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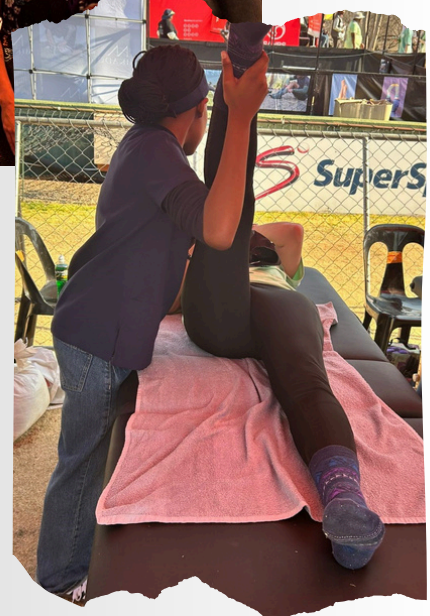
PHYSIOSA

MAGAZINE

FOR EVERY PHYSIO WHO CARES



PAEDS PAIN
CONGRESS



CLUBFOOT AWARENESS
DAY FOR TYGERBERG
HOSPITAL

PHYSIOS SUPPORTING
RUNNERS

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TEL: (011) 615 3170
www.saphysio.co.za

ACTING EDITOR: DR DIANA COETZER
socialmedia@saphysio.co.za

ADVERTISING: AMERICO PINHEIRO
TEL: (011) 615 3170
pr@saphysio.co.za

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SASP® HEAD OFFICE:
TEL (011) 615-3170 Unit 4, Parade on
FAX 086 559 8237 Kloof Office Park,
E-MAIL: Bedfordview
pr@saphysio.co.za
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EDITOR'S NOTE

September is a special month on our calendar. It marks Physiotherapy Week (8–14 September), and this year our focus is on Healthy Aging, with particular attention to falls and frailty. As physiotherapists, we know that aging well is not simply about living longer, but about living stronger, safer, and with dignity. In this issue, we highlight the role our profession plays in preventing falls, managing frailty, and supporting active lifestyles from midlife onwards. The message is clear: early intervention, consistent movement, and evidence-based care can transform the experience of aging. This is where physiotherapy steps forward, not just as rehabilitation, but as prevention, education, and empowerment.

Beyond our theme, we also share inspiring updates from around the country. From physiotherapists lending their expertise at major sporting events, to colleagues raising awareness for mental health, to collaborative initiatives with our nursing partners, this edition reflects the breadth of our profession's contribution.

It is encouraging to see physiotherapy increasingly recognised as essential in diverse spaces—whether on the sports field, in hospitals, in rehabilitation centres, or in community wellness programmes. Each story in this issue is a reminder of how our collective work impacts lives every day.

As you read through these pages, I encourage you to think about your own role in shaping healthier communities. How can you advocate for healthy aging in your practice? How can you amplify the message of physiotherapy as a vital part of living well, at every age?

Thank you for being part of this journey and for the care, skill, and compassion you bring to the profession.

Enjoy this issue, and let's continue to put physiotherapy on the map this September.

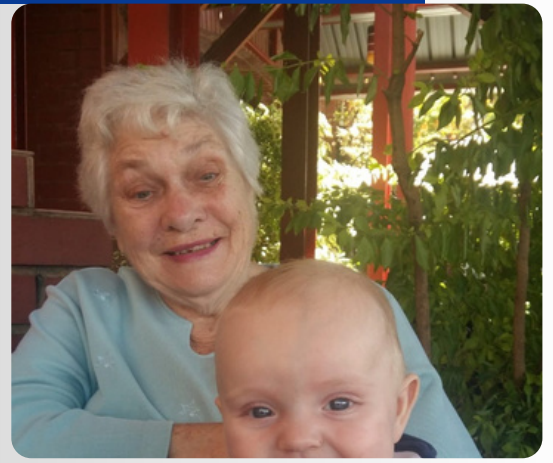
Diana Coetzer



TRIBUTES TO MARGARET ANN BEATTIE


Compiled by Magda Fourie

Margaret Ann Beattie was a remarkable woman, a mentor to many physiotherapists, and a respected leader in the profession. Friendly, supportive, and deeply committed, she was often described as a rock in physiotherapy. The physiotherapy community was deeply saddened to hear of her passing on 26 June 2025.



