

Editorial comment

I am delighted to be able to inform the readers and those interested in publishing in this journal that the journal web site (www.sajot.co.za) is now operational for the following functions:

- ❖ Readers are able to view the abstracts for articles published in Vol. 40, no 3 Dec 2010 and Vol. 41 No 1 March 2011. As we progress with setting up of the site, the full text articles will become available to the members of OTASA.
- ❖ A link to the OTASA web site (www.otasa.org.za) is available for OTASA members to access the options for Continuing Professional Development.
- ❖ Authors are able to submit their manuscripts on line. Instructions to authors covering article requirements can also be viewed on the web site. Some guidelines for the submission of articles via the web site can be found attached to the "Guidelines for Publishing in the South African Journal of Occupational Therapy" in this edition (see page) and authors are advised to read these guidelines before submitting an article. As all stages of the review process are recorded on line, authors are now able to track the progress of their articles up to publication.
- ❖ The review process is now also controlled through the site with reviewers being appointed and submitting their reviews via the site.

It is hoped that the web based management system will make the editorial function much more efficient and record keeping easier. It also means that an assistant editor can share the editorial functions with the editor. However, there are still a number of articles in the system that will have to be dealt with through the "old" process.

A time consuming job for the editor is following up articles with both reviewers and authors. The web site will shortly be set up for automatic reminders to be sent to reviewers which should make the editor's role more stream-lined.

In the last three i.e. Journals Vol. 40, No 2, 2010 to Vol. 41 No 1 2011, it is noteworthy that there were only fifteen articles and two scientific letters published. Nine of the articles used quantitative research methods as did the two scientific letters, the others used a qualitative research methodology. Only two of the articles were intervention studies looking at the effects of therapy^{1,2}, one quantitative and one qualitative. The articles in this edition, although very useful for providing information for practice, do not provide information on the effectiveness of occupational therapy intervention.

If we are to add to the body of empirical research to provide the knowledge needed for Evidence-Based- Practice (EBP), we not only have to increase the number of articles published in SAJOT but we also have to increase the number of contributions that prove the effectiveness of our therapy.

The first article in this edition of the journal is an important one which looks at the various occupational therapy interventions attended by long term in-patients at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital in Pretoria³. A disturbing finding was that on the whole, attendance at occupational therapy was low, with the most attendances coming from high functioning long term in-patients and male in-patients and low functioning long term patients being relatively neglected. This article takes an important step in analysing the services rendered by occupational therapists and providing the information needed to restructure the service so that larger numbers of patients can access opportunities that should enable them to reach higher levels of function.

The second article explores the experiences of three occupational therapy students from middle class backgrounds that experienced difficulties with their studies during the first year of university^{4,8}. The author uses an interesting framework for examining their difficulties. So, while the problems experienced by these students are not unique the use of Bourdieu's analytical constructs of habitus, field and capital provides a means of "exploring the complexity of an individual's transition from one social context to another"⁴. The finding that the rules, practices, and behaviours of university life are known and transparent to the academics but are often not clear to the first year student should serve to warn academics against the 'hidden curriculum'.

The next article tackles a topic which is often neglected, if not avoided, in rehabilitation practices i.e. the subject of sexuality. In this

pilot study students at the University Kwa Zulu Natal held a focus group with women who had a spinal cord injury⁵. They found that a significant shortcoming of rehabilitation was the failure to provide individualised and client centred intervention⁵ in the area of sexuality. A guide to therapists is the fact that the participants felt that an able bodied therapist was not able to understand the needs and feelings of those with a spinal cord injury, therefore, the need to introduce peer counselling into the rehabilitation process.

The fourth article investigates the knowledge that employees of a beverage manufacturing company have about health and safety regulations⁶. The extent to which employees have this knowledge would be reflected in the number of health and safety incidents in the company. This in turn would influence the productivity of the workers. Allied health professionals and especially occupational therapists (OTs) are an integral part of the occupational health care service and of ensuring ergonomic and safe environments for workers. They therefore have a need to know the extent of the workers knowledge of health and safety regulations for intervention planning purposes. The fact that it was found that 53% of employees in this particular manufacturing company were unable to correctly list the general health and safety rules applicable to the work of the company is of concern and may demonstrate the need for such surveys to be carried out in other companies so that the situation can be remedied.

The fifth article⁷ describes the development of a scissors skills programme for young children. Cutting with scissors is a difficult skill for young children to master if there has been no early exposure. As this activity requires a great deal of co-ordination it is important as part of the repertoire of activities in which children engage as they build up the fine motor ability needed to write. This paper describes the steps that were taken to construct and determine the content validity of a graded programme for improving cutting skills in children in grade 0.

The last⁸ article reports on a process undertaken to examine vocational rehabilitation services in the Western Cape, identify service delivery gaps and propose alternatives to making this service available to more people with disabilities. This paper reported on the way in which an iter-sectoral model, that aligns practice with policy, and that was inclusive of the different role players was developed. We note with sadness that when this model was presented to these role players, it was met with "significant resistance" mostly due to cost implications. It is regrettable that services that could provide skills and help to people with disabilities that would in fact reduce the financial burden to the state, the family and lastly and most importantly the individual, that these are not readily accepted.

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