



# IHA Newsletter #2



## Welcome to the 2nd Edition of the IHA Newsletter

As preparations continue for the 2025 IHA Conference in Slovenia next May, this edition brings important updates about the call for abstracts as well as a draft programme with details of the workshops on offer.

We are also featuring a brand new video created by Dawn Gallacher which is to do with Autism and Halliwick. This powerful short film follows an autistic girl as she enters a busy swimming pool, where the overwhelming lights and sounds intensify her anxiety. However, once she submerges beneath the water, the sensory overload fades—lights dim, sounds muffle, and her anxiety begins to ebb away. Click on the link and walk to the pool with her...

Our regular column “from the archive” features a paper by Konstantinos Chandolias, Chrysoula Moscolouri, Paris Iakovidis, Alexandra Hristara-Papadopoulou and Ilias Kallistratos. Entitled “The effectiveness of a specialized hydrotherapy program based on Halliwick concept in the transition from supine to sitting of children with cerebral palsy”, it will show that Hydrotherapy-Halliwick positively helps, over time, to improve standing from supine to sitting as well as sitting symmetry in children with cerebral palsy.

As usual, you'll find the latest details of upcoming courses on the last, but not least, page of the newsletter.

Happy reading!

With our best wishes and big splashes, Your IHA Education and Research Committee

LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA  
Host city of the 2025 IHA  
Conference

**We're proud to feature IHA's two new Senior Lecturers, Ursula and Nir.**

**Nir Alt** is a hydrotherapy expert with over 28 years of experience and has led numerous Halliwick courses and workshops, contributing to the field through research and teaching.

**Ursula Barrett** has been a Halliwick lecturer since 2011 and has been pivotal in expanding Halliwick's reach in Ireland. She was mentored by Beryl Kelsey, the late IHA Emeritus Lecturer, who we pay tribute to in this edition.



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## In memory of Beryl Kelsey

Beryl Kelsey's contributions to the Halliwick Concept are deeply rooted in her lifelong dedication to the empowerment of people with disabilities. As one of the early champions of Halliwick, her legacy is woven into the very fabric of what the Halliwick Association has become today.

Beryl's collaboration with James McMillan was a partnership that laid the foundation for the modern Halliwick Concept. Their shared vision of creating a method that embraced freedom, confidence, and independence in water has touched the lives of countless individuals. While James may have pioneered the ten-point program, Beryl was there, along with other early Halliwick practitioners, refining, teaching, and shaping the approach into something that could be shared globally.

Beryl wasn't just a teacher—she was a tireless advocate for the Halliwick Concept. Those who knew her often recall her infectious enthusiasm and belief in the transformative power of water. She traveled extensively, bringing the Halliwick message to new countries and communities, ensuring that the concept reached all corners of the world. Whether she was giving a lecture in Europe or demonstrating techniques to a new group of instructors in Asia, Beryl's energy and dedication were evident to all.

Many of us in the Halliwick community owe our knowledge, and indeed our passion for the concept, to Beryl's mentorship. She had a remarkable ability to connect with people, to inspire both instructors and participants alike.

Her patience, wisdom, and hands-on approach made her a beloved figure in the Halliwick family. Beryl didn't just train people in the Halliwick principles—she instilled in them the deep belief that water could be a medium for change, growth, and independence.

What truly set Beryl apart was her understanding of the broader impact of the Halliwick Concept. She saw water not only as a means for physical rehabilitation but also as a way to nurture the spirit. For Beryl, Halliwick was about giving people confidence, joy, and freedom—gifts that extended far beyond the pool. Her vision continues to inspire those of us who carry on her work today.



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## Conference Preview: Slovenia 2025

The Halliwick community is excited to be gathering together in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from May 8th to 11th, 2025, for our next conference, themed "HALLIWICK BEYOND BOUNDARIES: Thinking Outside the Box." This event will unite practitioners, researchers, and enthusiasts to explore innovative approaches in the Halliwick Concept.

- Venue: University Rehabilitation Institute Soča
- Dates: May 8-11, 2025
- Call for Proposals: Abstract submissions open until December 15, 2024

See below the official call for papers and draft programme, including keynote speeches, workshops, and poster sessions focused on Halliwick as hydrotherapy, competitive swimming, and its integration into new therapeutic projects.

