



## Development of Professional Theme Conferences in the Field of Continuing Education

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**PURPOSE:** A professional theme conference lasts for 1 - 3 days and usually 50 - 200 physiotherapists from around the country will participate. The overall purpose for the Association is the development and implementation of new knowledge and the creation of a dialogue of development in order to strengthen physiotherapy and the workplaces of physiotherapists. The Association sees the possibility of promoting new areas for physiotherapists leading to new jobs. Further, new knowledge arising from evidence-based research will throw new light on clinical practice. Another aim for the conference focus on learning: We believe that the participant will enhance her learning through the creation of arenas emphasizing dialogue, discussions, personal contacts across sectors, and the establishing of networks. **RELEVANCE:** Further education mostly concerns specific physiotherapy. A theme conference builds a bridge between research, professional development at work, clinical practice, and is a forum for active learning. **DESCRIPTION:** All members of the Association of Danish Physiotherapists are organized in clinical interest groups, occupational groups and local committees. When organizing a theme conference we form a planning committee, which is responsible for planning, hosting and evaluating the conference. They represent the above-mentioned groups: One superintendent, one researcher, one clinical advisor and one representative from the clinical interest group. They are carefully handpicked, knowledgeable specialists and resource persons who, due to their general assessment of the field, serve as visionaries and innovators. The planning occupies 3 - 4 meetings, which lead to a programme that gives space and possibilities for the development of clinical practice through new knowledge and dialogue. **OBSERVATIONS:** Evaluation shows, that when an effort in organizing a conference is made, the Association in return gets resource persons, researchers, and clinical specialists, who are all concerned on how the members jointly will develop the profession in the future. This is of great value for the flow of ideas of how to implement research into clinical practice, new ideas, networking, personal contacts, and quality insurance. **RESULTS:** The Ministry of Education in Denmark has agreed that life long learning must have a high priority. Many physiotherapists go into further education obtaining a university degree. The Association of Danish Physiotherapists sees it as an important task to carry the theme conferences further in order to illustrate new ways of developing the aims stated above, and thereby support life long learning.

