

# The Starting Line

*From the  
President's Desk*

*Carole Oglesby*

This column is written on 9/11 from my home in Philadelphia, about 100 miles from Ground Zero. It is a particularly somber time in the USA and one of the frequent refrains of the day is that the awful events one year ago "put everything in perspective" Generally, this seems to mean that life, death, and loved ones matter and all else is insignificant. Perhaps some might wonder if career work, the time spent advocating for "causes" is really worthwhile. Certainly life and family matter most to us all however health, longevity and quality of life for women are inextricably woven into the achievement of quality of life for global communities and the "causes" of WSI contribute mightily to women's health and well-being. Surely this matters!

The results of our inaugural research conference, June 2 in St. Louis, sketched briefly in this Newsletter, emphasized repeatedly the positive contribution of exercise and physical recreation for women's health and quality of life and the resultant positive effect on the health of children and families. Girls and women's access to adequate exercise and freely chosen physical activity appears to be crucial to health but only attained by a fraction of the world's women.

Those of us within WSI who have worked hard during the past years building our ties to the United Nations Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW) have been leaders in

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## *WSI Hosts International Conference*

### **Physical Activity and Health Guidelines for Women: National and International Considerations Related to Ethnicity and Race**

On June 2, 2002 forty invited participants from around the world gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, USA to bring their expertise to bear on the topic of the Conference.

Considering the fact that the data which support the current American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Position Stand related to physical activity and health have been derived almost exclusively from Caucasian men and women, do the conclusions based on these data apply to other racial/ethnic populations? The group also considered the need for research on the outcome from programs which are tailored to diverse cultural/community values and preferences.

*WomenSport International* has actively supported the World Health Organization's statement that enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental human right by promoting physical activity as essential in ensuring that girls and women achieve that goal. To do that we need to learn more about the health problems of girls and women globally, the social and cultural constraints relating to their participation in sport and physical activity, the current opportunities for women to participate in activity programs, and how *WSI* might positively interact with local groups to enhance those opportunities.

The *WSI* Conference was devoted to determining the current status of our knowledge regarding the physiological, psychological and social-cultural response to exercise of various ethnic/racial groups of women, identifying prevalent health problems in developing countries which might be prevented or attenuated by physical activity, ascertaining the status of women in various countries and what programmatic efforts might enable sport/exercise to be incorporated into their lifestyle, and how *WSI* can most effectively aid in providing the knowledge and opportunities for women to gain the health benefits that accrue from physical activity. *cont. page 2*

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Conference - cont.

## Conference Program

### Morning.

Welcome and Introduction of Chairs: Carole Oglesby, Ph.D., WSI President, USA

Co-Chairs: Barbara L. Drinkwater, Ph.D., USA and Carol Rodgers, Ph.D., Canada

**1. Keynote** Status of physical activity programs for women in emerging nations: A health related issue?

Fiona Bull, Ph.D., USA

**2. Keynote** UN DAW/WHO position on health & physical activity for women Joyce Braak, M.D., USA

**3.** Ethical implication of denying women opportunities to participate in physical activity

Fan Hong, China, for Angela Schneider, Ph.D., Canada

**4.** Current state of knowledge re health & physical activity in non-western/non-Caucasian populations.

a. Africa: Tracy Kolbe, B.Sc., Ph.D. candidate

b. South America: Patricia Sangenis, M.D., Argentina

c. Asia: Tomo Kanda, Ph.D., Japan

**5.** Can our current fund of research data apply to women in other racial/ethnic populations?

a. Cardiovascular disease: I-min Lee, M.D., Ph.D., USA

b. Breast cancer: Anne McTiernan, MD, Ph.D., USA

c. Diabetes: Amy D. Otto, Ph.D., R.D., USA

d. Reproductive area: M.J. DeSouza, Ph.D., Canada

e. Osteoporosis: Barbara L. Drinkwater, Ph.D., USA

### Afternoon

Co-Chairs: Natalia Stambulova, Ph.D., Russia and Don Sabo, Ph.D., USA

**6. Keynote:** Physical Activity as an Empowerment Context: Marit Sorenson, Ph.D., Norway

**7.** Empowerment through sport for disadvantaged and HIV at risk girls in Zambia:

Oscar Mwaanga, B.S., Zambia

**8. Keynote:** Violence against girls and women in sports - implications for health and quality of life:

Kari Fasting, Ph.D., Norway

Co-Chairs: Yvonne Harahousou, Ph.D., Greece and Teopista Birungi, Ph.D.

