

Webinar transcript

0-12 mins

Heidi Kosakowski (HK): Good afternoon. Good evening and welcome, everyone, joining us from your part of the world. We are here today to celebrate International Women's Day and to discuss women in leadership roles in the Physiotherapy profession. My name is Heidi Kosakowski and I'm a physiotherapist from the United States and head of membership for World Physiotherapy. Before I introduce our panellists, I'd like to go over a couple of housekeeping points. This webinar is being recorded and may be available for future viewing. And as an attendee, your microphone and camera are automatically turned off. However, you are welcome to write comments or questions in the chat or the Q&A and we'll do our best to discuss all of them. So now I'd like to introduce our panellists and thank them for sharing their experiences as female leaders in the physiotherapy profession. So can each of you introduce yourself and tell us where you live, what member organisation you belong to, and either your role in your member organisation or in your day job. So let's start with Nina then Ruchi and Carmen.

Nnenna Chigbo (NC): Hello, Heidi. Hello, everybody. Yeah, My name is Nnenna Chigbo. I'm a physiotherapist. Of course. I'm the president of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy. So I live in Nigeria and served by a physician there. Thank you.

Ruchi Varshney (RV): Hi, everyone. Namaste. So this is Ruchi Varshney. I'm the national head of Women's Cell and the treasurer of the Indian Association of Physiotherapists. I live in Delhi, India, and I wish you all a very happy International Women's Day. And also it is double auspicious because today is Holi, our festival of colours, which depicts victory of goodness over evil. So I wish you all and thank you.

Carmen Suarez (CS): Hello, I'm Carmen Suarez and I'm a physiotherapist and the general Secretary of the Spanish Association of Physiotherapists and also a lecturer at the University of Seville at the faculty of nursing, physiotherapy and podiatry. And I live in Seville in Spain, and I'm really delighted to share this webinar with all of you.

HK: Great. Thank you, everyone. I'm going to share my screen and go over a bit of data that World Physiotherapy collects. So as part of the World Physiotherapy annual membership census, which is where World Physiotherapy collects information on the

physiotherapy profession and member organisations. We also collect data on gender and the profession, gender and member organisations and gender and leadership and member organisations. I'm going to share a few slides with you with that data which is also available on the World Physiotherapy website for each member organisation. And there are also reports which pull together this information regionally and globally and we'll put links to those reports in the chat. So as background in 2017, World Physiotherapy began collecting and publishing key information provided by our member organisations as part of the census. It includes interesting information on workforce education, practice, regulation, direct access and others. It also includes data on gender. We ask how many physiotherapists are in the country and then how many of those are women? This gives us gender representation in the workforce. We also ask how many members belong to a member organisation and then how many of those are women? And then we ask about leadership positions within a member organisation. How many positions do you have and how many of those are held by women? And then finally, since 2021, we've begun asking about the gender of the president or chair of a member organisation. In 2022, 116 of our 125 member organisations filled out the census, making it about a 93% response rate.

World Physiotherapy is a pioneer in collecting gender data in the health care sector at a global level and through the annual membership census. We are asking member organisations to start collecting data on gender if they weren't already. So now we're going to look at gender and leadership. I'm going to start with the boxes on the left hand side of the screen with the numbers in green. We can see that 63% of the global physiotherapy workforce are female and 60% of members of member organisations are female. And I just want to point out that World Physiotherapy members are national associations in a country or territory, and there is one per country/territory. I also want to point out that the gender split in the workforce varies across the five regions of World Physiotherapy with 68% of the workforce being female in the Africa region and 54% of the workforce being female in the Asia Western Pacific region. Now we're going to look at the numbers on the right side of the screen in blue. And although there are more women than men in the global physiotherapy workforce, we can see that 48% of boards in the national associations are comprised of females. So we start to see a gap in representation in the workforce and representation in leadership or on boards of member organisations. And this gap widens when we look specifically at positions of the boards.

And we can see that 42% of member organisations globally have a female president or chair. We also wanted to know if the numbers we are seeing, this 48% female board makeup and 42% of member organisations having a female presence or chair was related to a specific policy or program that supported women in leadership roles. Because it is not uncommon for women to be in leadership position when the vast majority of the people she is leading are women. And 14% of respondents reported that their member organisation had specific policies or programs that did support women in these roles. If we break this down across the five regions of World Physiotherapy, we can see that variation that I just mentioned on the previous slide. The dark blue bars are the percentage of women in executive positions in member organisations. The light blue bars are the percentage of female members in a member organisation. And the yellow bars are the percentage of the female workforce in that region. We can see again that that 68% of the workforce in the Africa region are female. 54% of the workforce in the Asia Western Pacific are female and between 63 and 66% in the Europe, North America Caribbean and South America regions. Here we can see a visual representation of gender balance between the percentage of women in the physiotherapy workforce and the percentage of women on executive boards of member organisations.