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

"Halliwick Beyond Boundaries - Thinking Outside the Box"

The Halliwick conference will take place from May 8th to May 11th, 2025, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

### Organizational Details:

#### Venue:

University Rehabilitation Institute Soča  
Linhartova 51  
1000

Ljubljana, Slovenia

<https://www.uri-soca.si/en/>

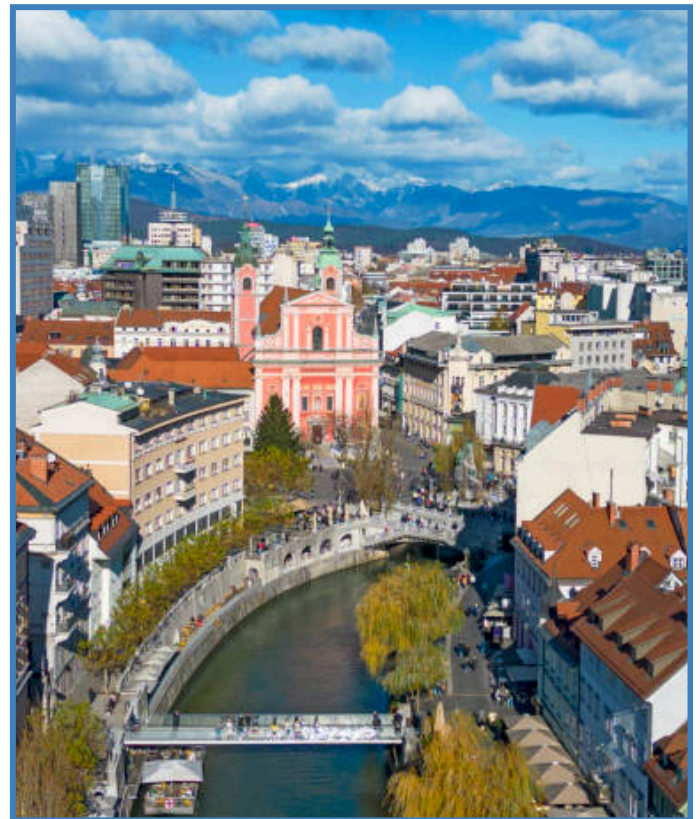
Members of the Conference Committee &  
IHA Education & Research Committee:

#### Conference Committee Members:

Katja Groleger Srsen  
Camilla Benincasa  
Nir Alt

#### Education & Research Committee Members:

Nir Alt  
Montserrat Gutierrez Bassas  
Chrysoula Mosholouri  
Dr. Konstantinos "Kostas" Chandolias  
Fezia Tyebally  
Camilla Benincasa



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## Preliminary Program Overview

### General meeting with election:

Day 1: Thursday, 8 May 2025

- 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration & Welcome Coffee
- 09:30 – 11:30 | Meeting of Executive and Education & Research Committee
- 11:30 – 13:00 | Lunch Break
- 13:00 – 13:30 | Registration (for new arrivals) & Welcome Coffee
- 13:30 – 16:00 | General Meeting of the IHA
- 16:00 – 16:30 | Coffee Break
- 16:30 – 18:00 | General Meeting of the IHA (cont.)
- 19:00 – 21:00 | Networking Dinner (unofficial)

### Conference day:

Day 2: Friday, 9 May 2025

- 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration (for new arrivals) & Welcome Coffee
- 09:30 – 11:30 | Session 1
  - greetings
  - Keynote lecture
  - Guest lecture
- 11:30 – 12:00 | Coffee Break + Poster Session
- 12:00 – 13:00 | Session 2
- 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break
- 14:00 – 15:30 | Session 3
- 15:30 – 16:00 | Coffee Break + Poster Session
- 16:00 – 17:30 | Session 4
- 19:00 – 21:30 | Evening Reception & Gala

**Day 3 & 4: Saturday, 10 May 2025 & Sunday, 11 May 2025**

### Advanced Course & Workshop

#### \*details of advanced course and workshop to follow

- 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration (for new arrivals) & Welcome Coffee
- 09:30 – 11:00 | Session 1
- 11:00 – 11:30 | Coffee Break
- 11:30 – 13:00 | Session 2
- 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break
- 14:00 – 15:30 | Session 3
- 15:30 – 16:00 | Coffee Break
- 16:00 – 17:30 | Session 4
- 19:00 – 21:00 | Networking Dinner (unofficial)

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# IHA Newsletter #2

## Call for Abstracts

We invite all those involved in the field of water treatment to submit abstracts for a lecture or poster at the Conference.

