

# Editorial comment

Readers will note that, as the 2010/2011 year for OTASA begins, there is a new executive committee. This means that we have lost Lana van Niekerk from our SAJOT committee, but we hope that she will still be able to be of assistance. I take this opportunity to wish her well with her new duties and tasks as President of OTASA.

The Journal is preparing for another change as we move into an era of web based electronic management. This will mean that authors will be able to track the progress of their article electronically and we hope this will also make it easier to manage the articles and the review system as well as enhance communication between committee members, so watch this space!

In this edition of SAJOT we have again published a scientific letter<sup>1</sup>. This one deals with the perspectives of and assessment of the knowledge of final year student occupational therapy students regarding the writing of scientific articles. A sense of "satisfaction and self confidence" was displayed by the students in the self evaluation of their knowledge which should encourage them to make contributions to SAJOT in the future.

This journal contains two papers that will add to the knowledge of therapists involved in treating children with learning disabilities. The first article entitled "The relationship between a teacher check list and standardised test of visual perception skills; A South African remedial primary school perspective"<sup>2</sup> by Richmond and Holland, certainly makes one think about the role and effectiveness of perceptual tests in diagnosing problems in children with learning difficulties. The results of this study reinforce the fact that visual perception is a complex process and "observations by the teacher must be taken into account when diagnosing and treating a learner for visual perceptual difficulties". The paper also showed that the sub-tests should not be used in isolation for diagnostic purposes as subtests such as that for figure ground, visual closure and form constancy did not correlate well with the teacher check list, but all the composite scores displayed adequate correlations. The authors therefore recommended further development of the teacher check list as a screening tool to identify those children that need in depth evaluation by an occupational therapist.

The second article by Buitendag and Aronstam<sup>3</sup> dealing with issues associated to learning difficulties, investigated the relationship between developmental dyspraxia and sensory responsivity. The study did not find that a relationship existed but provided other interesting correlations, thus further demonstrating the complexities of treating children who have symptoms associated with learning problems.

An interesting study into the attitudes and feelings of women with mental illness living in an impoverished area of Cape Town was carried out by fourth year students at the University of Cape Town<sup>4</sup>. This study showed that the women felt that their existence was dominated by their socioeconomic status rather than the fact that they had a psychiatric illness. Although the disability grant

provided a much needed income, they perceived themselves as "just existing". Of interest to occupational therapists is that their strategies for existing were "devoid of active doing", a finding that can guide occupational therapy intervention.

As we approach the end of the year 2010, two articles provide an opportunity for us to reflect on our practice over the last year and prepare ourselves for 2011. The article by Van der Reyden<sup>5</sup> on "Legislation for everyday practice", adds another resource to that already provided by the articles on the "Right to respect for autonomy"<sup>6,7</sup>. As Van der Reyden explains, much of what was previously ethical obligation has now become entrenched in legislation and it is thus incumbent on occupational therapists to familiarise themselves with the relevant acts. The second article that should provide food for thought, is the one authored by Joubert<sup>8</sup>. She, fortunately for the future of the profession, suggests that we as a profession have 'become of age' and are in the process of creating a new and more robust and appropriate Africanised epistemology". We look forward to publishing research focused on South African based philosophies and techniques in the future.

The SAJOT committee takes this opportunity to wish all its readers a happy and productive 2011. We also look forward to reporting on the outcomes of the work that you accomplished during the course of 2010.

## References

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