The green bars indicate that there's a higher percentage of women in the workforce than there are in leadership roles in a member organisation. And the blue bars indicate there's a higher percentage of women in leadership than that in the workforce. So a perfect gender balance on a graph like this is where there is no bar at all. Zero percentage higher in the workforce or in leadership. And we can see in the Africa region, which is on this slide, that Kenya, Ethiopia and Namibia have or are very close to a gender balance. So specifically in Kenya, 33% of the executive board are female and 33% of the physiotherapy workforce are female. In Ethiopia, it's 44% on the executive board and 44% in the physiotherapy workforce are female. And Namibia, 80% of the executive board are female and 78% of the physiotherapy workforce are female. And the countries, territories or the bars on either side of that flat line have over 5% difference in representation of the workforce and in leadership positions. Here's a visual representation of all the regions of World Physiotherapy. The green bars, as just stated, indicate that there's a greater percentage of women in the workforce than in leadership positions, indicating an imbalance of more men in leadership in relation to the

workforce. And the blue bars indicate an imbalance of more women in leadership in relation to the workforce.

So as we can see, there's a lot of green bars on this slide. When ideally, we'd like to see no bars or very small bars. And finally, I just want to briefly talk about why it's important to collect data on gender. Here you can see three headlines from the United States that demonstrate the negative consequences of when data is not collected on gender. Heart attacks often go undiagnosed in women because the signs that we typically look for are symptoms that most men experience. Likely because they were the people who were asked. They were the subjects in those studies. We're accustomed to being alerted to chest pressure, jaw pain, certainly left arm pain. And women can experience those symptoms, too. However, women frequently feel sudden fatigue or sweats or mid thoracic spine pain, and those aren't automatically connected in our brains to heart attacks the way that left arm or jaw pain may be. So as a consequence, women might not seek out emergency services. And even more sadly, there are cases of when they do that their health provider didn't recognise it as such and then they did not receive the diagnosis but more importantly, the interventions. Another one that I'm sure most women can relate to is that technology is not designed to fit women. This spans from artificial hearts to the sizes of our cell phones. I used to think that the reason I was so bad at taking selfies was lack of dexterity in my hands.

And perhaps that is true. But perhaps it's because my phone was made for a larger hand to hold it. This also can be seen in protective equipment, PPE. You know, a lot of time you see women in health care settings having to adjust their face masks and their robes and their gowns because it's designed to fit a larger body. And finally, you can see the headline on the right hand side of the screen that NASA had to scrap its first all-female spacewalk because they didn't have enough medium sized spacesuits. They had plenty of large spacesuits, but they didn't have enough medium. And when I say enough, I should clarify that it was two women who were scheduled to go on that spacewalk. So we may have a way to go in terms of gender representation and gender equitable data collection. However, the physiotherapy profession does actually lead the way in terms of gender and leadership. And I'm so excited to hear from our panellists. I'm going to stop sharing my screen now. And we're going to begin with our panellists questions. So first of all, let's just hear about your leadership journey. Where did you

start and how did you get to where you are today? So we're going to start with Ruchi and then Carmen and then Nnenna. So go ahead.

12-15 mins

RV: Yeah. Thank you for the question. Um, coming to leadership journey. My journey was like, almost a roller coaster. Coming from Asia Pacific region, India. And, you know, with a society which is largely patriarchal and from a conservative family where women are not supposed to be loud or vocal or aggressive. You know, they have to be sweet adjusting with the things going on and from that being denied the basic women rights in the workplace, like not getting the maternity allowance, maternity leave allowance, not getting even two months after my baby was delivered, because I was always in fear of losing my job. And it's not the case only with me with thousands of women, because there is not a comfortable environment where you can share your problems, where you can discuss your issues. Meaning I remember the girls were really scared to announce this to the management that she has conceived because they may be creating something that she is forced to quit the job. So coming from that background, a meek, submissive girl transformed into a vocal person to a successful entrepreneur, it was a journey. It was because I never quit. And you know, this this talk, this journey was invited by my, you know, one of the conferences. I was invited for the talk. And when I spoke about this journey, that actually was the trigger point because it made many girls and women cry when they heard about the challenges. And when they say, okay, now, we will not be quitting now. We will not quit the profession. Listening to your journey, we are inspired and we will remain in the workforce so that ten minutes of talk could inspire.

