
50 Years of History

Norway

Name of organization: The Norwegian Physiotherapist Association (NPA) Subgroup for Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy/Manual Therapy

Year organization started: 1957

Member of IFOMPT since: 1982

Key influencers of OMPT through the years: *Frederick M. Kaltenborn* (1923-2019) made significant contributions to the OMT field. He introduced manipulative therapy to Norwegian physical therapists in 1960 and was instrumental in developing MT education and certification standards. *Jan Erik Endresen* (honorary member) had a significant impact on the advancement of MT both nationally and internationally, connecting MT in Norway to the international field. *Olaf Evjenth* (1926-2020) was known for combining MT techniques with specific muscle stretching. He was awarded the King's Medal of Merit in Gold in 2010 for his contributions to MT and athletics. *Elisabeth Ljunggren* (1943-2010) was the first PT PhD (1977). From 1989, she lectured at the University of Bergen, one of the first in Europe to establish a master's program in physiotherapy. Her commitment was crucial in establishing the master's program in MT. *Alice Kvåle* led the MT Master's program from 2000 to 2014. She taught extensively on MSK disorders and worked closely with our IFOMPT group during international monitoring and securing the high standards of the masters program.

Development over the years: Norway has been a full member of IFOMPT since its beginning. The practice of MT has a rich history. Norwegian MTs have contributed to IFOMPT through research, presentations, and leadership roles within the organization. The integration of MT into the Norwegian healthcare system has contributed to its growth and recognition. Today, MT is well-established in Norway, with growing numbers specializing in this field. Research, education, and collaboration both nationally and internationally continue to shape the practice of Norwegian MT.

Any major changes and challenges in the last 50 years: There have been challenges throughout the years. Our biggest challenge and organizational conflict, peaked in 2005/6 when a group of MTs in the NPA created a new competing organization only for MTs. They advocated that MT was different to physiotherapy. They wanted "MTs" to have their own national authorization and not be PTs. This has always been seen as unnecessary and conflicting because we are all physiotherapists with different specialization. In 2022 the Norwegian Government unfortunately agreed with this new MT association and a new profession was established. Now all physiotherapists in Norway need an authorization as a MT to take advantage of the extended rights a MT has, as an extended scope practitioner. The challenge continues today with two often competing associations within a small country.

Current status and challenges: Challenges for the future are e.g. the increasing number of new and different healthcare providers often giving low value care. Another challenge is the increasing number of people having healthcare problems giving even higher pressure on public healthcare.

Future of the organisation: The future looks quite good for Physiotherapy and Manual Therapy in Norway. We have a very established role in Norwegian healthcare and especially for manual therapy there are extended scope possibilities. Manual therapists can refer to radiology and specialized healthcare/hospitals etc. We are also able to place people on sick leave for musculoskeletal conditions.
