

[Guest Editorial]

A Pivotal Moment

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to write this guest editorial on behalf of *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach* and the American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy (AASPT; formerly, Sports Physical Therapy Section) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). As we transition to the new AASPT, we have also updated the mission/goals of the academy (Table 1). Although the focus of this editorial is to reflect on the past 10 years, I have had the unique distinction of being a member of the AASPT from the very beginning in 1974. There are few members of any professional society who can say they have been involved in its development from the beginning. Consequently, this has allowed me the special opportunity to learn and contribute to the AASPT for the past 45 years. Moreover, it also adds a unique perspective to have seen and experienced the growth of the AASPT over the past 45 years. Furthermore, I have had the privilege to serve as its president for 6 years, was the cofounder and original coeditor of the *Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy (JOSPT)*, which has become the second-largest physical therapy journal in the world, and also had the honor to write the original editorial for the founding of the *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy (IJSPT)*, which is now an e-journal. This brings us to the present, with a reflection over the past 10 years.

Over the past 10 years, it has been exciting to see the impact of *Sports Health*, from its inception in 2009 to its inclusion in Index Medicus in 2015 and, most recently, its inaugural impact factor, which placed it in the top 25% of all sports science journals. But what's exciting to me is the potential the AASPT has to contribute to the field of sports health through interdisciplinary contributions as well as the physical therapy profession, which just crossed the 100,000-member mark in the APTA in 2017. An example of some of the accomplishments of the AASPT over the past decade are listed in the Table 2.

One of the significant accomplishments is the role the AASPT has played in sports physical therapy education both with our own conferences and participation in our national meeting. The Team Concept Conference (TCC) was created in 1978 to develop a professional meeting for both physicians and physical therapists in which the team approach to athletic care was emphasized. This annual conference continues today, with

attendance in recent years exceeding 500 individuals. Furthermore, when I was president of the AASPT in 1994, we extended this concept to a preconference at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's (AOSSM's) annual meeting, and that preconference continued through 2018. Moreover, the national APTA Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) has grown significantly over the past several years, with more than 17,000 members attending the 2018 meeting in New Orleans. The AASPT has always had extensive programming of featured educational sessions, poster presentations, and research platform presentations, along with the opportunity to recognize and honor many of our members for their contributions to the AASPT. The AASPT held its 45th anniversary celebration at the 2018 APTA CSM.

DEGREE CHANGE FOR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

One of the most significant changes in the profession of physical therapy is the mandating of the entry-level degree to be a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). The changes in the health care climate, with more patients needing direct access to clinical services rather than having so many gatekeepers, have resulted in increased responsibilities for physical therapists. Direct access for physical therapy services is now a law in most states.

RESEARCH AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

Research and contributions to the professional literature have become a primary focus of the AASPT, reflected by the academy having relationships with 3 professional journals included in Index Medicus: *Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy*, *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*, and *Sports Health*. The AASPT has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years to the Foundation for Physical Therapy to promote research to advance the science of the profession. Moreover, there has been a significant increase in the number of research posters and platform papers submitted and presented at the APTA CSM national meeting and other national sports medicine meetings over the past decade.

Table 1. American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy (AASPT) mission, vision, goals, and objectives

- **AASPT mission statement**
 - The mission of the AASPT, as a component of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), is to promote excellence in sports physical therapy practice, research, education, and professional development
- **AASPT vision statement**
 - To be the leader in sports physical therapy
- **AASPT goals**
 - Practice: promote and progress sports physical therapy
 - Research: advance sports physical therapy research and scholarship
 - Education: define and enhance sports physical therapy education
 - Professional development: advocate and provide resources for mentorship and growth
 - Engagement: facilitate member involvement and leadership
 - Sustainability: responsibly manage organizational resources
- **AASPT objectives**
 - Advance a culture of excellence in sports physical therapy practice, research, education, and professional development
 - Promote and advance sports physical therapy across professions and in society
 - Identify and respond to professional issues concerning sports physical therapy
 - Foster communication, collaboration, and mentorship among members
 - Assist the APTA in furthering its objectives as outlined in the bylaws and by policy statements/actions taken by the House of Delegates

Table 2. List of major accomplishments of the American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy (AASPT)

Advocacy

- The AASPT State Representative Network currently comprises 46 members who monitor and report state legislative activities regarding sports physical therapy issues in their local and state government.
- 10 years ago, only 12 state representatives participated in the network.