15-23 mins

So that was, you know, that shook something within me. And I felt like that if this can do so, I think if I connect the entire country, it will make a huge difference in our in my country. So therefore, I happened to attend the general body meeting of my association, that is the Indian Association of Physiotherapists, and I saw all the suited booted men on the stage. There was not a single woman. So sitting down, I asked my president that we say 70% of the women. This is a women dominated profession. So who is representing that 70% women. So he was kind of taken aback and smiled and said, okay, if you want to do something for the women, bring women forward, go ahead. And that was something which has created a revolution in India means everybody started connecting with each other. All my senior women, my colleagues, my friends,

everybody, they were just waiting for that platform to come. We connected like a nuclear chain and just no time. They were they were in 50 districts of the country. They were more than thousand in number. And it was like everybody wanted to give their best meaning. They were individually doing very good, very good meaning. It's a women dominated in India also. We are like now 60 to 64%. So it was it was a blast and everybody came together. It is like a revolution which is called women's cell. And here I am. So that is all about my leadership journey. Thank you.

CS: Okay. In in in my case, I have to say that this leadership roles always caught my my attention I was really interested in. So when once I finalised my degree in physiotherapy. I continue my training in physiotherapy in women's health and pelvic floor dysfunction, and I started advocating and promoting the role of physiotherapy in this field within the interdisciplinary teams in the educational field and also the professional as a profession, as physiotherapist, and in this specific field of physiotherapy women's health and pelvic floor dysfunction. But started in my that's what my beginning just trying to advocate the profession but I my my beginning in the member organisation the Spanish Association of Physiotherapists was in it was in 2008 when I started with a male president and I started in the role of vice secretary and I also was dealing with the international issues. So I continue my career in the member organisation until today and after that in but after my role of vice secretary, I started in 2012 as general secretary until today. In these years I've been working within three different executive boards. Uh, two of them were chaired by men and one of them was chaired by a woman that I have to say that in our association, the representation of women always has been really high. So that's my career, my journey that I continue doing. So we'll see what happened in the in the following years. So thank you.

NC: Okay, so it's my turn now. Yeah. So I'll say my journey into leadership started like the dream of a little girl when I was little. I always felt I could change the world. And I often see myself in a white coat. You know, I knew it was science, but I didn't know what exactly I thought was going to change the world through science. I had big visions of sitting in board meetings. So growing up, I easily think of the World Health Organisation. You know, I talk about it. So that was like, I set that goal. You need to be on the board of a world committee or something. In secondary school I easily got given responsibilities, so I think I was easily identified as a leader. But when I grew up, I knew I needed training. It's not enough to have the innate abilities you need training. So I got

opportunities like the one that changed my life was a fellowship program. I got the Hubert Humphrey Fellow Fellowship program. I spent about one year in the United States, and it opened my eyes to leadership. And I must say I was able to do that because I had support from my husband. I think I'm one of the few people that have her husband's support. He always said, Go, go, go, go. You could do it. I had children, so I left my children and went. And no, I got frowns. People were like, You're leaving your children? I'm like, Yes, I'm passionate about this. And I went, When I got back to Nigeria, my world changed. It was as if I was given a voice. I was able to air my views. I had presentations to make in my national association and I must thank the executives.

Then they gave me the platform. They gave me audience. I started doing presentations and people started listening to me and people started following my ideologies. So it's sort of like jump started me again into leadership. It started with my research in oncology. You know, I got connected with women all over the world and then was given an opportunity to lead as the secretary of education committee. And then I saw opportunity to grow as vice president, which was sort of a role reserved for women. So it was like a soft role. I got in there and I said to myself, Why I'm going to go for presidency. I'm like, What? There had been only one president before me and the chairperson before her. So let's say two women in the helm of affairs in my country. And I will see like sort of a little girl. But I pushed on and I had support, overwhelming support. And here I am today, president of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy. I'm also leading in research. I also have leadership roles in my church. Like I said, I am easily picked as a leader, but now I have knowledge and understanding and I'm able to manage people. I've been able to work on my people skill, so it's sort of comes easy for me to convince people about my vision and they follow me. So it's not really easy to push me aside anymore. But there were challenges. I mean, if we have more time as we discuss, we'll talk about the challenge. It wasn't like I came out and everybody said, yes, be the leader. No, there were challenges along the line. Thank you.