Below are some of the many tributes shared by colleagues and friends who had the privilege of knowing her:

- “My memory of Ms Beattie started in 2002–2003 when I was appointed at Wits University as a physiotherapy lecturer. Together, we served as panel members evaluating physiotherapy programmes across the country. Her passion for physiotherapy and her insightful contributions guided the process and stood out to me.” — **Prof Douglas Maleka**
- “She was our PNF lecturer. To tell you how good she was: PNF was developed in the USA, and when I came to America, I taught the PTs Margaret Beattie’s PNF. What an amazing woman.” — **Esna Veldsman**
- “She was principal of the Physiotherapy College when I qualified in the late 1970s. I hold the deepest respect and fond memories of her. I picture her with a smile and a slightly inquisitive tilt of her head, as if asking, ‘What are you up to?’” — **Grietjie van Zyl**
- “I had a wonderful friendship with your mom. It was a privilege to have known her and I am so glad our paths crossed. Wishing you strength and happy memories during this very sad time.” — **Masha Eisenberg**
- “I got to know Margie when I became involved in the academic aspect of physiotherapy and later as a fellow member of the HPCSA. I respected the way she promoted the profession with dignity, clarity, and professionalism. Her opinion was always valued by other medical professionals. It was a privilege to know and work with her.” — **Prof Celie Eales**
- “As a student, I first met her when she served on an accreditation panel at MEDUNSA. Later, we served together on the HPCSA Board and on various ethical conduct committees. She remained a member long after my term ended and may have been the longest-serving professional on the Physiotherapy Board. I hold her in the greatest respect.” — **Linky Molatoli (née Lebeloane)**
- “Margaret had a massive impact on the profession, both at the College of Physiotherapy in Pretoria and on the Council. Known affectionately as ‘Ma Beattie,’ she acted like a mother to her students—protecting, teaching, and guiding us by example. She served and led the Professional Board for many years and secured recognition for physiotherapists at the Medical and Dental Board. She never needed to raise her voice—her calm, well-reasoned opinions always carried weight. Her footprint in physiotherapy will remain forever.” — **Hester Huysamen**
- “Great physio, fabulous colleague, and friend.” — **Maria Kwas**
- “Gentle, soft-spoken, always friendly and willing to give advice. A great tree has fallen in our community, but her star will shine brightly over us all.” — **Maretha Coetzee**
- “A good friend, respected colleague, and mentor to many.” — **Yvonne Cohen**
- “Lecturer, remarkable woman, and deeply respected.” — **Carien Visser**
- “A rock in physiotherapy.” — **Lydia Hesse**
- “She was a huge part of the development of physiotherapy for many years.” — **Prof Aimee Stewart**

Margaret Ann Beattie leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of professionalism, mentorship, and dedication. She will be remembered with admiration, gratitude, and love by generations of physiotherapists. 

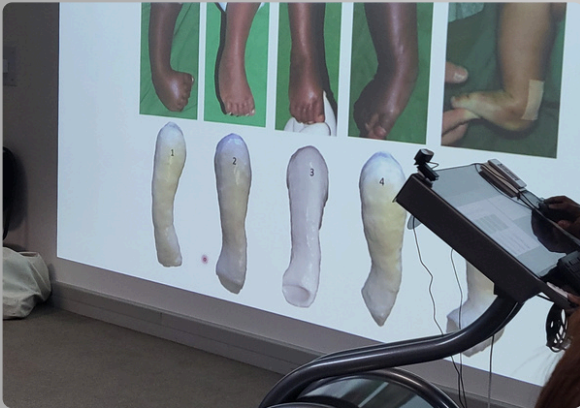
CELEBRATING WORLD CLUBFOOT DAY AT TYGERBERG HOSPITAL

Written by: Chrysanthé Ismail



It was a great privilege to once again be invited by Sr K Fredericks to participate in World Clubfoot Day, held on 12 June 2025 at the Tygerberg Hospital Advanced Orthopaedic Training Centre (AOTC). This annual initiative, organised by Sr Fredericks, highlights the importance of early intervention for children born with clubfoot. Sr Fredericks and her dedicated team run a successful Clubfoot Clinic at Tygerberg Hospital every Thursday.

