



SCI SIG NEWSLETTER

APTA Neurology Section
Fall, 2008

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As I take the chair position of the SCI SIG I have to acknowledge some ambivalence about the state of SCI Physical Therapy. I have been alternately thrilled by the focus of research on SCI recovery and the potentials which are being realized and frustrated by an apparent lowering of the discharge functional expectations and the abilities of individuals with SCI when they leave rehabilitation.

I am well aware of the forces that come in to play with the limited insurance dollars limiting lengths of stay and the idea of shifting rehabilitation to outpatient rather than inpatient. However, I will remind my readers that if you were present at the CSM in 2003 we had a standing room only meeting with a very dynamic discussion on the negative repercussions of the focus on a 'cure' and the lowering of the functional outcomes; the lack of life skills or high end functional skills in wheelchair use or off the floor transfers. We had a panel of wheelchair users facilitating this discussion and they attested to the fact that these skills used to be a routine outcome from inpatient rehabilitation. This discussion was half a decade ago. We have more research under our belts and some of it clearly shows that motor skills are learned with high intensity and frequency of practice, yet we are no closer to re-extending our inpatient stays to allow the high frequency and intensity of training during the most plastic phase. While we rightly focus on activity induced plasticity and the potential for regaining lost function we must question why this 'therapy' is being done outside of traditional rehabilitation? We need also recognize that the principles for motor learning apply to the individual who must learn new motor skills (programs) for functional movement with the changed neuromuscular

platform of paralysis. New functional patterns are needed to be functionally stable in sitting, to move from supine to sit or transfer between surfaces. I do not believe the choice should be either work on recovery or learn these compensatory skills; our patients deserve the benefit of both.

I am excited to be working again for the SIG. I hope to continue the work by my predecessor in reaching out to the international therapists and to also build bridges to the other national groups with a particular SCI focus. I will work with the current officers to develop a set of specific action goals for the SIG and we will share these goals with you after the CSM. I welcome your input into this process; please feel free to contact any of the officers with your ideas.

I want to encourage members to contribute to the SIG newsletter. We will have a standing content area called "Clinical Corner" and we want to feature innovations from the clinic, case reports, or new interests or concerns from clinicians. Please send submissions to Mark Bowden, SIG secretary at: mbowden@phhp.ufl.edu. Our hope is to increase the frequency of the newsletter to quarterly which will be easy to do if you contribute.

Thank you for electing me your chair, I look forward to seeing you at CSM

Jennifer Hastings PT, PhD, NCS

CSM 2008 Summary

At CSM 2008 in Nashville, the SCI SIG hosted two exciting sessions. The educational component of the business meeting was provided by Laura Shaubach, PT, DPT who presented “Back-to-the-Basics- A Practical, Systematic Approach to Wheelchair Seating after Spinal Cord Injury.” This talk provided experienced and novice clinicians with information on how to conduct a thorough seating evaluation and on the many considerations that are part of this important process. Dr.

Shaubach shared many of her words of wisdom, thus providing new information to all who attended. The second session hosted by the SCI SIG was a roundtable that focused on the use of FES for patients with neurologic impairment. Dosing and evidence were two topics that were discussed by attendees. The session moderators were Stephanie Kaplan PT, DPT, ATP and Therese Johnston, PT, PhD, MBA.

CSM 2009 Preview

Please join the SCI SIG for exciting programming at CSM 2009 in Las Vegas. The business and educational meeting is scheduled for Thursday February 12th from 3:00 to 4:30 pm and will feature Deborah Backus, PT, PhD from the Shepherd Center and Emory University, and Therese Johnston, PT, PhD, MBA from the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia and Shriners Hospitals for Children in Philadelphia. Debbie and Therese will be presenting a research update. This was a popular session a few years ago when presented by Debbie. This year, there are new topics planned which include health and wellness, metabolic syndrome and obesity, bone mineral density, shoulder protection, and exercise interventions and outcomes. We hope that you will leave this session feeling up to date on the research in these areas.