Awards

- At the APTA CSM (American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting), the AASPT has an awards ceremony that recognizes many members for their contributions to the AASPT. Examples of some of these awards include: Recognition of sports clinical specialists, recognition of 25-year members, recognition of newly accredited and reaccredited residency programs, JOSPT Excellence in Research Award, JOSPT George J. Davies-James A. Gould Excellence in Clinical Inquiry Award, IJSPT Achievement of Distinction Outstanding Original Research Manuscript Excellence Award, IJSPT Achievement of Distinction Case Report Manuscript Award, Legacy Fund Grant Awards, AASPT Excellence in Research Award, Outstanding Student Award, New Horizon Award, Excellence in Education Award, Lifetime Excellence in Education Award, Jack C. Hughston Award, Hall of Fame Award, and the Ronald G. Peyton Award.

Board-certified clinical specialists (SCS)

- Board certification is important to the AASPT, and more than 25% of AASPT members are board certified in sports, orthopaedics, women's health, neurology, and/or geriatrics. Nearly 40% of these members are credentialed in more than 1 area of practice.

Clinical practice guidelines

- AASPT has collaborated on the development and dissemination of clinical practice guidelines on topics relevant to sports medicine, including knee injury prevention and physical therapy for persistent symptoms after concussion, with several others in development.

Communications

- The AASPT uses technology to communicate with its members through a monthly e-magazine, a monthly educational update, and e-communications as needed to inform members of breaking events.
- The Marketing Department and Communications Committee also provide tools and media for all stakeholders in and outside the AASPT to support the promotion of its mission, vision, and goals.

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

<p>Education of physical therapists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard graduate degree for the profession is now a doctorate of physical therapy (DPT). • Presently, the AASPT has started a sports physical therapy education initiative task force to assess and ensure that sports physical therapy will continue to thrive in various facets of APTA during entry-level education or through residencies and fellowships.
<p>Educational programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program actually began as a team concept meeting in 1978. • Over the past decade, the growth of the primary AASPT meeting has been the Team Concept Conference, which has increased to more than 500 attendees at the recent meetings. • This program continues to promote the subtitle of this journal, which is a multidisciplinary approach.
<p>Home study courses (HSCs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AASPT has provided HSCs for its membership to provide hybrid educational learning experiences, which has increased to 17 courses over the past decade, including the female athlete, running, and current concepts in shoulder rehabilitation.
<p>Fellowships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a new process for the AASPT. Currently, 2 sports physical therapy fellowships have been established: Duke–DI Sports Coverage and The Ohio State University–Overhead Athlete
<p>International</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AASPT is the largest member organization of the International Federation of Sports Physical Therapy (IFSPT), which includes 28 nations and more than 30,000 members. • AASPT members were part of the founding board of directors of the IFSPT and still actively serve in that capacity today.
<p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership has grown from an average of 5500 members to an average of 8200 members over the past 10 years, comprising physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students.
<p>Professional mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TeamMates is a live program presented at the APTA CSM and Team Concept Conference each year that facilitates mentoring between new and experienced members of the AASPT. Over the past 10 years, the success of this event has enabled its growth from 40 participants to over 250.
<p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM): AASPT has had a long-standing partnership with the AOSSM since 1994, when we started the preconference at the AOSSM annual meeting, which has been further solidified with the creation of <i>Sports Health</i>. Additionally, the AASPT and the AOSSM will be providing exchange programming at their respective national meetings. • The AASPT is in communication with other societies (American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, American College of Sports Medicine, National Strength and Conditioning Association, etc) to develop exchange lectures or cooperative programming. • To demonstrate interprofessional society cooperative activities, AASPT obtained approval from the Board of Certification for Athletic Trainers to provide continuing education for live courses. This allows us to serve members that are both physical therapists and athletic trainers (currently approximately 10% of AASPT membership) and to draw sports rehabilitation partners in affiliated fields.
<p>Project Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, the AASPT has been involved with the Aspen Institute's Project Play, where leaders from many organizations convene to generate ideas to enhance healthy lifestyles and communities through sports.
<p>Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AASPT is the only component of the APTA to offer 3 peer-reviewed, Index Medicus journals as a member benefit: <i>Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy</i> (the original publication founded in 1979), the <i>International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy</i> (founded in 2006), and <i>Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach</i> (founded in 2009). These journals are the first, second, and third highest rated member benefits among the AASPT's membership.