World Clubfoot Day is observed in June to honour the birth month of the late Dr Ignacio Ponseti, the pioneer of the globally recognised, minimally invasive, and highly effective Ponseti Method for treating Talipes (clubfoot).



Presentations and Key Insights

The programme focused on the Ponseti Method and its impact:

- **Karen Mara Moss**, founder of Steps, provided an inspiring overview of the organisation's efforts in Southern Africa. Steps continues to promote the Ponseti Method through healthcare worker training and family support during casting and bracing. She reminded the audience that the South African Paediatric Orthopaedic Society (SAPOS) endorsed the Ponseti Method in 2012, encouraging all healthcare professionals, including physiotherapists, to learn the technique. This ensures children born with clubfoot receive timely intervention. More information can be accessed by contacting Karen at karen@steps.org.za.
- **Dr Pule** gave a comprehensive overview of the medical, anatomical and physiological aspects of clubfoot, including causes, presentation, and the importance of early intervention in infants with foot deformities.
- **Kyla**, representing the Orthotic and Prosthetic Centre (OPC), showcased the braces and AFOs used in treatment. Designed with bright, child-friendly themes, these devices not only support correction but also encourage compliance, which is crucial for successful outcomes.
- Moving testimonies were shared by mothers whose children are at various stages of treatment in the clinic. The prevailing message was one of gratitude, as they expressed hope and relief that their children would be able to lead healthy, active lives.



My Contribution as a SASP Member

As a SASP public sector member and physiotherapist at a tertiary hospital, I value opportunities to share knowledge and empower colleagues. My presentation focused on the three key elements that ensure the success of clubfoot management: Pathology, Technique, and Compliance. I used a symbolic triangle to represent these angles.

To bring this message to life, participants each placed stickers symbolising their roles: mothers used pink, nursing staff orange, technicians and OPC orange, and orthopaedic surgeons green. Together, these colours illustrated the importance of teamwork and collaboration in achieving the best outcomes.

I also shared the story of a young woman who sadly lost both legs due to multiple failed corrective surgeries, emphasising how lack of early intervention and proper treatment can have devastating consequences. My key message was that every healthcare professional has a responsibility to spread knowledge, advocate for early, minimally invasive treatment, and support families. Our goal is simple yet powerful: "Clubfoot kids enjoying life step by step."



Appreciation

A heartfelt thank you to the SASP for generously contributing items for the goodie bags, which were gratefully received by the clinic. Your continued support of World Clubfoot Day makes a meaningful difference. 🦋



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A TRIBUTE TO NURSES FROM PHYSIOTHERAPISTS ON NURSES DAY

Written by: Nicolette Ross



International Nurses Day was celebrated on Monday, 12 May 2025. On this special occasion, we as physiotherapists extend our heartfelt gratitude to all nurses who tirelessly dedicate themselves to improving the lives of patients every day. Nurses are often the unsung heroes of healthcare, the compassionate hands that bring comfort, care, and hope when it is needed most.

As fellow healthcare professionals, we share the same vision: to restore health, ease pain, and enhance quality of life. Yet it is the nurses who stand alongside us, bridging gaps and providing unwavering support across every area of patient care. From intensive care units to hospital wards to rehabilitation settings, their empathy and dedication create the conditions in which true healing can happen. Physiotherapists rely greatly on the collaboration of nurses to ensure patients are safely mobilised, supported, and encouraged throughout their recovery journey. Their vigilance, dedication, and willingness to go above and beyond are vital in achieving the best outcomes for those we serve. The partnership between our professions is invaluable, and we are continually inspired by their professionalism, kindness, and commitment to care.

On Nurses Day, we thank them not only for their skills and expertise, but also for the compassion and humanity they bring to every patient encounter. Nurses are a pillar of strength within the healthcare community, and we are proud to work beside them.

To all nurses: we see you, we appreciate you, and we honour you. Thank you for everything you do.

