

IFSHT Membership Survey and Mentoring Project



In 2019, the executive committee of IFSHT started a project to understand the member societies better in order to develop a mentoring project. The mission of IFSHT is to provide global networking and educational opportunities to develop and enhance the practice of hand therapy. At the core is the desire to encourage each country to grow the recognition and organisation of hand therapy as a group of occupational therapists and physiotherapists with an enhanced set of skills and knowledge.

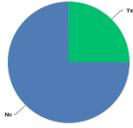
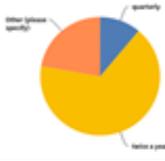
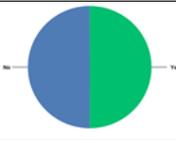
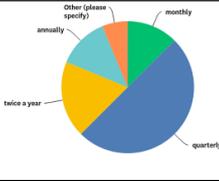
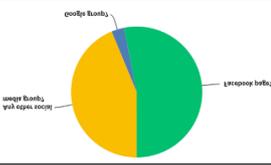
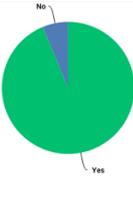
Full Member Survey

We sent a survey to all Full Member countries to ask about their Society and gather knowledge of each one's strengths. We were delighted to get responses from 32 Full Member countries. The summary of findings is below:

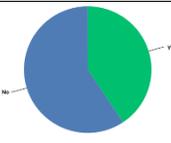
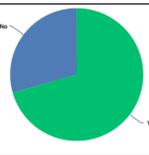
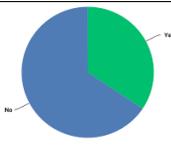
Education

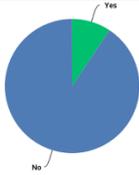
Do you have a National Congress?		28 / 32 do have
Do you combine your Congress with your hand surgery society?		19 / 32 do combine
Are there other hand therapy educational activities run by your society throughout the year?		22 / 32 do have
Are there other hand therapy educational events run by people or organisations other than your Society?		24 / 32 do have
What level of course is available in your country?		Masters 2 / 32 Society Validated 6 / 24 Other short courses 17 / 24
Is there a hand therapy qualification in your country?		17 / 32 do have

Communication

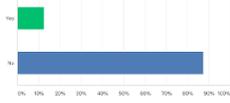
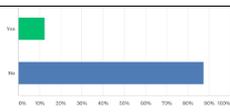
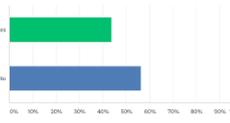
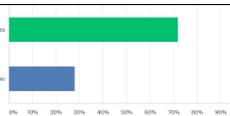
Do you have a regular paper newsletter for your members?		24 / 32 do not have
For those that do – how often is it published?		Quarterly 1/9 Twice a year 6/9 Other 2 / 9
Do you have a regular e-publication for your members?		16 / 32 do have
For those that do – how often is it published?		Monthly 2/16 Quarterly 8/16 Twice a year 3/16 Annually 2/16 Other 1/16
Does your society use social media?		Facebook 17/32 Google Group 1/32 Other (mainly Twitter) 14/32
Do you send emails for notifications of courses and events to your members?		30 / 32 do

Commercial and Marketing Activities

Is your society involved in marketing hand therapy?		13 / 32 are involved
Is this to encourage OTs and PTs to join the hand therapy society?		12 / 17 yes
Is your marketing for public awareness of hand therapy?		11 / 32 yes

Is your society involved in marketing products to members?		3 / 32 yes
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Organisational issues

Is your Society registered as a sub-group of your physiotherapy society?		4 / 32 are
Is your Society registered as a sub-group of your occupational therapy society?		4 / 32 are
Did you need to register your society with an official government body?		14 / 32 did need to
Is your society formally or informally linked to your hand surgery society?		23 / 32 are linked

Survey of Associate Member countries and Corresponding Member countries.

Associate Member countries are those where groups of therapists are interested in developing a hand therapy society but are not yet organised as an independent hand therapy organisation nor belong to a sub-group of a National Physical Therapy, National Occupational Therapy, or National Hand Surgeons’ organisation.

Corresponding Membership is open to individual therapists (physical therapists and occupational therapists) working in a country without a group with Associate Membership or a Full Member Society, who are unable to form an organised group of regional or national therapists involved in hand therapy.

We were keen to understand how they wanted to progress the development of hand therapy in their country and see if there was any way we could support them. We had responses from 21 countries.

Activities currently working on:

Setting up courses in hand therapy (8)	
Other (4)	
Developing a national hand therapy society (2)	
Developing a committee structure (2)	
Starting to use social media (2)	
Developing links to the OT / PT and hand surgery societies (1)	
Setting up a national hand therapy educational meeting (1)	
Marketing hand therapy to the public or to other therapists (1)	

The three most important development activities:

Setting up courses in hand therapy (6)	
Developing a national hand therapy society (4)	
Marketing hand therapy to the public or to other therapists (3)	
Other topics (3)	
Setting up a hand therapy qualification (2)	
Starting to use social media (1)	
Starting a newsletter (1)	
Developing links to the OT / PT and hand surgery societies (1)	

Mentoring Project

From this, we tracked the needs and aspirations of the Associate and Corresponding Members and the strengths of the Full Member countries. In October 2020 (following a delay over the initial months of the world pandemic Covid 19), we allocated one or two Full Member countries to each of the Associate and Corresponding Members. We hope that the relationship between mentor and mentee can slowly develop over time, with the Full Members taking on the Associate and Corresponding members as a developmental project to help them build their infrastructure. With clear guidelines, we look forward to following the relationships over time and seeing the Associate and Corresponding members moving hand therapy forwards in their country.

Nicola Goldsmith

President, IFSHT 2019 - 2022