December 15, 2024: Last day for submission of abstracts for Lectures & Posters.

February 28, 2025: Abstract Acceptance and notice to senders.

You can contact the following team members through the Education & Research Committee:

Email: [education@halliwick.org](mailto:education@halliwick.org)

Below is a list of topics

1. Halliwick & Competitive Swimming

[the paper may (but not necessarily) refer to regular, competition with timehandicap, Paralympic, Special Olympics (\*timehandicap according to Halliwick methodology)]

2. Halliwick as Hydrotherapy

[the paper may refer to research and/or implementation in practice]

3. Halliwick in Special Projects

[For example, European projects like Erasmus; non-traditional settings like open water, home-based therapy etc.]

4. Cultural Adaptation of the Halliwick Concept

[For example, teaching and practising Halliwick in a multicultural setting, including differing cultural and religious norms]

5. Halliwick and Mental Health

[therapeutic benefits beyond physical rehabilitation e.g. emotional and behavioural outcomes]

6. Combining Halliwick with other therapeutic approaches

[physiotherapy, occupational therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy etc.]

7. Halliwick in neurorehabilitation

[new neural pathways through aquatic movement, improving motor skills, balance, coordination etc.]

8. Community-Based Halliwick Projects or Programmes

(continued)

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## Call for Abstracts (continued)

### Guidelines

Lecture (Synchronous or Recorded): 20 minutes including questions and discussion of 5 minutes.

Short Movie: 10 minutes.

Poster: Presented at a designated session during the Coffee break of the conference. The posters will hang in the designated places and the poster presenters will answer the questions of the participants who approach them.

### Guidelines for Abstract Submission:

Presentations can be made in English or the lecturer's native language, provided that the lecture is delivered with English subtitles.

All abstracts should be submitted in English (maximum of 500 words). Do not include citations or references.

### Guidelines for Poster Submission:

Make sure the poster is not displayed as a presentation. The poster should be a single slide printed on a sheet measuring 100 x 70 cm, describing the research process and only it will be displayed.

Ensure that the poster is readable and clear.

For any questions, contact us at: [education@halliwick.org](mailto:education@halliwick.org)

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## INTRODUCING...

### Senior Halliwick Lecturer: Ursula Barrett

Ursula grew up around water as her mother was a lifeguard, swim teacher and water safety instructor. She spent her summers growing up attending water safety courses and trained as a lifeguard. She was introduced to Halliwick when she attended her first foundation course in Ireland in 2007. After this course she volunteered with a local group catering for children with autism where her appreciation for the Halliwick concept developed.

Her first mentor was Beryl Kelsy and she was in safe hands as Beryl not only guided her into lecturing but also supported the establishment of the Halliwick Swimming Association of Ireland. Ursula built on her knowledge and skills in Halliwick learning from her mentor Beryl but also Pamela Wood, Ann Gresswell and Jean Pierre Maes. She was recognised as a lecturer in 2011 and regularly delivers Halliwick foundation courses alongside Mary Arrigan-Langan and trainee Brid Browne in Ireland. She has also delivered workshops in Finland as part of her role as a lecturer for Munster Technological University.



Ursula was also a member of the IHA education and research committee for several years including the role of chair of the committee. She has attended multiple international IHA events and contributed to conferences and publications. She remains active in her national association and hopes that the status of senior lecturer will assist the country in progressing more trainee lecturers to become lecturers in the future. Ursula was delighted to hear the news that she has reached the standard of Senior Lecturer and hopes to follow in the footsteps of her initial mentor Beryl Kelsy, honouring her passion for Halliwick and her dedication to supporting its growth internationally.

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## Senior Halliwick Lecturer: Nir Alt

Nir Alt is a recognized IHA senior lecturer with over 28 years of experience in hydrotherapy and water-based therapeutic practices. He is a certified therapist in Chinese medicine, specializing in Chinese pediatrics, and certified in manual therapy methods such as shiatsu, various types of massage, craniosacral therapy, and more.

He has led numerous Halliwick courses and workshops across institutions, including Zafet, Tel Hai, and Wingate Colleges. Nir works with complex cases involving developmental disabilities, orthopedics, and neurological conditions, and mentors interns and therapists through advanced hydrotherapy techniques like Halliwick, Watsu, AI CHI, and Bad Ragaz.



