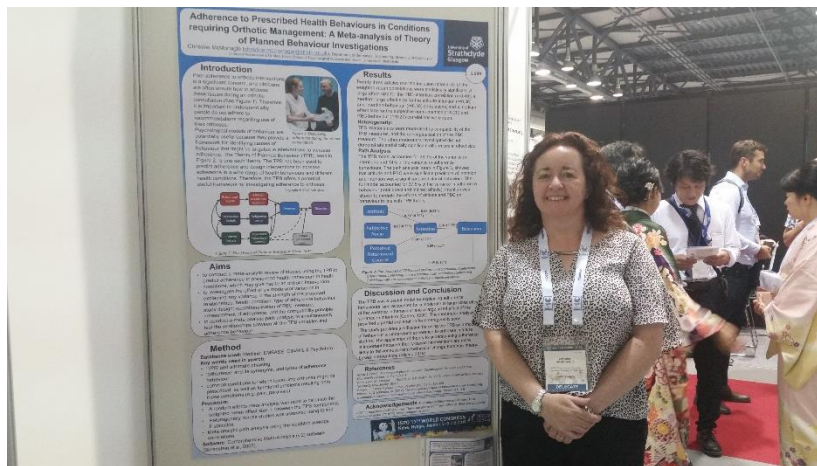


Report on ISPO 17TH World Congress in Japan 2019

I would like to thank ISPO UK NMS for enabling me to attend the ISPO 17th World Congress in Kobe, Japan. This was an excellent learning experience with some outstanding key note speakers who embodied the theme 'From basics to bionics'. The conference enabled me to become refreshed and re-engaged with the wider Prosthetics and Orthotics community and offered inspiration for future research projects.

The opening ceremony was followed by the Knud Jansen lecture, given by David Constantine. David gave a moving and insightful presentation, about his experience as a wheelchair user following a spinal cord injury, and his subsequent work in forming Motivation (www.motivation.org.uk), a Non-Government Organisation, which provides appropriate technologies for wheelchair users in low income settings. Having previously worked on a P/O project in Sri- Lanka with Motivation, I was already familiar with their work. However, David's message of the positive psychological impact that assistive technologies can have when they are which are both functionally and aesthetically appropriate, set the scene perfectly for the rest of the conference.

The 17th World Congress included 5 keynote speakers, 25 symposia, 28 instructional Courses, 57 free paper sessions and 129 poster presentations as well as exhibitor Workshops. Because of my interest in a range of different areas: orthotic management of neurological conditions; effects of P/O management on psycho-social well-being; upper limb orthotics, education, and services in low income settings; the challenge in attending the Congress was in having to choose between several competing sessions which were running at the same time. I also had the opportunity to present work from my recently completed PhD with both a poster and free paper presentation. In this work, I used psychological theory to understand and predict adherence to ankle-foot orthoses following a stroke, and was able to demonstrate that psychological theory can aid our understanding of the complex issues surrounding adherence in this patient group. It was great to have the opportunity to speak to an international audience about my work, although challenging to summarise in a seven-minute oral presentation!



Presenting a poster from my PhD work

There were many personal highlights of the conference. Firstly, Deirdre Desmond's key note speech, entitled "Complex Entanglements: People and Assistive technologies" offered an opportunity to reflect on the complexities of the human-device interface, and the importance of mental health in the well-being of our patients. Secondly, I enjoyed catching up with graduates from the Sri Lanka School of Prosthetics and Orthotics, where I had previously worked, and was pleased to find that they are now developing and leading educational projects and clinical services in South and SE Asia. Thirdly, it was fantastic to watch recent Strathclyde prosthetics and orthotics graduates presenting their final year projects and being enthused by other people, technologies and ideas. Also, a symposium which demonstrated a myo-wearable technology for people with high level SCI, using a lateral key grip, highlighted the potential opportunities for active upper limb orthotic technologies to positively impact quality of life in this patient group. In the exhibitors' hall, the increased use of computerised scanning technologies for shape capture was very visible. In addition, a high number of exhibitors demonstrating 3D printed products was also seen. It was positive to see many design and technology organisations recognising the role of the clinical professional in designing the interface between the patient and the device. However, the enthusiasm for these new technologies needs to be matched with higher levels of evidence to ultimately improve the lives of prosthetic and orthotic users.



Meeting up with graduates from the Sri Lanka School of Prosthetics and Orthotics

The Japanese were impeccable hosts, always respectful, polite and welcoming. Kobe was an excellent location, a wonderful city, with warm and sunny weather, and excellent transport links, and I also enjoyed experiencing the taste of Kobe Beef. The closing ceremony invited everyone to the next World Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2021, and gave out prizes. I was delighted that my poster was shortlisted as one of the best poster presentations, in a field of 130 posters. I must again acknowledge ISPO UK NMS for affording me this fantastic opportunity to attend the World Congress in Kobe.



Enjoying sunset at the Harbourland in Kobe