

# Above and Beyond...Bleeding Disorders Management on a Global Scale

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The management of genetically inherited and acquired bleeding disorders has a rich history at the Health Sciences Centre, and it is a study in mentorship, collaboration, and interdisciplinary care that should serve as a model of how to approach client centred intervention.

I have been fortunate to be included in this dynamic team of professionals for the last 17 years representing Physiotherapy, and like several of my colleagues, have been able to expand my scope beyond the campus of the HSC to other Provinces and other countries. In addition to my involvement here at home I have taken on an increasing engagement with the World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH), a global organization dedicated to enhancing care and treatment of people with bleeding disorders around the world.

It may surprise some of you that Physiotherapy plays an integral role in the management of bleeding disorders. In fact, over 80% of the bleeding episodes experienced by people with hemophilia occur into the joints and muscles, leading to devastating and debilitating effects. Seventeen years ago it surprised the hell out of me. I was fortunate to be surrounded at that time by knowledgeable and dedicated mentors from within my own profession as well as from nursing and medicine, to help me learn not only the mechanics of the various bleeding disorders, but the role that I could play in making things better.

Over the last 10 years, I have attended and presented at Interdisciplinary Congresses and taught WFH workshops for health care professionals in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and South America. My travels in support of improving hemophilia care have taken me to 21 countries around the globe, and here in Canada I Chaired the Canadian Physiotherapists in Hemophilia Care for a period of four years.

In May, at the WFH World Congress in Melbourne, Australia, I was elected by a vote of colleagues from Physiotherapy, Orthopedic Surgery, and Physical Medicine, to serve as the Junior Vice-Chair of the Musculoskeletal Committee of the WFH. This global committee consists of 5 individuals who advise the WFH on issues of musculoskeletal care, and design the scientific program for the biennial WFH Musculoskeletal Congress – a meeting that has seen enormous growth in the past few years attracting hundreds of delegates from around the world.

Election to the MSK committee is a six-year commitment culminating in a two-year appointment as the Chair. I was truly honoured to be given this opportunity by my peers, and am looking forward to the new challenges that it will bring.

Perhaps what is most noteworthy about the connection between the global organization of the WFH and the bleeding disorders clinic at the HSC, is that I am the second Physiotherapist from our clinic to be elected to this position. Kathy Mulder, now retired from clinical practice, served as the Chair of the MSK Committee of the WFH from 2006-2008.

When I was asked to write an article about my appointment to this international committee, I felt a degree of hesitation to do something that seemed at least in part like outright self-promotion. In the end though I hope that it may serve as an example for any Physiotherapist who strives to pursue an international career.

By actively seeking out and cultivating opportunities to get involved in other Provinces and indeed other countries, I have been afforded the chance not only to teach, but also to learn from a global array of esteemed colleagues who have in fact become life long friends. My mentors in hemophilia care - Kathy, Nora, Rose, and Morel - always encouraged me to stretch...which is exactly what I intend to keep on doing, while encouraging all of you to do the same.