



Message from the AAOMPT President

Tim Flynn, PT, PhD

Do you have an identity crisis?

I am Tim Flynn, PT. I am a Physical Therapist. I am board certified in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy and fellowship trained in Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapy. I am a Physical Therapist period. I used to place a lot of initials behind my name; at least I did before our Treasurer John Child's insecurity ruined it for all of us. I remember this event very clearly, it happened when his initials overflowed onto two lines when using 10 point font on standard 8.5 X 11" paper. I guess we might want to actually thank him for saving us from what was rapidly becoming a complete loss of the branding of physical therapy.

As members of the Academy we need to take the lead in our profession. We are Physical Therapists. We are members of the best profession in Medicine. However, the average patient/client in our country does not have any idea of what a physical therapist does nor are they aware of the large volume of evidence that now supports manual physical therapy interventions for a wide range of musculoskeletal disorders. We, as physical therapists, are largely responsible for this identity crisis. It is not unusual to see a wide array of alphabet soup behind our names (for example- Cert. MDT, CHT, CMP, COMT, CSCS, DPT, FACSM, FAAOMPT, FAPTA, FCAMT, FFCFMT, MTC, MPT, OCS, OMT, SCS). This dilutes who we are. Personally, I would fail an examination if I had to spell out what all of those initials mean. Try a little test with the next 10 patients you see by asking them if they know what these initials represent. Our professional colleagues are recognized by their

professional title designator (MD, DO) and their specialized training is described to the consumer (i.e. board certified Orthopaedic Surgeon; fellowship trained in Foot & Ankle). The patient/client in our culture understands this; they do not understand all of the initials that we put with our names. Medical professionals in academia may have their terminal academic degree behind their name (i.e. MPH, PhD, etc). However, they are still identified by their professional designator and medical training. We are not defined by our techniques or our numerous certifications; rather we are defined by our unique body of knowledge and our perspective on managing the musculoskeletal system. I believe clarity in our identity will come with less initials and more description. I would urge all Academy members to take the lead and clearly brand yourself as a Physical Therapist and describe clearly your board certification and fellowship training. Let's lead the charge and get our identity back.

Tim Flynn, PT, PhD
 Board Certified in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy
 Fellowship Trained in Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapy

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**AAOMPT Annual
 Conference
 Oct. 29 - Nov. 2
 Seattle, WA**