**9.** Impact of culture on physical education and sporting opportunities - Examples from different countries:

1. Denise Jones, Ph.D., South Africa

2. Gloria Diaz, Ph.D., Puerto Rico

3. Florence Adeyanju, Ph.D., Nigeria

4. Fan Hong, Ph.D., China

### Evening : The challenge

Group sessions to arrive at specific proposals to address the issues discussed during the day.

1. Establish a research agenda for physiological and medical issues: What are the most pressing needs and what can WSI do to address them?

Facilitator - Carol Rodgers, Ph.D., Canada

2. Establish a research agenda for Social Science issues: What are the most pressing needs and what can WSI do to address them?

Facilitator - Don Sabo, Ph.D., USA

3. What personal and structural changes have to be made so that sports/exercise programs for girls and women may be created and enhanced for disadvantaged groups?

Facilitator - Nina Kahrs, Ph.D., Norway

4. How can WSI and other women's sports advocacy groups cooperate with WHO and UN oriented groups to establish sport/exercise opportunities for women?

Facilitator - Carole Oglesby, Ph.D., USA

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: **Reports from Groups 1, 2 and 4 are available on pages 6 - 8** :  
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## *Around the World - excerpts from member letters*

### **Nigeria**

The assemblage of our group to the United States was a fabulous and fantastic idea, which was a Big Plus to the United States of Department of State and the Women Sports International. They both need to be congratulated and profoundly commended. I believe we as a group should consolidate the gains of that interaction and exposure by forming a formidable reference group as Multi-Regional Forum (MRF) on the Advancement of Women Health & Fitness through Physical Activities and Education (AWHFPAAE)



We must initiate multi-cultural researches on education, sport, health, and fitness and even on politics, commerce, and business and utilize the findings for the benefit of our nations in general and women in particular. The good practises must be disseminated for the benefit of all of us.

If you feel inclined and committed to contribute to this Multi-Regional Forum (MRF). please, get in touch with me with your ideas and suggestions. With your total involvement we can do it together better.

Philomena Bolaji Ikulayo, Ph.D. [ikulayo@hotmail.com](mailto:ikulayo@hotmail.com)

### **Russia**

In Russia during last three years I took part in the organization and functioning of "The St-Petersburg Olympic Champions Club". It has more than fifty members (all are Olympic champions!) The President of the Club is twofold Olympic champion Tatiana Kazankina. The goal of this Club is twofold: a) to promote sport & exercise activities in the city, especially among children and women, and b) to support psychologically and financially former elite athletes in the city. They work in close co-operation with Fund "Edelweis", which is one of the sponsors of sport activities in the city. In 1999 and in 2000 this Fund with participation of the Olympic Champions Club and The P.F.Lesgaft State Academy of Physical Education organized conferences on "Athletic retirement and adaptation of former athletes to the life after sports". Scientists (sport psychologists, physiologists, medical people, etc.), former elite athletes (many women among them!) and representatives of sport organizations took part in presentations and round table discussions.  
[natalia.stambulova@hos.hh.se](mailto:natalia.stambulova@hos.hh.se)

### **Japan**

Congratulations to The Japan Society for Sport and Gender Studies which has held its first conference in Osaka in June 2002. 120 researchers practitioners, NGO activists, students and people from various fields participated. The program consisted of a panel discussion titled "An overview of Gender Studies in Sport and Physical Education" followed by small group discussions on related issues. Professor Takako Iida is the president and Professor Keiko Itani the executive director of this new society.

### **Greece**

The Hellenic Union for Promoting Women in Sport and Physical Activity (P.E.P.G.A.S) was founded in 1994, by a group of women working in the field of Sport and Physical Education. P.E.P.G.A.S is a national voluntary organization and its office is located in Thessaloniki. The objectives of the P.E.P.G.A.S are the following:

- involve women from inside and outside sport
  - make women aware of women's issues in sport
  - promote research related to women and sport
  - promote legislation towards equality of women in sport
  - liaise with relevant international and national agencies concerning sport information
  - promote equality in P.E lessons in schools
  - educate women for leadership roles and functions of sports
  - promote the image of women and sport in the media
- We organized two conferences, one in 1997 and one in 1999 and two seminars- one in 1998 and in 2001 - on women and sport issues. We also organized special seminars and workshops in other sports conferences.

Another task equally important and more difficult was the fund raising task. At the beginning we managed to get some funds to publish and distribute leaflets with our objectives and later managed to publish twice annually our newsletter. Currently we are publishing our first scientific journal with issues exclusively connected to women in the field of sport, leisure and recreation. This journal is going to be published twice annually.