23-31 mins

HK: Wow. Thank you, Nnenna. That actually kind of segues into the next question. It's so interesting that you've all had kind of different journeys and different kind of environmental factors that kind of helped shape the direction combined with these intrinsic qualities that you're discussing. And I can just tell from listening to you that, the journey will continue. I mean, there's still so much more to do. As Nnenna just

mentioned, challenges do occur. So the question for you is what do you see as the challenges that women face in obtaining leadership positions? And also, do those challenges go away once she becomes a leader or is perceived as a leader? And then if you want, you know, share any challenges that that you had. We'll start with Carmen and then go to Nnenna and then Ruchi.

CS: Thank you, Heidi. Well, I have to I have to say, and we are. Looking at this in this webinar, there are different situations, different aspects in and different situation for the role of the woman in in around the world that I have to say that I'm going to speak about my country. So I have to say that here the option of the possibility to access to a leadership role is the same for women and for men. But think that we have some we continue having some problems in the sense of a you know, to find the balance between the professional and the family or social life. So it's I think it's a huge challenge because it's not so easy to access to this role means a huge amount of time of dedication. So it's sometimes it's difficult to get that balance, you know. So that's why I think in in some organisation there's no so many women in the executive or in this role, in this leadership role. So I think that it's not easy to manage time to manage the professional team, to manage the family. So I think that when you get this role, you have to. Or at least you have to give up, or at least you find more difficulties. And to have a social life and you have at least to give back some aspect of the social and familial life. So it's something sometimes it's something, you know, difficult depending of the of the moment. But it's not so easy to find this balance for many women. Thank you.

NC: Okay, so I'll just jump in. I'm coming from the Africa region, so since I'm the only one here, I will talk about Africa and not just Nigeria because the challenges are similar. First off, in Africa, you know, I liked when Ruchi was talking, as she said, as a woman, it's supposed to be sweet, gentle, just sit, sit pretty. So that's the case in Africa. When you're vocal, you're seen as challenging, arrogant, intimidating. So those are some of the names I get called even now as president, when once I challenge a view, the next thing I'll get an email. You're so arrogant. I'm like, No, I'm only expressing the view of the majority of the members. That is my duty. It really doesn't have to be my own opinion and I don't have to say it in a pretty way for you to accept it. I just have to tell you the truth. So those biases are there in Africa. Women are not supposed to be seen. In fact, in my own village, you know, my mother actually told me, you see a woman before you hear her voice. So I grew up with that notion. You're not supposed to be

heard, but something inside me, I guess it was my passion, couldn't let me play that role. So you have, um, political bias.

Um, you know, I talked about when I went to the US, people were like, If you leave your children and your husband for a year, he might get married to somebody else, have an affair and all that. And I wondered if that was supposed to stop me from chasing my dreams because I had seen people that stayed back and those things still happen to them. So it's really not a factor. And then you get you face the challenge of the moment. You're succeeding. Somebody thinks you have a sponsor I've been confronted with. Uh, is it because the person above you likes you or, you know, such derogatory opinions? Like, I don't have a brain, I can't convince somebody in an argument. It has to be sexual. You know, you get labelled all sorts. And then there's this thing of the gender roles. Everybody believes the woman's role, your gender, is to take care of the house, take care of the children, cook, everybody eats. Everybody should cook. I mean, I love cooking. I'm a mom to three wonderful children. I love to take care of them. But it shouldn't stop a woman. You know, like I said, I think I have a wonderful husband. We do quarrel, yes. But he gives me support and we share some of these responsibilities. If I have to go, I go.

Has it been easy? No way. I mean, I've been slowed down. When I left school, I wanted to get a doctorate degree. Up till now, I've not gotten it. This is 22 years later because I got married, I got pregnant, I had children. I didn't have a job. I mean, who is going to give you a job when you're pregnant and then the next year you're pregnant again, You know? So those were the challenges I faced, which if I mean, my male classmates didn't have to go through that. They could take up private practice. Sometimes I want to do private practice in physiotherapy and because I'm a woman, I don't feel safe. There's no security. Even the person you're coming to doesn't really feel a woman can do it. I was never this. I wasn't always this big. I was frail looking at that point. So because physiotherapy is a physically challenging job, it was like, Are you sure you can handle, um, neurologic cases? You know, why don't you go to paediatrics? Why don't you go to something more your size, you know? So you see those. Those biases they face you and these things stop you from getting equipped to be a leader. You may desire to be a leader, but you can't just be a leader.

