

Toward the Establishment of a Universal Foot Pressure Standard: A Report of the Banff Boards of Scientific Enquiry (I and II)

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Abstract

The purpose of this overview is to provide an historical context for the development of the Universal Foot Pressure Standard. This report concludes with details of the two Banff Boards of Scientific Enquiry in August 2002, and outlines the internationally agreed upon model for the standardization of the shoe and monopodal pirate adaptation device [MPAD] industries, and consequences for such standardization.

Introduction

In recent podiatric history, several key concerns have been raised by members of national boards of enquiry (Public Record, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2001). The root of these concerns has inevitably sprung from the rampant inequality and injustice, not to mention abhorrent disregard for solid scientific principles, present within the North American shoe industry—a strong carry-over from distant years of British colonial rule. Citing qualitative research opinion (Everyone, 2000), many boards of enquiry provide strong evidence for the necessity of reform. What follows is an academic review of relevant literature and events pertaining to the development of this scientific discussion. It is followed by a discussion of the outcome of the dialogue and decisions of the first two boards of scientific enquiry for shoe and monopodal pirate adaptation

device [MPAD] affairs—including their description of a universal model of measurement. This paper will conclude with an outline of the implications of adopting this new model as a true international standard.

Review of Literature

It is of little wonder that the North American continent remains the last bastion of imperial measurement, considering the grounded relationship between shoe size and the individual's academic well being. Conjecture (1973) tells us that "not only is the relationship between individuals and their footwear indicative of sensible intellectual development, but it remains the key stagnation of heuristics in adaptive metric and scientific deduction—so vital for growth and development in children" (p. 86). Indeed, time has shown that North American children, even those in

Canada, are often confused in early scientific pursuits as a result of a systemic mixture of measurement systems. A respected scientist of the podiatric arts noted in his address to the National Board of Enquiry of Canada:

[L]ost in the bipolarity of a country torn between its commitment to metric science and the imperial measurements of our largest trading partner to the south, children—our very own children—study the *Système international* [S.I.] in school, yet in the home learn their weight in pounds Avoirdupois, their height in feet, and most peculiarly of all, their shoe size in a system of inaccurate length only loosely based on imperial inches but more accurately measured in accordance with the 14th-Century British barleycorn standard. (Public Record, 1990a)

Again and again the literature sustains the sentiments and concerns outlined above. Of interest however, is the number of similar arguments made by concerned groups interested in bridging inequalities presently dividing the footed and monopodal world. Taking the lead in this area were several such groups within Scandinavia, as early as 1993 (Concerned Group, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). Much of the world followed within five years of this initial charge for equality (Concerned Group, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997) – with the only possible exception being a group of “scientists” from Belgium claiming that notions of inequality within the footed

theatre were merely post-Dickensian psycho-revisionism (“Scientists”, 1995).

Preparation for a Model of Conversion

In a 2002 conference held in the German provincial city of Saarbrücken, members of various Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs], Trans-Governmental Scientific Organizations and Commissions [TGSOCS], and Public Interest Groups [PIGs], consolidated their perspectives under the banner of “equality, universality and scientific accuracy in the shoe and monopodal pirate adaptation device industries.” The results of the conference were two fold: first, they agreed to meet biannual-septavialy (seven times within every two-year period); and second, to develop a standard unit of shoe and MPAD measurement (Saarbrücken Conference Notes, 2002).

The latter result prompted the creation of two boards of scientific enquiry, both of which convened their first meetings in the Canadian resort city of Banff in August 2002. The first of these boards was charged with the responsibility of devising a convenient, equitable, universal and scientific model of shoe and MPAD measurement. The second prepared a plan for worldwide implementation.

The Universal Foot Pressure Standard

Several notions of standardization were discussed during the August 2002 board meeting: mass, magnetism, polarity, thread count, Doppler effect, tensile durability, and blood-gas,

among others. At the conclusion of the third plenipotentiary session, the membership appeared evenly divided in their support of two predominant measurement schema: pH values (logarithmic measure of hydrogen ion concentration, or $-\log[H^+]$), suggested by representatives of the French and Luxembourgish scientific communities, and kPa (kiloPascals) propagated by a large group including participants from much of South America (less Argentina) and those of Canada, Iceland and Bangladesh.

Debate raged on for a further two sessions. At its conclusion, however, an impassioned speech made by the representative of Paraguay received torrents of applause—ultimately reflective of a consolidation of popular opinion. With overwhelming support, 88.6% of the members present voted in favor of a new universal standard based on the pressure placed by an individual's foot (adaptive pirate device, stilt or crutch) upon the floor. The Universal Foot Pressure Standard [UFPS] was born. The Banff Boards of Scientific Enquiry concluded with a luncheon.

With this agreement, scientific communities the world over race toward an efficient and scientific way of calculating and converting world shoe et al. device sizes into the UFPS.

Implications for the Future of Podiatric Sciences

The decision of the second of the Banff Boards of Scientific Enquiry included several recommendations for the implementation of the UFPS. Though

verbosely described within its Official Report (2002), it was decided that shoe et al. device sizes should be tackled in an order considerate of the greatest need for scientific advancement. What follows is a list of target dates for global standardization of non-standard sizes:

- North American – January 2003
- Mexican – February 2003
- European – March 2003
- Japanese – April 2003
- British – May 2003
- Australian – June 2003
- Korean – July 2003

Other implications were identified, including the need for training and possible retooling of both the shoe and MPAD production and dissemination industries. Total costs at this point are incalculable, though early estimates suggest figures surpassing 1,350,000 Dutch guilders. Certain “members” of the Belgian “scientific” community outlined their concerns surrounding the tertiary cost of updating children's school textbooks and mercantile signage. A representative of the Hyderabad Woman's Coalition for Standardization addressed their concerns by stating, “is not the ideal of standardization sufficient justification for such expenditure?”

In expectation of a new era of scientific standardization, members of the world scientific community continue to ascribe their loyalty to the banner of the 2002 Saarbrücken Conference: *Equality, Universality and Scientific Accuracy in the Shoe and Monopodal Pirate Adaptation Device Industries!*

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