

## **Eligibility to Attend Schroth Certification Courses.**

As Schroth Instructors, we have been asked to discuss the decision of our schools (BSPTS and AKSK) to limit Schroth certification to physical therapists (PTs).

### **Original Physical Therapy Concept:**

The original Schroth concept was created by the German physiotherapist K. Schroth in 1921. It was later further developed by her daughter C. L. Schroth, also physiotherapist in Bad Sobernheim, and was introduced in Spain in the 1960's by E. Salvá, another physiotherapist. This method has been applied classically by PTs in Europe as a part of an integral scoliosis care plan managed by a multidisciplinary team formed by medical doctors, physiotherapists and orthotists. Ultimately, our aim is to preserve the quality of the method originally designed by K. Schroth – as a physiotherapy method.

### **BSPTS History of Certification Courses:**

The clinic in Barcelona started to educate PTs in Schroth in 1989, and from the very beginning only PTs were accepted in the courses. With the inception of the formal Barcelona Scoliosis Physical Therapy School (BSPTS) International Body of Instructors in 2011, the founding document declared “The most specific objective of BSPTS is to teach its methods to physiotherapists. (Therefore), the certification courses will be offered exclusively to physical therapists”. Since then, all BSPTS certification courses taught in Europe and North America have been limited to PTs, with orthotists and physicians able to attend as observers at a reduced cost (see SOSORT comments below).

### **Katharina Schroth Clinic / Asklepios (AKSK) History of Certification Courses:**

Since 2008, Schroth certification courses in the English language have been available at the Katharina Schroth Clinic in Bad Sobernheim as SST - course (Schroth 3D Scoliosis Therapy) and as ISST - course (International Schroth 3D Scoliosis Therapy®) abroad. At the beginning, some non-PT professionals were allowed to attend (such as chiropractors). Since 2011, the policy has changed to be the same as BSPTS, where certification is limited to PTs, but others may attend courses as observers.

### **Scope of Practice:**

Our decision to offer certification only to PTs is also related to the scope of practice for licensed professionals. Schroth clearly best fits with the scope of practice for PTs. As graduates of accredited PT universities, it is logical that only PTs can undergo further post-graduate education that is specific to PT methods. So it is also around the world for other medical and allied health professionals - where certain post-graduate training is limited based upon university degrees and professional credentialing. Whereas we agree that Schroth needs to be offered more readily around the world, this need cannot compromise the educational process or in the end, patients and the method will suffer. We encourage non-PT professionals that are interested in providing Schroth therapy to encourage their PT colleagues to attend certification courses, or to develop working relationships with PTs that are already certified.

While treating a patient with scoliosis specific exercises, the treating physical therapist is constantly observing the effects of the treatment and making clinical decisions on the course of the treatment. Licensed Physical Therapist Assistants may attend only with the Physical Therapist with whom they will be working. The Physical Therapy will then have the responsibility to delegate appropriate portions of the treatment plan and program to the physical therapist assistant consistent with the physical therapist assistant's education, training and experience.

They will be required, prior to the course, to sign a paper which states they agree to treat patients only while under the supervision of a BSPTS Certified Physical Therapist. They may take the test at the end of the course, but they will not be certified. They will receive a certificate of attendance.

### SOSORT Guidelines

SOSORT (The International Society of Orthopedic Scoliosis Rehabilitation and Treatment) was formed in 2004, with the key members of the leading European Schroth clinics as founding members (Dr. Weiss – Germany, and Dr. Rigo – Spain). Since then, BSPTS has always been intimately involved in and follows the consensus recommendations of SOSORT. The 2011 SOSORT consensus on treatment guidelines clearly define the main members of the multidisciplinary team as MD, orthotist, and physical therapist. The exercise methods being carried out under SOSORT treatment guidelines are referred to “Physiotherapy Scoliosis Specific Exercises” (PSSE), which is inclusive of the Schroth Method. This supports Schroth being limited to the PT member of the team.

### The Question of Politics:

According to the previously stated historical background, BSPTS and AKSK are not practicing “exclusion” of any one profession. Instead, we are practicing “inclusion” of PTs for Schroth training for reasons stated above. The decision has nothing to do with politics, and we discourage anyone from creating an artificial political issue from one that is clearly not. Schroth was, is, and will be a physical therapy method applied by PTs, as it has been for nearly a full century. As the climate is changing in non-operative care for scoliosis, more professionals may want to be part of the meeting the growing demand by patients and families are looking for better care. But each professional has their own role, and it is the role of the PT to apply PT methods – Schroth being just one of many. There is no political motive for our decision, but only a historical and professional one.

### Education for Non-Physical Therapists

We admire the enthusiasm and desire of non-PTs to learn more about scoliosis exercise in order to benefit the scoliosis community. We feel it is important to provide education to all providers that may see scoliosis in their practices to help better overall non-operative management of scoliosis.

SOSORT: In an effort to support the educational mission, SOSORT offers an annual Educational Preconference before every annual scientific meeting during which all disciplines may attend to learn about scoliosis management, including the different schools of exercise.

BSPTS and AKSK: As indicated above, MDs and orthotists, as members of the SOSORT-recognized multidisciplinary team, are able to attend Schroth Certification courses as observers.

BSPTS/US: In response to an especially rapid growing interest in Schroth education in the US, the US group of BSPTS instructors offers a 2 day course open to all disciplines. The “Introduction to Scoliosis Rehabilitation” course provides knowledge for all disciplines about key rehabilitation concepts. Although this is not a certification course, participants will gain an understanding of the rehabilitation needs of scoliosis patients to help them improve their management of scoliosis patients.

Respectfully,

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