[YvonneHarahousou,harakabi@otenet.gr](mailto:YvonneHarahousou,harakabi@otenet.gr)

At the ICSSPE General Assembly in July 2002, WSI was granted full membership in the ICSSPE Board of Associations.

## WSI TASK FORCE REPORTS

### *The Sexual Harassment Task Force:*

***Sexual harassment and abuse in sport has risen rapidly up the sports agenda in the past few years, largely due to work of WSI members in the research, advocacy and policy fields. The key researchers in the field are all WSI members and contributed to a major Symposium on the subject at the 2001 International Society of Sport Psychology Congress (ISSP) in Skiathos, Greece. The Symposium was organised and co-edited by Kari Fasting (Norway) and Celia Brackenridge (UK), both prominent WSI activists. The papers from that Symposium will be edited by them and will appear in a special issue of the Journal of Sexual Aggression in mid summer 2002.***

Other notable WSI achievements in this field include:

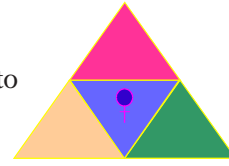
- Successful lobbying for the establishment of a permanent, funded Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) in the UK, housed in the country's largest children's charity – the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and co-funded by Sport England and the NSPCC. Celia Brackenridge, convenor of the WSI Task Force on Sexual harassment, has also been appointed chair of the CPSU's Research Task Force
- Keynote speeches on sexual harassment in sport by Celia, Kari and Trisha Leahy (Clinical Psychologist at the Australian Institute of Sport) at a series of major academic and professional conferences in the past two years including the ISSP, International Sociology of Sport, European College of Sport Sciences, Leisure Studies Association, British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, UK National Play Conference, Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, Council of Europe Committee for the Development of Sport (CDDS) (see below)
- Award of the prize for the best social science paper at the 2000 International Olympic Committee Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress in Brisbane to Kari and Celia for their paper on sexual harassment of elite female athletes
- A key role in the development of child protection and anti-harassment policy work in Australia (through Trisha Leahy), Canada (through Sandra Kirby) and Europe (through Kari and Celia). Most recently, Kari and Celia both presented keynote speeches to a Council of Europe CDDS SPRINT seminar of 26 European countries on the theme of preventing sexual harassment and abuse of women and children in sport
- Consultancy with national and regional sport organisations and federal bodies to develop and implement policy on child protection and athlete welfare
- Award of a major 5 year grant to Celia Brackenridge from the English Football (soccer) Association for research on the impact of child protection on the game
- Media appearances and interviews on BBC television and radio, Sky TV and many other channels to spread the word about child abuse and protection needs in sport
- Development and delivery of training workshops in USA (Carole Oglesby and Don Sabo), Canada (Sandra Kirby), UK (Celia Brackenridge) and Australia (Trisha Leahy) to improve professional standards and good practice in coaching and sports administration.

Celia Brackenridge

WSI Sexual Harassment Task Force Convenor

## *The Female Athlete Triad Task Force*

In July 2002 a Female Athlete Triad Summit was convened in Chicago, USA, by Michelle Cameron, MD to coordinate the efforts of many organization in their efforts to eliminate the occurrence of the Triad among female athletes. *WomenSport International* was represented by Barbara Drinkwater, Ph.D., Chair of the WSI Task Force. Summit participants agreed on a Mission statement, six specific goals and the four projects listed below.



**Mission:** *Promote optimal health and well-being of female athletes and prevent the female athlete triad through:*

- *Advocacy • Education • Global Leadership • Public Policy • Research*

### **Goals:**

1. *Support cultures that promote healthy athletic environments*
2. *Establish public policy*
3. *Effect change in national and international governing bodies*
4. *Eliminate unethical and inhumane treatment of female athletes*
5. *Educate athletes, parents, coaches, health care professionals and the general public*
6. *Determine the scope of the problem through research*

### **Project #1 – Public Education**

- a. Review existing materials on the Female Athlete Triad and review relevance to our target audience
- b. Develop appropriate educational materials in collaboration with the task force

### **Project #2 - Collaboration/Sponsorship**

- a. Establish foundational elements necessary for soliciting financial support
- b. Solicit Corporate Sponsorship
- c. Collaboration with other organizations

### **Project #3 Advocacy/Political Strategies**

- a. Partner with IOC Medical Commission
- b. Collect data from CDC for secondary analysis and to identify gaps
- c. Contact legislators to determine best approaches to legislature and related to H.P
- d. Contact Indiana Based sports federations regarding advocacy support

