

## Call for focused symposia

Submission deadline: 8 April 2026

### Submission guidelines

Please read this information carefully before proceeding to the online submission form

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#### Submission process:

Apply on the congress website

#### Important dates:

Submission opens **10 February 2026**

Submission closes **8 April 2026**

Notification of outcome **June 2026**

#### Focused symposium format

The session moderator, a recognised expert in the field, has the responsibility to invite and lead a group of international speakers through a series of evidence based and critically reflective linked presentations, drawing out the relevance, applicability, take-home message and potential challenges for the audience. **It is important to deliver a coherent session with speakers working together thoughtfully to engage with the audience.** The aim of the session should be to create an insightful and engaging learning experience for clinicians, managers, educators, researchers and/or policy makers (depending on the topic) that ultimately informs, inspires, involves, and empowers congress participants, and allows time for discussion.

Each symposium will last **60 minutes** and consists of:

- an introduction by the moderator
- a maximum of three presentations in addition to the session moderator
- a 3-5 minute summary by the moderator highlighting the implications, applicability and relevant messages/learnings to take away
- at least 10 minutes of questions and answers with the audience (it is recommended that Q&A are spread throughout the session as well as a dedicated slot at the end), and engagement with the audience through creative/interactive elements (eg through real time polling, quizzes, word clouds etc - an interactive platform will be provided)

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- sessions should be based on relevant theory or science which should be specifically clarified during the session

**Informal meet the panel opportunity:** in addition to the 60-minute session, the congress programme committee (CPC) may request an informal 'meet the speakers' session following some symposia, allowing speakers and participants to continue conversations. Details to be confirmed.

### Call open to any topic

The call for focused symposia is **open to any topic** that is relevant to the physiotherapy profession. The CPC is particularly interested in seeing proposals that address the following cutting-edge topics:

- how physiotherapy can address **global health issues**, such as the demands of an ageing population, promotion of physical activity, improvement of health literacy, practice in emergency and conflict settings, community-based rehabilitation; and priorities identified in the Rehabilitation 2030 Agenda and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- **professional challenges** across all areas, such as diversity and inclusion, cultural sensitivity, quality assurance, knowledge translation, implicit bias, mental health and wellbeing, and ethics in publication
- the role of **innovative technology** in physiotherapy practice, education and research such as big data management, artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual reality
- new approaches to address **policy and advocacy issues**, such as health system funding, cost-effectiveness, workforce matters and the unique role of physiotherapy in addressing these challenges

### Requirements

**The moderator must have secured the agreement of all speakers before making a submission** on their behalf.

World Physiotherapy and the CPC advocate for diversity and international perspectives across all congress sessions. This can be achieved through a range of aspects: a balance of gender, nationalities, perspectives from low, middle, high income countries/territories, including experiences from service users and under-represented groups or ethnicities. Submissions should include speakers reflecting complementary perspectives from different countries/territories.

Where applicable to the topic, priority will be given to symposia that consider complementary perspectives from across different economic and geographic contexts, including low income countries/territories. Successful symposium moderators can apply for a bursary to support the travel and registration needs of no more than one speaker from a World Physiotherapy member organisation in a [low or lower-middle income country/territory](#).

Special consideration will be given to symposia that demonstrate creative and effective approaches to engaging and interacting with the audience.

A moderator or a speaker may **only appear in one symposium**.

The online submission form offers a limited word count detailed below.