At Netcare NI City in Cape Town, physiotherapists celebrated the day by handing out small tokens of appreciation to all nursing staff. Those on duty during the Monday day shift received their gifts, while the team working on Wednesday was also recognised. With the generous support of the SASP, who provided branded lip balm and key ring measuring tapes, the gift packs were completed with TheraBand and lollipops—a small gesture of thanks for an immeasurable contribution.



Classified

Durban Sports Medicine – a multidisciplinary practice with 26-year history. Full-time physiotherapist needed to work for practice in a learned multidisciplinary set up as well as in a gym environment. Huge mentoring and upskilling programmes internally.

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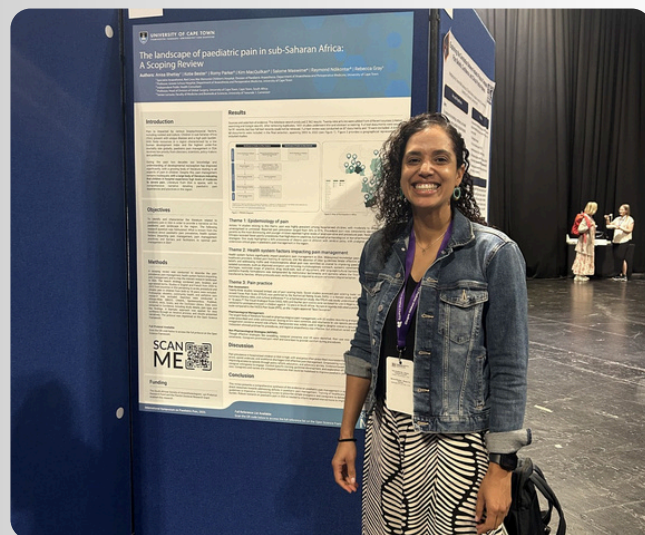
GRATEFUL FOR PPK SUPPORT: REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PAEDIATRIC PAIN

WRITTEN BY ELEONORA RAY

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP) for awarding me PPK funding, which enabled my attendance at the International Symposium on Paediatric Pain (ISPP) held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 17–20 June 2025.



Panel member in a discussion



Dr Anisa Bhattay

Through the generous support of the PPK fund, I was not only able to attend this global event but also had the honour of contributing as a panel member in a discussion titled “Avenues to Improving Paediatric Pain Management in Africa”. I was privileged to share the stage with colleagues and friends, South African anaesthetist Dr Anisa Bhattay and Cameroonian anaesthetist Dr Raymond Ndikontar Kwinji. Together, we formed part of a small group of just ten delegates from Africa, in a symposium largely attended by professionals from high-income countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and Europe.

Participating in this important conversation alongside esteemed African colleagues was an incredible experience. It highlighted the need for collaboration, context-specific strategies, and strong advocacy in advancing paediatric pain care across our region.

Thanks to this valuable financial assistance, I was able to engage with world-leading experts, attend thought-provoking sessions, and gain insights that will enrich both my clinical and academic journey. The experience was deeply inspiring and has further strengthened my passion for paediatric physiotherapy.

Key Highlights from ISPP 2025

• The Landscape of Paediatric Pain in Sub-Saharan Africa

Presented by Dr Anisa Bhattay (see picture), this scoping review revealed alarmingly high levels of pain among hospitalised children in the region. Moderate to severe pain is often unrecognised or untreated, with inconsistent use of analgesia, frequent dosing errors, and reluctance to prescribe opioids. The study highlighted the untapped potential of caregivers and nurses as valuable resources in improving paediatric pain management.

- **The COMFORT Promise**

“We promise to do everything possible to prevent and treat needle pain. For every child. Every time.”

This initiative focuses on reducing the pain of needle procedures through a toolkit that includes topical numbing cream, comfort positioning, age-appropriate distraction, breastfeeding or sucrose, effective communication with choices, and positive memory-shaping. With research sites worldwide, including in South Africa, this programme aims to make every child’s experience less distressing.

- **Paediatric Pain Curriculum**

SickKids is offering a free, mobile-friendly online curriculum for healthcare professionals: [SickKids Pain Centre – Paediatric Pain Curriculum](#). This valuable resource is designed to strengthen global knowledge and skills in managing paediatric pain.

