA proceedings has also changed substantially over the years. Initially proceedings were predominantly the reports of clinicians sharing their clinical experiences, their treatment models for how manipulative treatments should be selected and applied, or offering theories

for how manipulative treatments worked. In more recent times the proceedings have been predominantly reports of original research. What has not changed over time is the vision of the presenters at MPA conferences and we would like to share an example from the very first conference.

At the inaugural conference in 1978, Geoffrey D Maitland argued that there was an urgent need for the creation of a specialty in manipulative physiotherapy. Maitland's vision was that these physiotherapists would act as consultants to other physiotherapists and medical practitioners. He also suggested that the scope of practice of a specialist manipulative physiotherapist should not be limited to manipulative techniques but instead should include the range of physiotherapy treatments needed to best manage musculoskeletal conditions.

Maitland's vision was certainly quite bold because up until 1976, Australian physiotherapists could only treat patients on referral. This MPA conference, where we celebrate a large number of musculoskeletal physiotherapists being recognised as clinical specialists by The Australian College of Physiotherapists, is probably the first where we can truly say that we have caught up with Geoff's vision for the profession.

Among the presenters at the MPA 15th Biennial Conference, there are individuals who certainly displayed the revolutionary vision embodied by Maitland. Hopefully their presentations will lay the foundations for even greater advances in musculoskeletal physiotherapy in the next 30 years.

Chris Bartram, Chris Maher, Peter Osmotherly, Suzanne Snodgrass, Henry Tsao
MPA Conference Scientific Committee

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