The SCI SIG roundtable this year will feature Sue Ann Sisto, PT, MA, PhD from Stony Brook University and Alison Lichy, PT, DPT, NCS from the National Rehabilitation Hospital’s Neuroscience Research Center. The topic is “Bone Mineral Density following SCI and its Impact on Physical Therapy Interventions” and the session is scheduled for Thursday, February 12th from 8-10 AM. This topic was discussed a while back on the neuro section’s listserv, and we felt that it was a topic that would generate much discussion as a roundtable. Please come and share your thoughts and ideas or just listen and learn.

We hope to see you in Las Vegas!

Therese Johnston



Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) is a unique conference that focuses on programming designed by all 18 of APTA’s specialty sections for 5 stimulating days of cutting-edge programming, networking opportunities, and an exhibit hall filled with products and services to keep you current.

February 9-12, 2009
Las Vegas, NV

[CSM 2009 WEBPAGE](#)

[CSM 2009: Programming](#)

[CSM 2009: Registration \(.pdf\)](#)

[CSM 2009: Registration \(online\)](#)

[CSM 2009: Hotels](#)

Student Research - Page 1

University of Puget Sound
School of Occupational and Physical Therapy
1500 N. Warner St.
Tacoma, WA 98416

November 2008

To whom it may concern;

We have become aware of the APTA SCI SIG in our process of learning about SCI, wheelchair usage and the population of spinal cord injured individuals and the clinicians who work with them. This letter is being sent with the hope of sparking your interest in our research study! We are students in the doctoral physical therapy program at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

As part of our course work we are conducting a research study under the advisory of our professor Jennifer Hastings PT, PhD, NCS. For our project we have chosen to investigate the differences between power and manual wheelchair users in terms of their community participation, physical function, and self-esteem. The specific population that we are interested in is adults with spinal cord injury and C6 and C7 level motor function who are at least two years post-injury.

Our research proposal has been approved by the University's IRB and we are continuing to work on recruiting subjects who meet the criteria for this study. We would greatly appreciate any assistance you might be able to offer in terms of subject recruitment, whether it is by posting a flyer or passing this message along to anyone you think might be interested. We particularly need help recruiting power wheelchair users and will enroll subjects through the end of January 2009.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, feedback, or interest!

Thank you for your time,
Christina Hamilton SPT, Yvette Griffiths SPT, and Hillary Robins SPT
hrobins@ups.edu
(253)879-2445

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Dear Spinal Cord Injury SIG member:

We are third year students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Duke University studying walking rehabilitation in spinal cord injured patients. Our team is interested in better understanding clinical practice for walking recovery for those with incomplete spinal cord injury. We would like to interview physical therapists to better understand their scope of practice, their selection of interventions and assessments. We will conduct a focus group at CSM 2009 with clinicians who have experience working with spinal cord injured patients. We expect that the focus group will help us learn more about clinical reasoning and the barriers and facilitators to the application of best evidence. Information gained at this focus group will be used for educational purposes only, without the intent to publish.

The focus group will include approximately 6-8 therapists and will last no more than 90 minutes. During the focus group we will provide a case vignette to guide the discussion of current practice for walking recovery. We hope that this will be an opportunity for you to also hear and share with other colleagues your perspectives on walking recovery programs post spinal cord injury.

Dr. Pamela Duncan and Dr. Andrea Behrman are mentoring us for this project. Dr. Behrman suggested that we invite you to participate. Should you be interested in participating in this focus group, please let us know so that we can provide you with further details. We anticipate that this will be a rich learning experience for all of us.

We hope you will join us in Las Vegas. Please contact Theresa Smolak, SPT at Theresa.Smolak@Duke.Edu to confirm your interest in participating.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Danielle Blankenship, SPT
Katie MacDonald, SPT
Kelly Mortellite, SPT
Marcy Paulsen, SPT
Theresa Smolak, SPT

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