You will be asked to provide the following:

1. title of suggested symposium [max 150 characters]
2. names and affiliations of the moderator and all speakers

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3. email address and contact mobile phone number for all speakers
  4. relevance of session to physiotherapy globally [~75 words]
  5. summary of the session theme [~100 words]
  6. an outline plan that includes the time allocated for the moderator introduction, each speaker presentations, indication of QA and other audience interaction throughout the session, moderator summary and concluding panel discussion and QA
  7. target audience of session [25 words]
  8. at least 3 KLOs (Key Learning Objectives/take-aways)
  9. completed abstract for the symposium

One abstract, jointly authored by the moderator and all the speakers, should provide a comprehensive overview of the symposium and linked presentations. This will be included in the congress proceedings and should be structured using the following headings:

- title [max 150 characters]
  - authors (moderator first, followed by all speakers)
  - learning objectives (at least three) [max 30 words each]
  - abstract [max 500 words]
  - key words (up to three)
  - funding acknowledgements
  - supporting references (up to 10) [max 300 words]
10. short biography for the moderator and each speaker. This should outline academic qualifications, positions/appointments, most recent publication and presentation track record (last five years), research information (interests, grants), and professional practice background. [max 200 words for each biography]. Please provide in paragraph format, not a CV
  11. details how diversity has been considered in preparing the submission [max 75 words]
  12. information on any language support needs
  13. consent for the submission to be considered for an alternative congress format, if unsuccessful as a focused symposium
  14. details of any presentations or publications of the work made prior to the World Physiotherapy Congress 2027 [max 50 words]
  15. for full transparency, disclosure of AI involvement within the session or subject basis of the session – give full details (eg large language model used, specific use of LLM)
  16. I confirm I have read and agree to all the general terms and conditions
  17. I confirm I have read and agree to the copyright statements outlined
  18. I confirm I have read and agree to the consent and permissions outlined
  19. request for any speakers to be considered for travel funding assistance [for further details about the bursary programme see: <https://wp2027.world.physio/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/WP2027-FS-SpeakerBursary-FINAL.pdf>]

### **Selection principles**

Submissions will be reviewed (for clarity and completeness) against the following principles:

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**Explore:** the most recent ideas, evidence, methods and areas of controversy/contention in the literature related to outcomes for people and populations

**Inspire:** with a clear purpose and applicable outcomes for participants

**Connect:** participants by reflecting the diversity of the global profession and draw in audience from different fields with special attention to interactivity

**Include:** speakers with international experience and standing<sup>1</sup> in the topic area, representing a range of global, possibly service user perspectives and speakers from underrepresented groups

**Impact:** practice, education, research and/or policy by making clear the implications arising from the presentations including considerations on the international diversity of the profession

### General terms and conditions

1. The congress language is English and all proposals and presentations must be made in English. Translation may be provided.
2. A symposium moderator or speaker may only appear in one symposium proposal submission. This does not affect any abstract submissions.
3. Symposium moderators and all speakers must register and present in person.
4. In keeping with World Physiotherapy policy honorarium, fee, waiving of registration fees or payment of expenses will not be provided for moderators or symposium speakers, except where a bursary is applied for and awarded to support a symposium speaker from a World Physiotherapy member organisation in a low or lower-middle income country/territory.
5. Proposals should address the current evidence, areas of controversy in the literature, implications for practice and the need for further research.
6. All research and studies that involve human participants and animal subjects reported in submitted proposals must comply with general ethical principles. To check that your research complies with ethical principles, please visit <https://bit.ly/4k5DJhN><sup>2</sup>. See also the global standards<sup>3</sup>.
7. All proposals and presentations must adhere to the use of “people-first” language. A person must not be referred to by disability or condition, and terms that could be considered biased or discriminatory in any way should be removed (eg use ‘person with a stroke’ instead of ‘stroke patients’).
8. Any source of funding or support for the work being presented should be acknowledged.
9. The CPC may invite symposium moderators and speakers to contribute to other congress programme sessions, such as moderating platform presentations.
10. World Physiotherapy may wish to record certain sessions for publication on its website. As plans are agreed the implications will be communicated with symposium moderators and their cooperation would be expected.
11. The author(s) retain the right, after presentation at the World Physiotherapy Congress 2027, to subsequently include the work in articles, books, or derivative works that they author or edit, provided said use does not imply the endorsement of World Physiotherapy.