There are processes. You have to have education. And in Africa, many women don't have education. If you manage to get a first degree, it's almost as if you should be grateful to God. How many women have their master's, have their PhD? And these are the things that count in the real world where you're competing with every other person. And, you know, I'm never want to say pity me because I'm a woman. I want to compete with what I've got. And then is there is there fairness in the opportunities to get those things that are with me for leadership? So these are some of the challenges. I don't want to take up everybody's time, you know, but these are real life challenges. And before I go, they don't go away because you have now arrived. Even as president, I still have those things. There are a lot of travelling to be. And, you know, you just have to go. I won't say okay, because I have a family. I have children, and there are political issues to handle. The Ministry of Health won't be there. I try my best not to let my personal limitations stop me from delivering. And so far, so good. I think I've been able to do the most that I can. Yeah. Given my limitations. Yeah. Thank you.

31-42 mins

RV: I agree to both of my panellists in obtaining the leadership role. The challenges are, you know, they are global challenges. First is, yes, of course there is an absolute conflict of the biological clock of a woman and a career clock. You know, when you are at a particular age, you have to have babies, get married, take care of your family. And at that age that break, people write you off. They are you know, your peers become ahead of you. Your knowledge is not that upgraded. And when you come back, the policies are not that favourable for a woman to come back in the workforce. So that is one that you are busy fulfilling your social responsibilities despite of everything. Second, what I believe is the lack of female role models in Physiotherapy as a leader because I thank this platform of Word Physiotherapy two that I am meeting such great people today. But there is like, absolutely we don't know. The women don't know who are meaning, who are their role models for a leadership opportunities. You know, they eventually learn if they want to be a leader, it's through their journey. They will fall, they will rise, they will come up again. But there is no guidance. Nobody has a mentor who can tell them how to move ahead. So that is the second challenge. And third challenge, which I believe is that you get scared of taking risks. You get scared of the failures because you think that you don't know the right way. You don't know meaning how to take up the things you don't have, the access to the funding.

You are happy taking care of your family, getting the salary in your account. Because you know, the challenge is that in the leadership journey you will face everything. Everything. Meaning there can be, you know, totally taking away of your credit, your work just by giving you some names, just by, you know, thinking that you may be using the wrong means or, you know, they will take away all your hard work. They will take away everything that you have by the social media allegations. You know, they will demotivate you so that you withdraw yourself. And I believe that challenges don't go anywhere, even if you are in a leadership position, if you are in a bigger position, the challenges are bigger, but that eventually makes you a better person, that makes you a better leader. You are much mature to handle such things because these will come and go. But your aim is to, you know, to develop your profession, to develop your country, to make it, you know, the best health care profession. And that will only be your primary goal. So nobody can demotivate you. As I keep on saying that we all have come together. The women cell is working fantastic. We have reached to the rural level. We are doing low-cost workshops. We are doing the courses which earlier they were not happening. So if I would have quit or my team would have quit, this would have never happened. So the challenges should go on. They should go with the journey and we should keep moving.

HK: Wow. Thank you all. This is, so important. The things that you're talking about, the kind of structural and political parameters that really impact our lives and what we can attain. Something that Ruchi said kind of talking about examples. You know, part of the, the thing that we can see from the data that we've collected on gender is this kind of gap in representation among the workforce and people in leadership positions. But my question for you is: was there someone along the way that inspired you? First of all, you are all inspiring me right now, this is this is already working, but was there someone along your particular path that inspired you? And then what was it? What did they do? What did they say? If there was that moment for you of inspiration from someone else that you saw represented in leadership? So we'll start with, Nnenna and then go to Ruchi and Carmen.

NC: Okay? Yeah. Thank you very much. Yes. Um, personally, I pick mentorship from anywhere. I don't even have to have met you. So, like, the best mentors I've had don't even know me. So that's one thing for leaders, the way you carry yourself matters. You don't know who you are making an impression on. Yes, I've met women in my country.

