

The 3rd Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Congress

Singapore hosted the 3rd Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Congress from 15-18 September 2003. Postponed from the original June dates because of the SARS epidemic, the organizing committee created an exciting programme which captured the theme, 'Cultural Diversity, Global Identity'. This multi-cultural city with modern and high tech facilities which retains many traditional values and practices offered a perfect backdrop for this stimulating event. The Congress Chairperson, Tan Peng Chian and the President of the Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists, Tan Hwei Lan, and their committee are to be congratulated on an excellent and well run congress.

Wang Li Chun, Tan Hwei-lan, Kit Sinclair, Louisa Shing-ru Shih



Carolyn Baum, our invited keynote speaker lead us into the programme stimulating us to take advantage of the changes in Health care which are now reflected in the WHO ICF (2001) and related to active participation. As she noted in our own discussions, this congress shows that we have our finger on the pulse and need to keep it there. We should demonstrate our confidence as we move into leadership and health policy positions. We should continue to work with our Health Ministers with the knowledge that what we do is valued by the system and impacts the people who have needs.

Nathan Vytialingam, Carolyn Baum, Anjan Kumar Ghosh



The congress started with the drumming up of our positive spirit and a wonderful dance involving some of our health care consumers. The range of the 89 oral presentations was broad and encompassed our breadth of knowledge and experience. The 79 poster presentations provided

opportunities for sharing in a less formalized way—all so professionally presented with wonderful graphics, a tribute to modern technology and our expert use of it. The trade exhibition provided yet another opportunity for learning, sharing and discussion.

**Singapore students
and Delegates with Kit
Sinclair and Carolyn
Baum
(right)**



Michale Iwana (left)

Through out the Congress, we discussed in depth the theme of cultural diversity, and the Global Identity emerged as we shared our views from many regions of the world—enriching practice through cultural competence and cultural relevance. We touch on Asian perspectives of collectivism and interdependence that should be incorporated into our models of practice in Asia. An exciting model is emerging with the Kawa Model proposed by our Japanese colleagues from Okayama City that is based on the metaphor of a river. We heard about the challenges of culture, of traditions and values and the different views of our consumer groups. Theories and models are always changing and evolving as they reflect on and lead practice. Evidence for practice was another theme which emerged throughout our presentations which should be published to make the evidence public. We acknowledged the contributions of our colleague, Prof Tsuyoshi Sato, one of the key instigators of the APOTN and APOTC, **by establishing a lecture in his name.**

Professor Tsuyoshi Sato, PhD, OTR
July 12, 1943 – December 28, 2002



It has also been traditional that the Asia Pacific Network group to hold its meeting during the APOTC Congress. WFOT Executives, Delegates and representatives from national associations were hosted to a multicultural meal and meeting by SAOT following the opening ceremony. Twelve countries were represented and for the first time, Iran joined the group at the meeting table. Issues pertaining to supporting the continued growth of the profession in the Asian region were discussed. Especially exciting is the proposal to formalize the Asian region as a regional group within WFOT and the continued growth of the Asian Journal of Occupational Therapy, a publication by the Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists. During the meeting, four countries put forward a very favourable and exciting bid to host the next APOTC in 2007. The result is at the end of the article!

Not only are congresses a great learning experience, they are also about having fun, renewing old ties and meeting new friends, networking, exchanging cards and email addresses and planning our next encounters, whether it be faculty or student exchange, professional visits or just 'when is the next conference—see you there.' The congress dinner reflected our cultural diversity as well as our penchant for fun and enjoyment.

Kit Sinclair, Lau Cheng Mun



Hong Kong will be the host of the 4th Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Congress in 2007. See you there!

Kit Sinclair, President WFOT and Lim Hua Beng, WFOT Delegate, Singapore
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