### **Project #4 Professional Education**

- a. Identify our audience – coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, athletic trainers, ACHA, medical personnel, physical educators, health educators, nurse practitioners, dieticians, physical therapists, personal trainers.
- b. Create tip sheets for our audiences
- c. Fact finding on the web, resources, associations such as NATA, NCWA, Middle Schools, High Schools, ANA, AMA, ADA

**The Summit was organized by the National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses (NAON) and funded in part by an educational grant from Merck Pharmaceuticals.**

**WSI members in countries outside North America who would like to participate in this program can contact WSI by e-mail at [bldrink@aol.com](mailto:bldrink@aol.com)**

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**TASK: Establish a research agenda for Social Sciences issues:**


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**(i)What are the most pressing research needs?**
**PHASE 1: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

Given that we lack data on the current state, the first phase would involve gathering descriptive information on the questions listed below. We also acknowledged that the research methodologies would vary across cultures to reflect different communication modes, ways of interacting with women, etc. The questions of interest are as follows:

**1. Who is Doing What?**

What are women doing in terms of physical activity? This analysis must include activities that range along a continuum from structured sports to recreation, domestic tasks and activity required for transportation. Language and conceptual definitions (i.e. structured physical activity versus domestic activities) must be considered in this analysis.

**2. What are the Health Benefits of the Alternative Forms of Physical Activity?**

While we may know of the health benefits of various structured physical activities, we know little of the health implications associated with domestic and transport activities.

**3. What is the Level of Health Awareness?**

What do women know about health, the antecedents and correlates of good/poor health? Furthermore, what is their level of awareness with respect to the health benefits of physical activity?

**4. What is the Meaning of Physical Activity?**

How is physical activity perceived amongst various groups of women? What does it mean to them?

**5. How Are Resources Distributed?**

How are the resources, ranging from financial to facilities, equipment, administrative support, and personnel, distributed?

**6. How Are Structures Organized According to Gender?**

An analysis of structures along gender lines is needed. For example, are women in positions of coaching, sport administration, etc.?

**PHASE 2: ANALYSIS OF MOBILIZING AND INHIBITORY FACTORS**

This phase would be designed to identify the factors that both enable and/or motivate women to participate in physical activity as well as the factors that inhibit participation. The factor viewed as the most important is that of safety, both at the structural and personal levels. Within the community there are issues related to crime and violence. Within the actual sport or exercise setting, violence in the form of harassment needs to be addressed. Unless women feel safe, they will not engage in physical activity, regardless of being aware of the health benefits of activity and available facilities and support systems.

Some other mobilizing factors would include appropriate leadership from women, the experience of pleasure or enjoyment associated with activity, and positive attitudes towards being active. Other factors will undoubtedly arise with further study.

*Summarized by Gretchen Kerr, Canada*

**Visit the new WSI website at:  
[www.womensportinternational.org](http://www.womensportinternational.org)**

**TASK: Establish a research agenda for Physiological and Medical issues:****(i) What are the most pressing research needs?****PHASE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF KEY ISSUES**

Although data is now becoming more extensively available on causes of death in women across the world the interplay between physical activity, all-cause mortality and disease risk is still relatively unknown in developing and emerging nations. This lack of data in conjunction with the growing epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in these countries further emphasizes the need to identify and reduce leading risk factors for such diseases.

In order to obtain the data that will enable us to characterize the relationship between physical activity and women's health we must first broaden our current compendium of physical activity to reflect the full diverse range of activities (transport, domestic, physical labour, cultural, sport and recreation) that women engage in across the world. It is only once the full cultural breadth of activity is known that we can completely understand the role that physical activity plays in the risk of both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

- develop an instrument to determine physical activity level that fully reflects the diversity of activity in which women participate in across the world.
- ascertain the energy expenditure associated with diverse activities
- using the newly developed instrument conduct population surveillance studies of physical activity – link with disease

In many nations of the world cultural barriers prevent the participation of girls and women in physical activity. These barriers may be a function of gender, socio-economic status, a lack of awareness of the potential benefits of physical activity and its relationship to disease, a lack of awareness of the risk factors for many NCDs and/or cultural dichotomies that promote the enhancement of risk factors (i.e. in many nations obesity is looked upon from a cultural perspective as “positive”). ASSUMING that a positive link between health and physical activity remains amongst women from multiple cultural and ethnic backgrounds a coordinated program of education about these benefits that addresses cultural issues and recognizes diversity is paramount.

