

## **International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM): strengthening Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) worldwide**

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Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) is the Medicine of Functioning in light of health conditions, under consideration of the person and in interaction with the environment<sup>1,2</sup>. PRM focuses on the application of *rehabilitation*, the third health strategy which complements the preventive and curative health strategies. Thanks to the increasing survival of people after injury and formerly conditions as well as aging populations and an associated increase in chronic conditions, PRM as the leader of the *rehabilitation* will, over the next decades, assume an ever more important role in the health care systems worldwide.

Accepting the challenge, it must «think global» and «act local». With this understanding, ISPRM, the international umbrella organization of PRM physicians, works closely with its constituency, national society members and individual members. Membership with ISPRM allows national societies and individual members to shape the future of PRM and *rehabilitation* worldwide. Thanks to ISPRM, PRM speaks with one voice in its collaboration with the United Nations and its specialty agency for health, the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as regional bodies and other non-governmental organizations<sup>2</sup>. Policies developed by the WHO, including for example standards for the assessment of functioning or reimbursement, influence how national health systems develop their services and care. This ultimately shapes the context of how we, as PRM physicians, can provide care and services to patients and persons in need of rehabilitation<sup>1,2</sup>. In order to achieve our mission, national

societies and ISPRM must therefore work in tandem and in partnership with regional societies including the Asociación Médica Latinoamericana de Rehabilitación (AMLAR), the Asia-Oceania Society of PRM (AOSPRM) and the European Society of PRM (ESPRM).

At the start of its second decade of existence, ISPRM has successfully addressed a range of issues strengthening its leadership role with respect to its humanitarian, scientific and professional mandates for PRM worldwide<sup>1,2</sup>.

Most importantly, ISPRM is expanding its collaborative work with WHO as outlined in a current special report published in ISPRM's official journal, the *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*<sup>1,2</sup>.

As a catalyst of rehabilitation research, ISPRM is now organizing a yearly ISPRM Congress rotating along the three ISPRM Areas *Africa, Eastern-Mediterranean, Europe; Asia-Oceania*; and the *Americas*. After the 2011 congress in Puerto Rico and the 2012 ISPRM interim meeting in conjunction with the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) (Atlanta, USA), the yearly congresses will be held in *Asia-Oceania* (Beijing 2013, China); in the *Americas* (the location of the 2014 congress will be decided in the next months), and *Africa, Eastern-Mediterranean, Europe* (Germany, Berlin 2015). The bid for the congress 2016 in *Asia-Oceania* will be opened in 2011 and will be decided in 2012. The bid for the congress 2017 in the *Americas* will be opened in 2012 and will be decided in 2013. The bid for the congress 2018 in Africa will be opened 2013 and will be decided in 2014.

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Since collaboration with Regional (ESPRM, AMLAR, AOSPRM) and National PRM is pivotal to the work of ISPRM and vice versa, future congresses on the regional level may establish ISPRM sessions. In these sessions important topics of the current agenda of the regional society and national societies within the respective region could be discussed and action plans developed. This would provide another strong tool to reinforce information sharing and cooperation.

It is envisioned that in the future, ISPRM congresses hosted by a national society will be held jointly with a regional society. An example is the 2015 Berlin congress hosted by the German and Austrian societies (DGPRM; OEGPRM) involving the European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ESPRM). As a framework for its congresses, ISPRM has developed and adopted a *standard topic list* as well as a *standard structure* covering the whole field of PRM from cell to society<sup>1</sup>. National societies are encouraged to align their topic list and congress structure with ISPRM in an evolutionary and collaborative process.

To strengthen the scientific process and high-level scientific publications in PRM, *ISPRM's Publication Committee*

has initiated a *PRM-web of journals* for the three ISPRM Areas. We envision that in the next years, a number of journals worldwide will emerge as our leading PRM journals and that we will be able to rely on a range of journals which are both internationally competitive and relevant for practitioners in their countries and regions as well as researchers worldwide.

The leadership of ISPRM is looking forward to develop PRM in close collaboration with its national and individual membership and in harmony with our regional partners. Together we can ensure that PRM physicians worldwide can provide effective, adequate and efficient services for patients along the continuum of care and over the life span.

## REFERENCES

1. Stucki G, Reinhardt JD, Imamura M, Li J, De Lisa JA. Developing the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM): Following Through. Special Report. *J Rehabil Med* 2010; doi: 10.2340/16501977-0661.
2. DeLisa JA, Melvin JL, Stucki G. Developing the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine. Foreword. *J Rehabil Med* 2009; 41: 789-790.