Closing Reflections

I am truly grateful to the SASP and the PPK fund for making this opportunity possible, and for their continued investment in the growth and advancement of South African physiotherapists on both a local and international stage. Thank you once again for your generous support. 🌟



The COMFORT Promise

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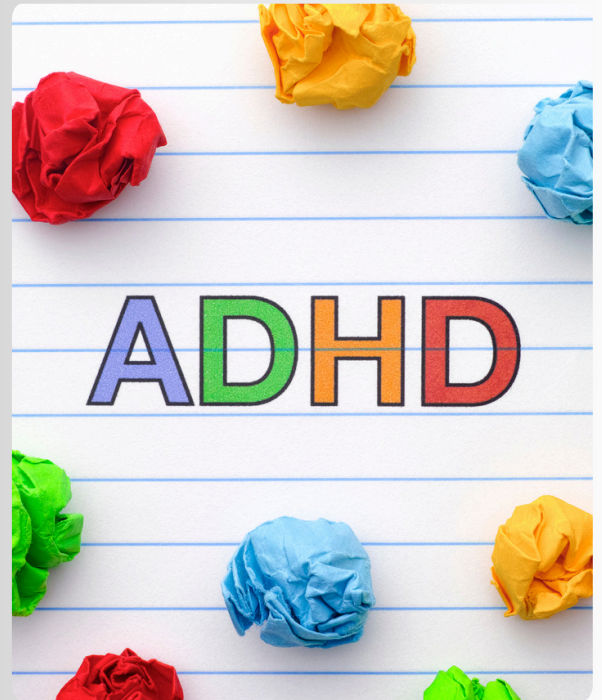
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THERE IS NO PHYSICAL HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Written by: Brent Petersen

It has only been three years since I fully embraced the challenge of attending to clients of all ages with persistent pain. In this short time, I have learned from colleagues and mentors about the deep and irrefutable relationship between mental health and physical health. The impact extends from cellular physiology to the whole being. I realised that without a solid understanding of mental health, its diagnoses, and both conventional and emerging therapies, I would be inept at making a meaningful difference in the lives of those I serve.

Across the world, epidemiological data show sharp rises in mental health disorders in both children and adults. The question is, what has changed? Not us as human beings, but our environment and technology, especially in the last 50 years. Too often, media headlines still miss the mark on improving care for those living with mental health challenges.



Past and Current Failures

The prevailing belief that presentations such as ADHD, Autism, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Depression, Anxiety, and other psychopathologies are solely genetic or caused by chemical imbalances is dangerous. This view ignores evidence showing that early life adversity is a primary driver of mental health disorders. Artificial manipulation of neurotransmitters often works no better than an active placebo.

As psychiatrist Dr Daniel Amen has noted, psychiatry is the only medical specialty that does not evaluate the organ it is meant to treat. His research, and that of many others, highlights the role of early adversity, intergenerational trauma, and exposure to harmful substances in the development of mental health conditions. Yet general psychiatric practice rarely considers these factors.

Food and nutrition inequalities are another neglected dimension. Without optimal nutrition, the brain cannot function. Biological processes such as neuroinflammation, brain glucose hypometabolism, oxidative stress, methylation dysfunction and mitochondrial dysfunction all play a role in mental health disorders. Despite extensive research linking these processes to both mental and chronic physical illnesses, they remain largely ignored in mainstream care.

Nutrients such as amino acids, B vitamins, vitamin D, iron, magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, creatine, coenzyme Q10 and copper are essential for neurotransmitter function. Without them, the brain cannot operate at its best. Yet patients are rarely assessed for deficiencies.



The Way Forward

South African psychiatric guidelines, like many worldwide, are heavily weighted towards pharmaceutical prescriptions. They offer little on precision and personalised lifestyle interventions. If we are not in a crisis, why are stimulants, anxiolytics and antidepressants still our main options?

The successes of orthomolecular psychiatry in the past were largely ignored. Today, nutritional and metabolic psychiatry is rising, led by physicians and researchers such as Dr Uma Naidoo, Prof Christopher Palmer, Prof Felice Jacka and Dr Georgia Ede. Their work demonstrates how nutrition, gut health, and metabolic processes can transform mental health care.

We cannot ignore the role of the gut microbiome, food sensitivities, environmental pollutants and the dangers of ultra-processed foods. Neuroinflammation and chronic toxicity impair brain function, yet this is seldom acknowledged in mainstream mental health discussions.