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

<p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assure the continuation of essential sports physical therapy research, the AASPT established The Legacy Fund. The name describes the purpose of the fund—to leave a legacy of excellence and continuity of advancement within the profession that has seen so much progress over the past 45 years. Through a competitive review process, one \$10,000 grant is awarded annually to support a member-initiated research project. Annual nonmonetary awards are given to recognize excellence in research presented at annual meetings or published in AASPT-supported journals.
<p>Special interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AASPT offers its members the opportunity to focus on issues of specific areas of practice in the form of its special interest groups (SIGs), which provide dedicated forums and collaborative discussions with peers. SIGs have expanded to include 13 separate areas of specialization for member collaboration and mentorship, including the emergency responder, female athlete, golf, hip, intercollegiate and professional athlete, knee, residency, running, shoulder, sports performance enhancement, youth athlete, physically challenged, and tactical athlete.
<p>Residency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency programs have become a very popular professional path for physical therapists, with continued growth over the past decade from 11 to 45 residency sites.
<p>Scholarships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AASPT contributes to the Foundation for Physical Therapy, which offers scholarships and further research grant opportunities. The AASPT has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Foundation during the past decade.
<p>Traveling fellowship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJO Global has helped create and sponsor the Kevin Wilk Traveling Fellowship, which allows up to 3 individuals twice annually to participate in a condensed fellowship at 3 different clinical locations. The participants of the traveling fellowship have the opportunity for clinical observation, didactic components of presentations, and discussions as well as social networking.
<p>Youth sports safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AASPT has been in collaboration with STOP Sports Injuries and AOSSM since the inception of the STOP program.

EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

For more than 30 years, the AASPT has provided outstanding educational programs in sports medicine beginning with the initial Team Concept Conference in 1978 and continuing through present day. The level of the science and evidence has continued to increase with each passing year as sports physical therapy continues to contribute in many areas, including rehabilitation, manual therapy, specificity for therapeutic exercise, prevention of injuries, and criteria for return to play to name just a few of the more prominent areas of contributions to the sports medicine literature.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SPORTS HEALTH

The sports physical therapy profession and the AASPT have been fortunate to enjoy tremendous strides over the past decade in the areas of education, research, and clinical practice. This level of growth and accomplishment is due, in part, to the strong collaborations between the AASPT and the other partner organizations behind *Sports Health*: the AOSSM,

the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM), and the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA). What is interesting when we talk about a collaborative effort among the societies and individuals within the societies is that I have personally been a member of 3 of the 4 societies for over 30 years. Congratulations to all for their participation, support, and contributions over the past 10 years, and to many more years to come.

I hope the readers of *Sports Health* have enjoyed learning from the quality of the articles over the past 10 years and realize the potential that a collaborative journal such as this has to advance the art and science of sports medicine care in the future. Good luck and continued success to all the professional societies and their collaborative contributions to *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*.

George J. Davies, DPT

—George J. Davies, DPT, ATC, CSCS
Sports Health Associate Editor for the AASPT