As the professional manager of a hydrotherapy center, he continues to contribute to the field through teaching and published research on case-based learning in Halliwick courses.

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## The Calm Breath

This powerful short film follows an autistic girl as she enters a busy swimming pool, where the overwhelming lights and sounds intensify her anxiety. However, once she submerges beneath the water, the sensory overload fades—lights dim, sounds muffle, and her anxiety begins to ebb away.

Drowning is the number one cause of death for autistic children, making water safety an essential skill for all. It's crucial to teach children how to get into a safe breathing position in the water and build confidence to navigate aquatic environments safely.

The sensation of pressure as you submerge in water can feel like a "hug" to some children, which is why understanding water safety through methods like the Halliwick Concept is so important.

<https://youtu.be/j8kpVeATN6k>



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## Research Spotlight

by Konstantinos Chandolias, Chrysoula Moscolouri, Paris Lakovidis, Alexandra Hristara-Papadopoulou and Ilias Kallistratos

Here is a focus on a randomized control trial on the effectiveness of a specialized hydrotherapy program based on the Halliwick concept in the transition from supine to sitting of children with cerebral palsy.

This study highlights the significant role the Halliwick Concept can play in improving motor function.

**Background:** Halliwick concept focus on people with disabilities, to participate in water activities and move independently. Many studies found a considerable improvement and positive outcomes in children that were included in hydrotherapy programs. The aim of this study was to investigate the Halliwick hydrotherapy in combination with onland intervention, versus only on-land treatment, on the supine-sitting transition and head symmetry.

**Methods:** 54 children with cerebral palsy (CP), two groups, the intervention group-water (N=28) (1 water and 1 on land treatment) and the control group-on land (N=26) (2 treatments on land). The duration was 3 months and the assessment via gross motor function measure (GMFM), parameter B, questions 18-37, and head angle via the Kinovea software.

**Results:** In GMFM before intervention the mean value of the intervention group was 69.632 ( $\pm 13.1269$ ), while for the control group was 61.227 ( $\pm 20.4681$ ) and after for intervention group was 75.757 ( $\pm 12.3766$ ), 6.125% improvement, while for control group was 65.308 ( $\pm 20.6663$ ), 4.081% improvement. In the sitting head angle before intervention, the mean value of intervention group was 19.36 ( $\pm 9.639$ ) while for the control group was 20.15 ( $\pm 11.199$ ) and after for the intervention group was 13.93 ( $\pm 7.333$ ), 5.43% improvement, while for control group was 16.46 ( $\pm 9.205$ ), 3.69% improvement.

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## Research Spotlight (continued)

**Conclusions:** The addition of intervention in water in combination with intervention on land in the rehabilitation program of children with cerebral palsy can lead to a statistically significant increase in the effectiveness of the therapeutic program.

The implementation of programs that include hydrotherapy, appropriately adapted, can produce benefits in children with cerebral palsy. There is the possibility that the therapeutic approach using hydrotherapy will offer the child a better execution of movements than if this movement were carried out on land. The purpose of hydrotherapy is not only a part of the treatment or a way of restoring the movements of children with cerebral palsy, but it is also considered a way to be able to improve the person's daily life.

This research is the first in the literature to investigate the two treatment approaches over a long period of intervention and targeting a specific activity.

Hydrotherapy-Halliwick positively helps, over time, to improve standing from supine to sitting as well as sitting symmetry in children with CP. Adding Halliwick hydrotherapy to the rehabilitation program of children with cerebral palsy enhances their improvement in gross motor function and symmetry.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364597689> The effectiveness of a specialized hydrotherapy program based on Halliwick concept in the transition from supine to sitting of children with cerebral palsy a randomised control trial

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## Upcoming IHA courses



Course	Place	Date	Lecturer
Halliwick Foundation Course	Slovenia	November 2024	Katarina Praznik
Halliwick Foundation Course	Greece	9 - 11 November 2024	Konstantinos Chandolias
Halliwick Foundation Course	Poland	June, Sept, Oct, Nov, & Dec (6 courses) 2024	Krzysztof Milkowski
Halliwick Foundation Course	San Juan, Puerto Rico	(Postponed to 2025)	Fezia Tyebally



Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Halliwick community. We look forward to seeing you in Ljubljana, where together we will explore new ideas, share knowledge, and advance the future of aquatic therapy.

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