Even The Lancet Psychiatry Commission has called for a shift towards metabolic therapies, bioindividual nutrition, detoxification, exercise and lifestyle optimisation. These are not fringe ideas, but evidence-based approaches with the potential to bring lasting relief.

The Role of Physiotherapy

Growing research also highlights physiotherapy's role in supporting mental health. Physiotherapists are uniquely placed to help reduce the burden of mental health disorders on individuals and society, thanks to our holistic approach to care, focus on movement, and ability to address both physical and psychological aspects of health.

A Call for Change

We do not have a pharmaceutical shortage. Human beings do not suffer from a drug deficiency. What we lack is a system that validates people's struggles and provides true opportunities for healing.

The way forward requires a compassionate community, healthcare professionals willing to move beyond symptom management, and a commitment to harnessing the tools we already have—nutrition, movement, environment, trauma-informed care and human connection.

Everybody should have the opportunity to heal. 

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References: 1. Transact professional information approved by the medicines regulatory authority. 27 May 1994.
2. Marfens, M. Efficacy and tolerability of a topical NSAID patch (local action transcutaneous flurbiprofen) and oral diclofenac in the treatment of soft-tissue rheumatism. *Clinical Rheumatology*. 1997;16(1):25-31.

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SASP PHYSIOTHERAPISTS SUPPORT SPAR WOMEN'S CHALLENGE MARATHON

Written by Gauteng North GEC

A dedicated team of physiotherapists volunteered their time and expertise at the Spar Women's Challenge Marathon to support athletes during and after the race. Physiotherapists assisted participants who sustained injuries during the race as well as those who were fatigued after completing their events. Their professional care ensured that runners received immediate treatment, advice, and support to aid recovery.

The impact of our presence was overwhelming. Athletes expressed gratitude for the support, and many enquired about having physiotherapists available at other corporate and athletic events. This highlighted both the value of physiotherapy in sports participation and the importance of injury prevention and recovery care.

The SASP is proud of our members who continue to promote physiotherapy through action, care, and community engagement.



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PRIVATE SECTOR GROUP: A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH

WRITTEN BY LIZL VAN HEERDEN

The Private Sector Group (PSG) Annual General Meeting was successfully held online on 21 July. We are humbled by the overwhelming support from so many members who attended, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you.

We were also privileged to be joined by George Diab of GAS Accounting, who shared invaluable insights on business structures, outlining the pros and cons for physiotherapists considering opening or expanding their practices.

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that 2025 has been one of significant growth, innovation, and exciting initiatives for the PSG. Serving as Chair of the PSG Committee has been an honour, made even more rewarding by the incredible team beside me: Pheto Moumakoe (Deputy Chair), Shuaib Rassool (Treasurer), Francis Rogan (Coding), Dale Linström (Practice Management), Marelee Fourie (COID), and Karen Coertze (Professional Liaison Officer). Together, we have remained committed to supporting our members and strengthening our community of ethical and dynamic physiotherapy practice owners.

Guided by our strategic plan theme, “From Practice to Business: Transformation Through Education and Implementation” (2022–2025), we have focused on empowering physiotherapists not only as skilled clinicians but also as confident business leaders.



Key Highlights from 2025

• Empowering Education

We launched new courses and webinars on vital topics such as coding, business management, and legal matters, as well as a new podcast offering insights into practice ownership.

• Community Engagement

PSG was proud to have a visible presence at the SASP Centenary celebrations and the World Physiotherapy Africa Rehab Conference in Cape Town. We hosted a networking event, business seminar panels, walks, and talks, and contributed actively to the SASP stand.

Our monthly Coffee with PSG sessions remain a trusted platform for open discussion, advice, and information-sharing. Collaboration with SIGs and external speakers has further enriched these conversations.

EMPOWERING

• Advocacy and Representation

We continued engaging with medical schemes, submitting proposals to advocate for the inclusion and expansion of physiotherapy services. Through COIDA and IPPTA representation, we ensured that your interests are represented at every level.

• Expanding Reach

Our participation in university career expos and community service outreach programs allowed us to promote physiotherapy and mentor the next generation of professionals.

