

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We have entered yet another year and the South African Journal of Occupational Therapy takes this opportunity of wishing all our readers a productive year in research and publication. We hope that we will see the fruits of your work in the future editions of this journal.

The importance of outcome measures in the support of scientific evidence of the effectiveness of a service has become an essential guiding tool in the allocation of funds for service provision. Outcome measures consist of the evaluation of the results of an activity, plan, process or programme and their comparison with the intended or projected results. They are, therefore, important in determining the success or otherwise of treatment. There are three papers in this edition of SAJOT which provide background on outcome measures.

The first paper in this regard is the 22nd Vona du Toit Memorial Lecture¹ given last year by Daleen Casteleijn. The paper is an important one as it addresses the issue of implementing routine outcome measures in our work. Dr Casteleijn has developed a tool based on the stages of creative ability formulated by Vona du Toit, a tool that should prove extremely useful for measuring our therapy outcomes. Vona du Toit proved indeed to be a visionary in our profession and left us an important legacy in the Model of Creative Ability. Dr Casteleijn also draws our attention to one of the basic tenets of our profession i.e. the importance of occupations, as was stated in the founding documents of the profession way back in 1917. It is heartening, to note that this aspect of the profession has strengthened over the years.

South African occupational Therapists have long been reliant on testing materials for use with children that have been developed and standardised in America. It is, therefore, significant for the profession that a test for the evaluation of bilateral fine motor skills in children has now been developed in South Africa for local conditions². Additionally this test has used tasks as its basis which makes it unique. This, the second article in this edition describes the development of the items of the test as well as some of its psychometric properties which make it an extremely useful tool for occupational therapists to use in measuring school readiness in grade O children. The fact that the test was found to have both validity and test-retest reliability should also make it a useful outcome measure.

Hough and Nel³ continue to provide studies that will make the use of the Posture Analysis Tool Kit a useful, reliable and valid assessment tool for occupational therapists to use in the assessment of standing posture alignment as well as a more scientific alternative to the plumb line method of evaluating posture. According to the review of the literature in the article, the intra-rater reliability of a measurement tool is important if the tool is to be used as an outcome measure. It is therefore useful that we now have the Posture Analysis Tool Kit that can be used in the production of outcome measures for the profession.

The fourth article⁴, looks at the difficult question of the use of matriculation scores as the criterion for admission to occupational therapy courses at Universities in South Africa. The authors of this article did a retrospective review of the records of students admitted to the occupational therapy course at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal between the years 2005 and 2010. As a result of their study they suggest that matriculation scores may be used to predict degree percentage averages but that the matric scores should be used with caution when trying to predict success in specific components of the course such as clinical work. It seems that matriculation results do not offer a comprehensive guide to success in the training to become an occupational therapist and that the profession has yet to formulate a profile of abilities that will help in the selection of students for the profession.

The next article⁵ deals with a little discussed but critical aspect of substance abuse i.e. the anger behaviour manifested by those who abuse substances such as alcohol and drugs and the relationship between this anger behaviour and the individual's sensory processing patterns. The researchers used the Brown and Dunn Adolescent / Adult Sensory Profile to evaluate the sensory processing patterns of their study sample as well as a questionnaire to determine anger behaviour. The research found an interesting phenomenon i.e. that

a majority of the substance abusers showed significant sensory seeking or sensory avoiding behaviour. The researchers also found a relationship between these sensory patterns and the type of anger behaviour manifested, thus giving a background for therapy planning and intervention to help deal with the sensory processing problems.

The Opinion Piece by Ruth Watson entitled⁶ "A population Approach to Occupational Therapy" highlights again what many therapists, who have been actively involved in rural communities since the early 1980's know and are accustomed to trying to cope with in their daily work of implementing Community Based Rehabilitation. On the 21st of March we again celebrated Human Rights Day. This paper highlights the fact that many rural communities have yet to experience the benefits of the link between human rights and health as advocated by the Alma Alta declaration more than 30 years ago. As the author of this article says many people, particularly those in rural disadvantaged communities, do not know what their rights are or "even how to access services". This paper serves to remind us of the different important components of CBR and in particular of the mechanisms that can be put in place to develop realistic and inclusive policies that will lead towards improvements in the various communities. As London states "... Human rights approaches imply the prioritisation of the needs of those who are most at risk⁷. Watson suggests that in pursuit of this goal, combining a population approach to intervention with CBR can bring added benefits to the community being served and maybe this will bring some reality to our celebrations of Human Rights Day.

The Editorial Comment in SAJOT Vol 42 No3 listed some of the requirements for being part of the PubMed platform. One of the criteria that we are not yet meeting is the one of having a bank of articles ready to draw from for publication (at least one publication worth of articles in this bank). At the moment SAJOT editors have only the required number of articles for publishing in a particular Journal. The usual delays are preventing this from happening (see the article in the current Newsletter). One of the problems is that authors are checking the boxes in the Submission Checklist without adhering to requirements such as attaching the Multiple Choice Questions, having an English grammar check conducted etc. This inevitably leads to delays. However we need to have many articles for SAJOT to create a bank. So please keep on sending your research and comments for publication.

REFERENCES

1. Casteleijn D, The 22nd Vona Du Toit memorial Lecture: Stepping Stones from input to Outcomes: an Occupational Perspective. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
2. Ratcliffe I, Franzsen D, Bischof F. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
3. Hough R and Nel R. Intra-rater reliability of the Posture Analysis Tool Kit. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
4. Naidoo P, Motala N, Joubert RW. Matriculation Scores as an Indicator of Academic Success in an Occupational Therapy Education Programme. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
5. Stols D, van Heerden R, van Jaarsveld A. Substance abusers' anger behaviour and sensory processing patterns: An occupational therapy investigation. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
6. Watson R. A population approach to occupational therapy. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2013; Vol 43:1. In this edition.
7. London L. Human Rights: a professional responsibility and institutional obligation. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2008; Vol 38:1; 1.

Marj Concha

