

## EDITORIAL

# Conservative Treatment of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

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Pelvic floor dysfunctions (PFDs) often refer to many pelvic conditions such as urinary incontinence (UI), pelvic organ prolapse (POP), sexual dysfunction, pelvic pain which have an enormous impact on the quality of women's life. PFDs are associated with a range of risk factors, eg. number, and mode of delivery, age, obesity. Various definitions and classifications have been suggested for these pelvic floor conditions and the differences in definitions, both in clinical practice and in the literature create variability in the prevalence and incidence estimation. Conservative Treatment of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction. Conservative Treatment of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction.

The data from 5 years ago say that about 60 million people in Europe experienced urinary incontinence, and it is two times more common in women than in men. Only in Poland, about 30% of women over 50 suffer from UI. Global demographic trends suggest that the incidence of urinary incontinence will continue to increase and consequently will entail a significant burden on the health of society.

Pelvic floor physiotherapy is the conservative first-line treatment and may involve exercise programs, manual therapy, biofeedback, electrical stimulation, and behavioral education. In recent years we can see significantly increased interest in women's health, which translates into the emergence of numerous scientific publications on pelvic dysfunction and the impact of physiotherapeutic interventions on the quality of life of women around the world. However, the multitude of different standards and new, often very interesting therapeutic concepts in European countries, or simply different curriculum contents dedicated to the first stages of physiotherapeutic education, may become a thread of misunderstanding in cooperation between physiotherapists.

To face the communication difficulties of urogynecological physiotherapists, physiotherapy undergraduates, or

health practitioners working with women suffering the PFDs, a project was launched under the Erasmus+ program, titled: "Education of students within the medical and health sciences - conservative treatment of pelvic floor muscle dysfunctions".

For three years, scientists and educators from three European Union countries from the University of Opole (former Opole Medical School) in Poland, Universidad de Cádiz in Spain, and Università degli Studi G.D'Annunzio Chieti Pescara in Italy have jointly developed unified standards of procedures, terminology, and common therapy guidelines (i.e. with the use of manual therapy, a textbook for students and practitioners, a syllabus for the subject, and the implementation of the subject in the curriculum).

The final result of the collaboration was the 1st International Virtual Congress on Conservative Treatment of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction held on 2-3 July 2021. The Congress was attended by 287 participants, and the event was registered by a total of 525 people from around the world (from Brazil, Great Britain, Germany, Iceland, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Portugal, Solomon Islands, Ecuador, Mexico, United States, Morocco, Sweden, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Costa Rica, Belgium and Bolivia).

We are glad that the 1st International Virtual Congress on Conservative Treatment of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction enjoyed such interest, and its effects can be seen in this Special Issue. This only shows how important the subject of conservative treatment of PFDs is, and the issues raised at the Congress concerning diagnostics, therapy, and contemporary therapeutic approaches (taking into account the assumptions that pelvic floor functions as a holistic entity, including the role of fascia), have a huge impact on the effectiveness of urogynecological physiotherapy.

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