• Norms and Standards Programme

The updated Norms and Standards Programme was successfully rolled out on EduSASP. Congratulations to Alison Thomson, the first practice to be reaccredited under the new system



Farewell and Gratitude


As we close this chapter, we express heartfelt thanks to all our members for your support, participation, and trust. A special word of gratitude goes to Francis Rogan (Coding) and Dale Linström (Practice Management), who are stepping down after serving two terms since PSG's inception in 2021. Their dedication and contributions have been invaluable, and we wish them the very best for the future.

At the AGM, we also announced the winners of our membership discount giveaway—Aimee Aungiers, Jonette Ball, and Audrey Liebenberg. Congratulations, and thank you for your continued support!

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch new initiatives, including linking our Strava Club with upcoming Nexus events and Physiotherapy Week walks. We look forward to moving together as a community—step by step.

Looking Forward

As we move into the next phase, PSG remains committed to transformation, innovation, education, and stability. Together, we will continue building a strong, sustainable future for private practice physiotherapy.

Thank you for your passion, your trust, and your dedication to elevating our profession. 



ELECTROTHERAPY BEST PRACTICE HAS EVOLVED, HAVE YOU?

WRITTEN BY LUCY AIRD VIA PHYSIOPEDIA

As physiotherapy practice continues to evolve with emerging evidence, the role of electrotherapeutic modalities has become increasingly refined and targeted. The Physiopedia team are reviewing and updating pages related to electrotherapy, to ensure they reflect current best practice recommendations where exercise therapy, manual therapy and patient education remain the cornerstone of effective treatment, and also help to guide your clinical decision making.

The landscape of electrotherapy in physiotherapy has undergone significant transformation over the years. Where once these modalities were widely applied across numerous conditions, current evidence-based practice demands a more discriminating approach. Major international organisations, including the [World Health Organisation](#) and [World Physiotherapy](#), emphasise that non-physical interventions should form the foundation of physiotherapy treatment plans, and [global campaigns](#) advocate for dialogue on avoiding wasteful or unnecessary medical tests, treatments, and procedures which are not backed by recent evidence.



This shift represents a change in our understanding of therapeutic effectiveness thanks to more recent evidence on the topic. Rather than viewing electrotherapy as a routine adjunct to treatment, modern practice requires clinicians to apply these modalities only when robust, condition-specific evidence supports their use. Crucially, electrotherapeutic modalities should be used as an adjunct to physical therapy, not as the sole treatment of a condition. This evidence-based approach ensures patients receive the most effective interventions whilst avoiding unnecessary treatments that may not contribute meaningfully to their recovery. The evolution of electrotherapy practice also reflects broader changes in healthcare delivery, where patient education and engagement are increasingly recognised as central to successful outcomes.

Despite the fact that there has been a bigger shift away from electrotherapy in musculoskeletal rehabilitation with [low evidence at best](#) for many of the previously commonly used modalities, there may still be a place for electrotherapy. Whilst evidence exists [for the use of functional electric stimulation to improve mobility in adults with lower limb impairment due to an upper motor neuron lesion](#), and it remains equivocal whether electrical stimulation should be used [to improve muscle strength in chronic respiratory conditions, chronic heart failure and chronic kidney disease](#), some treatments such as extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT) for Achilles tendinopathy have maintained popularity, [if not being wholly endorsed by the current evidence](#).

In any case, clinical recommendations now emphasise avoiding patient dependency on these treatments, which may hamper long-term functional outcomes. Instead, electrotherapy should be positioned to facilitate patient participation in active treatment programmes, helping individuals engage more effectively with exercise therapy and self-management strategies. Modern electrotherapy application must incorporate these elements, with patients understanding not just what treatment they are receiving, but why specific modalities have been selected based on current evidence. This educational component helps prevent over-reliance on passive interventions and promotes active participation in recovery. Patient education becomes particularly important when discussing the role and limitations of electrotherapeutic interventions. Clinicians must communicate clearly that these modalities, whilst potentially beneficial in specific circumstances, represent just one component of a comprehensive treatment approach. This transparency helps establish realistic expectations and encourages patients to engage meaningfully with the active components of their rehabilitation programme. 🦋

