

# Reflections- WCPT 2011

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I arrived in Amsterdam on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> July. What a journey and what a world away from my home.

Registration day for the congress was on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup>. The venue, RAI congress center is huge compared to any of our convention centers here. During the registration I got a glimpse of how much work was put into hosting something so big. Everything had to be just right. There were volunteers and signs everywhere to help us out. I also saw that this was not only a professional meet but also a meeting of friends. Friends who came from different countries, different cultures, different religions but all gathered together for one cause, "Movement for Health".

Waiting in line to get my congress bag and tokens I met a lady named Jean. She asked me where I am from and when I told her she immediately smiled and said ok, I'm a kiwi. She said that is where the Kuru people come from. She told me she did her masters paper on the Kuru and when I asked if she ever came to PNG she said no. Wow I thought, you get a master but you have never seen the place or met the people. There were around 5000 participants from over a 110 countries. I quickly realized how privileged I was a somewhat novice in this profession to be among some of the great.

On Tuesday our poster was presented by Dr.Karthikeyan. There were over 1800 posters and they were exhibited in 2 halls over a period of two days. Our poster attracted a good level of attention, especially from other educators and institutions. From the other posters I noticed that there were other countries where physiotherapy was also new and physiotherapy schools were new too. There was willingness from them to exchange ideas and collaborate.

I met a friend from Canada, named Adrianna. She worked at Angau as a Physiotherapist in the early 80s. She was overjoyed and very excited to see and hear that physiotherapy was growing in PNG. Witnessing her excitement and joy was touching. It made me proud to be a physiotherapist and also to be associated with training physiotherapists. Through DWU we are accomplishing what others thought it would take a lifetime to do.

On Wednesday and Thursday I attended different platform presentations. One of the most interesting presentations was on the role of Physiotherapy in HIV/AIDS. A Physiotherapist from Canada and a few colleagues had designed a learning module for HIV/AIDS, what it was, how it could be contracted, how we assess, how we can treat etc. It looked real user friendly and I how good it would be to have something like that to use with our students. I found the different types and methods of research interesting. Some were very high tech with lots of machines and measurements and others were simpler and based on exercise therapy.

Attending a big occasion like this encouraged me a lot. It reinforced in me the fact that physiotherapy is important. It plays a major role in peoples lives especially those who have suffered debilitating conditions. It showed me the importance of evidence based practice and that we shouldn't be

complacent with what we know or learn but always hunger to learn more and put in to practice what we learn.

An important issue that we physiotherapists in PNG and maybe with the help of the University will have to look at is the issue of a physiotherapy association. In order to have recognition from outside institutions and employers it is important that we are recognized by WCPT. With this being said, WCPT will only recognize countries after certain requirements are met. One of this and I think the most important is that the country member should have a physiotherapy association in place. I feel that getting recognition from such a body as WCPT will ensure quality in our education and practice in PNG.

My hope for the future is to see PNG becoming a member of the WCPT and maybe one day hosting an occasion like this.

My heartfelt gratitude to all people who made this trip possible and to Karthi and Priya thanks for taking the initiative to try something new. It's a good lesson for all of us.

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