

Editorial comment

In the last edition of SAJOT I mentioned that the Journal was moving to a web based management system. Work is progressing nicely and by the next edition management of Journal articles will be through the web site. Currently readers can access the Instructions to Authors at www.sajot.co.za.

The Guest editorial deals with Research Ethics¹, a subject which becomes more and more important as we develop new ways of evaluating the effectiveness of treatment provided by occupational therapists. Van der Reyden has published three articles in SAJOT which dealt with legislation and ethics in practice^{2,3,4}. The concept of informed consent related to the treatment of clients, client privacy etc is shown by van Niekerk to be similar and just as important in the research setting as it is in the practice setting. It is highly recommended that occupational therapists read the Guest Editorial together with the articles by van der Reyden.

We again have articles based on work carried out by 4th year occupational therapy students. These papers describe research related to children and their assessment as well as the problems that institutionalised children may have in the perceptual motor sphere. The first is an article by van Jaarsveld, Vermaak and van Rooyen⁵ on the developmental status of street children who were staying in a shelter. The study found a number of sensory-motor and cognitive-perceptual problems in the group. The second article by Van Heerden et al⁶ examined the relationship between visual motor integration and various factors that might affect the institutionalised child such as age, gender, types of play etc. These authors pointed out that the number of different types of play that a child engages in as well as the play resources, the number of professionals and volunteers available at an institution and the socioeconomic circumstances of the institution have a significant relationship to the development of visual motor integration. Both these studies indicate that occupational therapists should have a role in improving perceptual motor skills in the institutionalised child.

A third article is also within the perceptual – motor field of practice. This article written by Richmond and Holland⁷ is a follow up to the one they published in Dec 2010⁸ and examines the correlation between two Visual Perceptual tests (the Developmental test of Visual Perception -2 [TVPS-2] and the Test of Visual Perception Skills (non motor) Revised [TVPS-R non motor]) as well as their relationship to academic performance. The authors found that the two tests were of equal value when looking at the overall scores however the subtests revealed differences in outcome. They recommend the use of the TVPS-R as it appears to be a more reliable measure of visual perceptual skills.

A fourth article dealing with assessment describes the use of the Tupperware™ Shape O Toy as an assessment tool for tactile memory, visual spacial perception and tactile form perception, for people with limited vision⁹. Both sten and stanine scores have been provided for a normative sample of 170 adults. This paper provides very useful information for testing adults with low vision and fills a gap in the testing environment for this type of patient particularly as it is low cost and easily obtainable.

In this edition is also published an article which looks at the effects of psychomotor play on body perception of young children with developmental delay¹⁰. A group of children from an inclusive nursery school was exposed to the psycho-motor approach to developing play. This approach advocates that children “play liberally, express themselves spontaneously” and regards the development of self confidence and a positive self image as important factors in intervention outcomes. Sometimes as therapists we emphasise skill attainment rather the emotions that are attached to enjoying particular activities and this article underlines the importance of a positive self image.

Also to be found in this Journal are two articles that are relevant to two different fields of practice. The article by Wegner¹¹, describes the interesting work that she did with adolescents investigating their perceptions of boredom and risk behaviour during

their free time. It gives a clearer insight into the risks of leisure boredom. Wegner used photography as an interesting way of getting adolescents to express themselves. Her study also emphasised the need for occupational therapists to implement strategies to overcome the imbalances that may occur in adolescents free time so that the risks of substance abuse are reduced. Secondly the article by Maja et al¹², that aimed to identify the knowledge, attitudes and experiences that the people in two companies had of employing people with disabilities has reflected the gap that exists between the preparation of a disabled person for employment and actual employment. The authors indicate that the lack of “knowledge, awareness and understanding” that potential employers have of disability needs to be dealt with before a person with a disability can be successfully integrated into the work force.

References

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