I'm going to list some people. And outside my country. Yeah, okay. So for my country, there's a particular. Woman. She's lit now. She's not even a physiotherapist. She was a pharmacist. Dr. Dora Akunyili. You know, this was a woman that broke limits. She became the DG of one of the agencies in Nigeria. And she rewrote the way things were done. So growing up, I admired her like this woman is something. And then coming home, the other president before me, Dr. Bridget Biribi. You know her? Yeah. You know, didn't I admired her from afar, You know, the way she carried herself, the way she did the things she did. I'm just like, man, there are women, there are breaking this barriers. And then I had research mentors. Dr. Stephanie Dickson in Canada, you know, we have the same research interest. And for once I saw someone that was departing from the traditional physiotherapy role because when I started in HIV and cancer, I didn't have anybody to look up to in my region, so I had to seek outside. So the leadership is not just in political positions. It could be in academia. You know, you could be leading somebody, helping somebody organise their thoughts. And then when I got into the oncology group in the WCPT, oh man, there are women there. I had Dr. Jackie Drew, the current president of the speciality group, Dr. A.T., and then I had other women in the board of WCPT that were inspiring, like Dr. Esther Kundu, Dr. Stacey Gayle. These were black women, so they made an impact on me because I'm like, If they can break those barriers, then anybody can do it. Thank you.

RV: Uh, yeah. I believe every day there is an inspiration and totally I believe that my inspiration in this journey was all the secured men around me, starting from my father to my husband, to my two sons, to my president, Dr. Sanjeev Jha, to my friend Dr. John and many others. They all they were not threatened by a woman rising in the leadership position, which was very important for me, you know, to have my back and then to all the strong women, to all the strong office bearers of my team who never let me quit the senior, you know, they are the legends. Nita Madam Yagna, madam, they all, you know, never, never let me feel that I'm alone doing this because it is a difficult task, especially in the developing countries. You know, it's a huge challenge. But they stood with me rock solid. They never let me quit. I might have cried many times. They were there to wipe off my tears. When you are so weak and vulnerable, then these words that they believe in you. They know our intentions are right. Especially I am at the Treasurer position also in the association. So which involves finance and you know what kind of responsibilities come in when you are at that position, especially in the scenario. So it is

like the inspirations, they are huge and they all help me make what I am today. I am strong because they are having my back. Thank you.

CS: Well, I would like to start from the very beginning, because I would like to find my parents. They inspired me because they educate me for doing whatever I wanted to do. If someone could do something and you want to do something similar, you can do it also. So thank you them because they inspire me and they continue inspiring me in my daily life. So thank you so much. In relation to the professional. In my professional career. And have the opportunity to work in different fields research, education, clinical practice and also leadership roles. For this reason, I have known many, many women and men, many physiotherapist research teacher, educators, professor, clinical physiotherapist, even any other many other leadership leaders that supported me, helped me dedicated their time to training me, to listening to me to help me. Definitely. So thank you to all of them and thank you to in relation to my member organisation, thank you to all the executive committees that have been working in the Spanish Association of Physiotherapists to advocate the profession and trying to put our profession where it should be. So thank you all.

42-59 mins

HK: Thank you. So now we need your advice, right? So you talked about who has inspired you. We want to know if you have any advice for women in leadership, but especially women who are starting their journey. And there was actually a question in the chat that a couple questions that have spoken to that. One question from the chat was what do we all need to do to nurture, develop support, mentor or sponsor a new generation of female leaders globally? So what advice do you have on that? What skills should they develop? What experiences should they seek out? So we'll start with Ruchi, Carmen and then Nnenna.

RV: Yeah. Thank you, Heidi. So my advice to who all are in the position of leadership is first, that you are sitting on the table, start speaking for others. If you are doing that, you have to raise the voice of all those thousands of women who are not that fortunate that they are sitting with you. Make their voices heard, raise their concerns, make them aware of their rights. We in India, we worship women. And, you know, we have that faith that if the intent and content of your knowledge is clear, nobody can stop. You create more opportunities for them. And to all the new budding leaders, to all those who want

to start this journey, I would like to say that never give up meaning. Once people are talking about you, about your work, whatever they are talking good, bad, pulling you down, discussing about you. You are on a right track. As Nina said, you have arrived if people are discussing you. So no social platform, no social stigma, no environmental obstruction, no socioeconomic obstruction can make you weak, feel weak or vulnerable. It is women which brings more women in the profession. They organise more women and believe me, they can do incredible work as a leader. So don't quit. Don't demotivate yourself, believe in yourself, keep going on and never let anybody make you meaning judge you because you know what you are inside. Nobody else can tell you that you are, you know, not that powerful or you are not that good because you know the power is within you. You just have to extract it. Thank you.

