



## 16<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics

### Report from Cassandra Haber, Clinical Physiotherapist



I am a clinical physiotherapist. I read for a Masters Degree in Biomechanics at the University of Roehampton and graduated at the beginning of this year. I have a special interest in amputee biomechanics and the implications on rehabilitation. My dissertation research project involved the analysis of the BladeXT (Blatchford & Sons Ltd.) for dynamic movement performance in transtibial amputees. I presented the findings of my research at the ISPO Cape Town Congress in the form of an oral presentation ***titled 'Does prosthetic spring stiffness have an effect on the biomechanics of a start-stop movement in unilateral transtibial amputees when using a running-specific prosthesis?'*** and also as a poster presentation titled ***'An analysis of dynamic forward movement performance in transtibial amputees using a running-specific prosthesis'***.

This was my first experience of presenting my research at such a large international conference. It was a wonderful opportunity to share and exchange findings and interpretations with fellow researchers and experts in the field. I believe that one major benefit of the ISPO conference is to discover and discuss research that has yet to be published and to meet people with the same research interests as yourself. Furthermore, I was delighted to meet a few of the authors of research papers I have analysed when formulating my own study.

I attended several other presentations, some of which focused on the extensive pool of research whereas others aimed at imparting knowledge and skills. One example of the latter is the keynote lecture on outcome measures in amputee rehabilitation by Professor Robert Gailey which was very instructive. Thus, I found this conference to be beneficial to me both as a researcher and as a physiotherapist. The knowledge and skills I gained through this opportunity can now be applied in amputee rehabilitation and allow for best practises.

This conference allowed members to network with other professionals and vendors in the industry. I was able to learn about new advancements in orthotic and prosthetic technologies and I became aware of new concepts in research. Through this conference, I was able to meet people of different nationalities with different areas of expertise such as academia, research, clinical, marketing or prosthetic user, all with the aim of advancing the field.

This ISPO World Congress was hosted under the theme ***"Assistive Technology for All"***. I was shocked to learn that only about 15% of individuals who require orthotic or prosthetic devices actually have access to them. In the words of Mr Rajiv Singh Hanspal, the ISPO president, ***"ensuring increased access to assistive technology for users worldwide forms part of ISPO's vision to contribute to a world where all persons have equal opportunity for full participation in society"***. The ISPO congress provides the opportunity for

international organisations, P&Os and rehabilitation professionals, and the users to work together and support this worthy cause - to improve access of orthotics and prosthetics worldwide.

I would like to formally thank ISPO UK MS for the travel bursary which was of substantial assistance to attend the ISPO conference in Cape Town and present my research. I am very grateful for the opportunity and the experience that I obtained.

