



European network for best practice and research

**Special Interest Group (SIG) on
Mobility & Occupation
in - between joint meeting 9. – 10. 11 2012,
Milan, Italy**

REPORT

Theme:

The use of clinical approaches including advanced technology systems for maximizing the effect of rehabilitation on mobility and function.

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Chair and Co-Chair SIG Mobility: Anders Romberg (FI) and Paul van Asch (B)

Chair and Co-Chair SIG Occupation: Daphne Kos (B) and Tarja Huilla (FI)

General

The 15th SIG on Mobility in-between meeting can be regarded as a success in many respects. The number of meeting participants has continued as high, this time 42 persons (mostly physiotherapists) representing 13 countries attended. The organization of the meeting partly in collaboration with the SIG Occupation was perceived as important and fruitful. The number of presentations was high (n = 23), and their overall quality excellent. As usual, the meeting gave important opportunities to reflect own research/clinical work against practices in other centers and countries. Finally, important information on the status of ongoing joint studies was received as well as outlines for potential new multicentre research projects were developed. Hence, the meeting can be regarded as an exemplary event to reflect the fulfilling of RIMS mission statement as a European network to provide with multi-level activities in the field of rehabilitation for persons with MS. The meeting was, however, not without some limitations. Most of these were well noted in the feedback questionnaires. There are some lessons to be learnt for the future meetings, e.g. provision of an abstract book (or leaflet) would be welcome.

Meeting feedback

The participants were sent an evaluation form to receive feedback of the meeting. Thirteen responses were received. First, the participants were asked to rate their satisfaction of six aspects related to meeting on a scale from 1 (absolutely not satisfied) to 5 (fully satisfied). The results of these questions were as follows (n = 13):

- 1) Overall organization before the meeting; mean score = 4.0
- 2) Overall organization during the meeting; mean score = 3.9
- 3) Hotel and venue; mean score = 4.2
- 4) Social events; mean score = 4.7
- 5) Overall program of the meeting; mean score = 4.5
- 6) Quality of the presentations; mean score = 4.6

Taken together, the participants seemed well satisfied with the arrangement, program and other aspects of the meeting.

The feedback questionnaire included six open questions as follows:

- 1) Did the meeting meet your expectations?
- 2) Which key words would you mark related to this meeting? A) STRENGTHS, B) WEAKNESSES
- 3) Do you have specific remarks and suggestions about this meeting in order to improve future SIG's?
- 4) Do you have any proposals for central themes for the coming SIG Mobility meetings?
- 5) Do you have any overall suggestion(s) for future SIG Mobility meetings?

Here a summary and selected answers to the open questions:

The meeting met all respondents' expectations. The idea of joint-meeting with SIG Occupation was given credit, and there was a "good variety in presentations". Several respondents noted that the content of presentations and the quality of speakers was high. However, particularly the first day of the meeting was perceived as unnecessary tight with too many short presentations and too short time for discussion. The practical sessions were seen as important, some respondents wished more of these in future meetings. Another idea for coming meetings was working in small groups and then sharing ideas. Two respondents suggested that a printed abstract book would be useful. Moreover, it was noted that enough time to questions/response in the timing for the presentations would be valuable.

Proposals for central themes and other suggestions for the coming meetings included: 1) treatment for cerebellar ataxia/coordination, 2) managing people with more severe mobility problems, 3) evidence for early interventions/education for mild disability, 4) evidence for self management approaches, 5) more attention to basic therapeutic principles, 6) what is physiotherapy and reflection on how on best way collaborate on a multidisciplinary basis 7) brain plasticity, 8) the importance of physical activity in pwMS; facts and recommendations, 9) endurance and strength training/combined training and its implementation in standard rehabilitation protocols.

The participants were asked if they intend to take part in the next SIG on Mobility meeting in Limerick, Ireland. Ten respondents answered yes, three unsure (one: depending on the theme). The final question enquired about the respondents' background. Apart from one Pt with three years of clinical experience, most of the respondents were experienced (≥ 10 years) clinicians/researchers. Two of the respondents were MDs, the rest Pts.

Future activities

- The next SIG on Mobility in-between meeting will be held in Limerick, Ireland. The local organizer is Susan Coote. Primarily the meeting was planned to be held on the 24-25th May 2013. However, owing to logistic reasons, the dates were changed later to the 7-8th June 2013. The meeting will be organized in collaboration with the SIG Education group (with Christoph Heesen as the co-ordinating person.).
- RIMS annual meeting will be organized in collaboration with the ECTRIMS congress in October 2013. SIG Mobility will be responsible of the organization of one session in the congress.
- The collaborative projects within Sig Mobility are ongoing:
 - The multi-center study on Responsiveness of short and long walking capacity tests in multiple sclerosis: a multi-center trial is coordinated by Peter Feys and his team (University of Hasselt, Belgium)
 - Content of rehabilitation in persons with MS In Europe is coordinated by Kamila Rasova (Prague, Czech Republic)
- Initiatives are ongoing of other potential multicenter studies, e.g. “A Multicenter RCT of Balance”, and “new multi-center data collection on arm function and/or mobility”.
- Meeting participants were reminded/encouraged to subscribe both for the RIMS general newsletter as well as the one particularly for SIG on Mobility., During future contacts between chair/co-chair and the members of mobility group, further reminders of newsletter subscription will be given in order to ensure that they'd be a valid and useful information tool.