CS: Well, I think that first I would like to highlight the importance of include all these leadership competencies during the entry level degree. So it's important just to start speaking about these roles for the future physiotherapy. So that's it's important that we, we should do it or we, we are starting to do it. And in relation to the advice that I will give to a a colleagues who starting in this role just to encourage her or him to continue doing what she or he is doing, because once you are there, you need some skill. You need to be to continue training in this role, learning from the others. And it's really important the team, all the people surrounding you to help you and to work together. Because this role, yes, sometimes you can feel alone that it's better to work as a team that maybe you lead. But it's important all the person who work with you so and encourage them to continue doing what they are doing and. And good luck.

NC: Yeah, what I'll add to that is follow your passion. Be disciplined. Your resilience is not going to be easy and you live in a real world. I don't remove myself from the reality of my circumstances. I got married, I had children. I trained my children. I was in their lives. But I didn't let that stop me. You know, you have to double back to balance it. One of the challenges is that you your you have to prove yourself. You know better than your male colleagues. But that's a challenge you're faced with and you have to surmount it so you can be found wanting in any area. You get that. So you need to understand the society that you live in and you keep triumphing until the society changes. Then you need to master your people skills. You must be able to control your emotions and be able to sell your vision to people. You can be mean. We used to say a leader without followers is just taking a walk. Nobody is interested in what you're saying. Then you're

not yet ready to come out. So for every young leader, be patient, get a mentor. Like for me, they were not even people around me. They didn't even know they were mentoring me, you know? So get somebody that inspires you and find out how the person is coping and managing to achieve what she's achieving. Then know that somebody else is looking at you. So don't give up because you're going to fail the young people that are looking at you and what are you going to tell us? You stopped halfway. No, you must be focussed. You gotta focus and get trained in leadership. Another thing I want to also trained for us is that we need to enable people. I'm so happy with what's happening at the World Physiotherapy level. There are so many, you know, leadership programs. You know, we have a network of young facilitators which one of the first people was a Nigerian student, and we made sure we gave our support. You know, once you see opportunities, point them in that direction, give them support and then form groups for women in my association, just like you have in India, we have the Forum for Women in Physiotherapy and it was the last male president inaugurated it. So it wasn't like a woman came up and she did it for them. No, we pushed it when he was president and the points were made and the need for it was seen and he was inaugurated. So we need to give people a platform to be able to, you know, get trained and to.

HK: Thank you. I also want to just echo those comments because I think it's really important to examine leadership as a concept, as something that you can do at any part, any at any point in your journey. Right. So you don't have to be in a leadership position overseeing people or responsibility for kind of organisational type of things. You can start that at any point in your career. And like you said, there are opportunities and programs out there that can help you kind of wrap your head around that and figure out what it means to lead from where you are at, wherever that may be. But you also kind of led into the final question. And so I want to hear just kind of your final words to everyone on this, but you kind of talked about advice that you would give from a structure standpoint to an organisation to encourage access to leadership roles. You know, we ask that question in the annual membership census about if there were specific policies or programs in place, and 14% of the respondents said there were, and that could have been how they advertised a position. What the, you know, how they characterise the role of something and whether or not there was a support structure. So it could look different depending on where you're at and the specific needs for the organisation. But just want to know, do you have any advice for organisations in this regard? And so we'll start with Carmen and then Nnenna and Ruchi. And this is our last question, by the way.

CS: And I think it's important, too, to highlight the importance of this rule. And I think that when we when we speak to organisations, you know, to institutions, it's important to speak about benefits, you know So it's, it's important role of this leadership to manage maybe better the organisation, to also manage the team, the team and also to manage the, the profession because we are speaking about effectiveness and mainly about cost effectiveness. That is one of the most important thing for the, you know, for the institution or organisation. So I encourage them to, to, to improve the access of, of this rule and to increase the number of these roles in the organisation because Physiotherapy leadership roles. It's important. Yeah. Thank you.

Yeah. Thank you. My advice is that organisations should be flexible.

