

50 Years of History

Denmark

Name of organisation: Danish Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Association / Dansk Selskab for Muskuloskeletal Fysioterapi

Year organisation started: 1967

Member of IFOMPT since: 1992

Key influencers of OMPT through the years: Hanne Thorsen, a medical doctor and physiotherapist was one of the founders of DMPA and represented Denmark internationally for decades, along with Asbjørn Mittung and Birthe Carstensen. Professor Per Kjær has carried out international research and contributed to Denmark's network as well as international views.

Development over the years: DMPA was founded in 1967 and run by a small number of people. In 1971 the organization was officially recognized by The Danish Union of Physiotherapy. In 1974 the organization was represented by Hanne Thorsen at the foundation meeting of IFOMPT in Montreal. First courses in manual therapy were just two-day courses in joint mobilization conducted in a rented room in a hotel basement. Courses developed, with international collaboration and inspiration, into a minor educational program with the first exams held in 1990. Education has been a continuous and ongoing progression which reflects research and contemporary understanding from only manual skills, to comprehensive biopsychosocial management. Presently education is either a diploma degree in a community based program or a university based master degree. Today the organization has 600 members.

Major changes or challenges in the last 50 years: DMPA has a long history. The first decade it was not recognized by the national association of physiotherapy. In fact courses and exams were conducted 'out of sight' up until 1990. The founders and the teachers were determined both in the development of the educational program and in recognizing the importance of musculoskeletal physiotherapy and development of international networking. Today the educational program and association is well-established and recognized nationally. There is a community based program and as of 2019 a university-based masters program.

Current status and challenges: The current status is that the quality of both educational programs is better than ever! Despite this we face three major issues: (i) a decrease in the number of members and have done for the past decade; (ii) we deal with a poor infrastructure in the Danish Healthcare settings – as such progression from novice to skilled practitioner to expert is not recognized in work areas, in responsibilities and in salaries, even though an official expert title exists and consists of clinical skill and education, supervision and an academic title; (iii) a forced marriage with a union which is not bold.

The future of the organisation: Optimistically, the health care context will improve, such that physiotherapists who put in the extra time and money would not only experience the benefits as an individual professional satisfaction, but also have better employment opportunities. We work towards an advancement and recognition of our specialized skills to contribute to the physiotherapy profession.