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<sup>1</sup> Consideration will be given to symposia that support inclusion, as appropriate, of less experienced with established speakers.

<sup>2</sup> With thanks to Julius Sim, University of Keele, UK, for permission to use this document.

<sup>3</sup> [Declaration of Helsinki](#) of the World Medical Association and the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences’ (CIOMS) [International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects](#) published in collaboration with the World Health Organization. CIOMS and International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (2012) [International Guiding Principles for Biomedical Research Involving Animals](#).

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12. Standard lecture room layout will be provided with PowerPoint presentation in all focused symposium rooms.
  13. Successful moderators and speakers will be expected to use their social media channels to promote their involvement in the World Physiotherapy Congress 2027 and will be supported by World Physiotherapy in these efforts.
  14. Focused symposia are not to be used as marketing opportunities for new products, equipment or organisations, nor to refute or denigrate competitors' products.
  15. Descriptions and objectives for each focused symposium will be published in the preliminary and final programmes, on World Physiotherapy's website, and in other promotional material.
  16. Congress programme placement will be determined by the CPC to ensure best fit with the overall congress programme.
  17. Any changes to an accepted focused symposium must be submitted to the CPC for review and approval.
  18. On request, a teleconference to support the collaboration between the relevant focused symposium speakers can be facilitated by World Physiotherapy staff and this is actively encouraged.
  19. All decisions of the CPC are final.

### **Consent and permissions**

In submitting an abstract, you must confirm that:

- you accept responsibility for the accuracy of the submitted abstract and understand that the content cannot be modified or corrected after the abstract submission deadline and that it will be published exactly as submitted
- all co-authors are aware of and agree to the content of the abstract and support the data presented
- all speakers have agreed to participate in this session at congress, should the proposal be accepted for presentation, and take responsibility for their own travel, accommodation and registration costs
- you accept responsibility as the contact person for all correspondence about the abstract and to share information with co-authors about its status
- you have secured any copyright/permissions clearance required relating to any previous presentations, equipment or other material for inclusion in the World Physiotherapy Congress 2027, its recordings/proceedings or other congress publications
- you consent to the session being recorded and made available by World Physiotherapy
- for all studies involving human participants or animal subjects, permission has been obtained from the relevant ethics committee and properly informed consent given where appropriate
- anyone who is identifiable in the abstract and presentation has given their consent to be included
- the work is original, except for extracts from copyrighted works used with permission from the copyright holders, and that it does not infringe upon any copyright, proprietary, or personal right of any third party
- you have identified any potential conflicts of interest eg financial interest in products or processes described in the abstract, stock ownership, membership on an advisory board or board of directors, or other substantive relationships

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## Copyright statements

On behalf of any and all co-authors, the submitter will confirm the:

- consent to have authors' names, affiliations and biographical materials used in connection with the publication of your work.
- content belongs to the author(s). However, if the abstract is accepted the submitter agrees, on behalf of all co-authors, to transfer and assign to World Physiotherapy free of charge, on a non-exclusive basis, the rights to edit, publish, reproduce, reformat, distribute in whole or in part the abstract and prepare all type of derivative works. These works may include press releases, recordings, and/or educational products, using all communication tools and means, now known or hereinafter developed, including any and all analogue and digital means and any and all supports or forms of media, now known or hereinafter developed. This includes use in indexes or search databases in print, electronic, or other media.
- author(s) retain the right, after presentation, to subsequently include the work in articles, books, or derivative works that they author or edit, provided said use does not imply the endorsement of World Physiotherapy.
- the author(s) will retain copyright of their abstract. However, the author shall only reuse, reproduce or post the abstract with acknowledgment to the initial and first publication or presentation at a World Physiotherapy event, and therefore reference the name of the World Physiotherapy event and the date.

When completing the online submission process you will be asked to confirm that you have read and understood the general information and the requirements you are expected to fulfil.