Do away with the old stereotype. For example, if you are advertising for a job and somebody wants flexible hours so that she can juggle her private life. Try and accommodate that as much as he does not, you know, like affect the quality of the output of the job. You know, I don't have to come in by 8:00 if I can settle my children and come in by 10:00 and run clinic from 10:30. There's nothing wrong with that. The only thing you can do is to tell me when others go by. For I will go by five. I mean, you should be flexible so that you are accommodating everybody and then, um. Be open minded. Don't have a closed door against the. Is gender biased. You know, uh, don't worry about how we are going to cope. Don't worry about how I'm going to handle the men under me. Leave that to me. So be open minded. Trust the process. Trust the woman. Trust that she can deliver. If a woman can handle a house, a family, she can handle any organisation, you know? And then for the women, bring in your woman skills. I mean, that's an advantage. You shouldn't be this advantage. So and then of course, like I said, enable people by having structures in place and they are deliberate structures to encourage women and they are deliberate structures to break the stereotype and the bias. Are you encouraging women to come out from their shells? They have to be encouraged. And that's that will be done by the people calling them out. If they come out and there is no structure, they will go back in. They will get swallowed in if elections are coming up. Are you encouraging women to pick forms to get elected? Are you encouraging them to canvass for votes? And thank God for the technology? You know, this year's theme, we're talking about technology. Women should use technology and organisations should use technology. When I run my campaign as president, it was during COVID, so I did everything online and that was

super easier than me travelling across the country. So there are things you can put in place that will help women. Can they work from home when their children are small? Allow that for as long as it does not affect the job. You know? And then for a wonderful man, we are not demonising you because we are here today, because we have men that believed in us. We want to encourage you to keep supporting women, Hold the children. If your wife has to go for a meeting, if your wife is having an online meeting in the house, take the children out. They are also your children. They also belong to you. So there are things we can do to enable the woman do what she can do. And when a woman feels fulfilled, she'll be happier. You will have a happier, a happier society. Yes.

RV: I agree to both the panellist and representing the women physios, which cater to 1.45 billion of Indian population. That is 17.5% of world population, 32 countries. In the Asia West Pacific region. And this makes me more. Responsible and proud. Of the efforts we have done. So far. But, you know, the journey has to go on because the data shown by Heidi is not very favourable for Asia West Pacific region as far as leadership is concerned. We have faced the struggles. We have a model of women cell. What I want to see or I wish a platform in similar platform in World Physiotherapy, where global women leaders converge their strength, their working ideas for the upliftment of profession meaning, as we all know there, it should be cost effective. The programs, you know, many women, they are unable to upgrade themselves to come back to the workforce. There are the policies, meaning World Physiotherapy. Along with the international other organisations can ensure. Because there are many countries in the region, we say Afghanistan, there are Bangladesh, there are many countries where women are denied the basic rights, you know, basic right of working, basic right of education, higher education. So I think there should be an intervention, where World. Physiotherapy should come up with something where these women come out and come together, be more in the leadership roles. And as our government says. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Which means one. Not one family, one future. So let us all have same future together. We all are one family and we want really this profession to be the best profession. Women can change the destiny of the profession and association in their own countries, in the entire world. So I just wish a similar platform and my advice would be the same. So we need strict policies against meaning there should be no crime against women, there should be certain reservation in certain posts so that they are more motivated to come up to those positions. Thank you.

HK: Wow. Thank you all so much for sharing your experiences, for giving us great advice. A lot of good things to think about. I hope it's inspired people watching. It certainly has inspired me. And so just thank you all so much and thank you, everyone, for spending your time with us and listening and being interested in this topic to spend your afternoon or your evening with us. I just want to point out a couple kind of final housekeeping things. You can find out more information on World Physiotherapy events and activities by going to the website and looking at events. You can also subscribe to the mailing list where you will get this information automatically sent to you and believe that it is in the chat. There are certificates of attendance that will be sent out to everyone within the next week, so don't worry about that. It'll be sent to the email address that you registered with. And then just going to give one little, you know, extra plug for our congress coming up. So another opportunity where we can get together and we can continue this conversation at, you know, various kind of events. And so that's going to be in Dubai the second through to the 4th of June. So hope to see you all there. If not, you know, see you when we can. Thank you so much for your time, for sharing your experiences and have a great evening. Thank you, everyone.

CS: Thank you. Bye. Enjoy the day.

RV: Have a good day and night.

NC: I'm just reading the comments. They're so inspiring. If you look at the charts.

HK: Yes. Yes, we yeah, we all have. We'll have this as a as a transcript available in Spanish and French for later.

NC: So thank you so much.

HK: Thank you.

RV: Everyone. Thank you for having me.

CS: Thank you for this webinar. Nice to meet you all. Hope to see you soon. Yeah.

NC: We'll see. In Dubai.

CS: Yeah, hope so.