- education programs that target specific needs with respect to women's health knowledge, perceptions of physical activity and awareness of the health benefits of physical activity
- incorporate the use of visible demonstration projects
- link with other international health oriented projects

**TASK: REQUIRED ACTIONS BY WHO, UN, AND OTHER NGO AND GO GROUPS:****(i) What are the most pressing needs?****PHASE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF KEY ISSUES**

- Funding for grass roots programs in addition to elite programs for girls and women
- Finding funding through both corporate sponsorship and philanthropy
- Inclusion of disabled women in all programming
- Assuring that national regulations exist for equality of opportunity for girls and women
- “Quota discussions”, especially as regards the IOC mandates, monitoring the necessary distinction between “women as staffers” and “women in power”

**PHASE 2:** In order to be effective and successful in making inroads into UN deliberations, and other government-oriented systems throughout most of the world, the following steps should be taken:

- 1) Become completely familiar with and understand the operation of the system in which one must deal.
- 2) Within the system, locate all “natural allies” in advocacy for your own issue – for example “women's health advocates” are natural allies for advocates for women's sport and exercise opportunities.
- 3) Take the time to “make a relationship” with the allies identified. This will mean not only personal contacts but supporting the allies' battles where appropriate and feasible. *Cont. on p. 8*

**President's Column - cont. from p. 1**

the achievement of a major step forward for our advocacy issues within that body. In Montreal, at the IWG Conference, and again at a NYC meeting of the WSI-State Department Voluntary Visitors Program following the St Louis Conference, UN-DAW leaders publicly welcomed the addition of exercise and physical recreation standards in each country as an aspect of the regular CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) review. There is still much work to be done to enact this step. What it will mean, however, is that when each CEDAW signatory state (the USA and a handful of other fundamentalist countries are the only hold-outs) undergoes review for its treatment of women's rights matters, the exercise, sport and physical recreation opportunities for girls and women would be assessed as part of the review. This means, in turn, that each and every government will feel much greater pressure to study and correct such deficiencies, which reflect badly on the country profile.

Such steps of advocacy taken by each of us day by day, year by year can seem very small. In the crisis perspective descending upon us in times of violence, epidemics, and social chaos, it is easy to wonder what the little steps all add up to and if it really matters in the end. I hope we can remind ourselves, even at times like these, that the reckoning is not so much concerned with the solitary outcome of our action but that we spend the time given to us ENGAGED; in a movement for life enhancement in its most simple and fundamental form.

As you read the content of this Newsletter, I hope you will commit to one or more of the projects of WSI. Contact a Task Force leader for an area that interests you. Contact me if you have a new idea that needs to be pursued. Commit to Dr. Drinkwater to write a column for the next Newsletter or if you have a paper, essay or Abstract you would like posted on our website. We need you and others you may recruit to action! There is no shortage of challenges for people of strength and courage to take on.

*cont. from p. 7*

4) The WS advocates need to do a better job of preparing to be effective and opportunistic in approach; they must be able to mount a relevant campaign, based on core fundamentals of the sport/exercise issue yet immediate and flexible as the occasion presents itself. For example, when the world news media is focused for whatever reason on an abuse story about women, the WS campaign should be able to present relevant, factually accurate, even research-based information on the implications of abuse concerns in the women's sport and exercise environment, and do so while the "iron is still hot".

- Some of the "natural allies" for WS advocates were identified:

WHO Gender/women's health offices; Adolescent and Child Health Advocates; Health Promotion units in governments; World Bank Gender Office; Amnesty International Division of Women and Health; World Medical Association; UNICEF Education for All unit and Global Movement for Children; relevant units of the UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session) on Sustainable Development (Health NGOs have proclaimed "health MUST be the center of sustainable development") Sustainable Development UNGASS has units on "Working Group for Girls", "Health Committee" and "School Lunch Program".

- Who are the most important actors to carry out WS equity mandates? National governments, regional oversight groups, and multi-national NGOs. 1) Most conventions and treaties (already signed by the groups above) have applicability in women's sport and exercise advocacy, for example Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, Rights of the Child, Sustainable Development.

2) WS advocates must produce at local, national and global levels REPORT CARDS on implementation of these treaties and conventions AND grants must be obtained in order to carry out the monitoring process on the implementation. Of particular import was the strong suggestion to get the CEDAW review to cover progress on implementation of the equity opportunities for girls and women in sport and exercise.

Lastly, WS advocates must be more proactive and assertive in gaining collaboration and support from larger, older and/or more high status groups.

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PRESIDENT CAROLE OGLESBY**

**WSI is very proud of the fact that the Executive Board of ICSSPE has awarded Carole Oglesby with the Philip Noel Baker Award of ICSSPE for the year 2001.**