

Note from the Editor

M.E. Concha

In the August 2008 edition of the South African Journal of Occupational Therapy (SAJOT) a very interesting article titled "Occupational Therapy and its potentially positive influence upon the CD4 count of individuals with HIV: A single case study" appeared¹. This is one of very few articles that have been published in SAJOT dealing with HIV and rehabilitation written by occupational therapists. It seems strange considering that the prevalence of HIV in the South African population of people two years and older is estimated to be 10.8%². This prevalence is particularly high in the age group 30 - 34 years (23.3% for men and 26.0% for women²). This high rate would indicate that therapists working in the hospitals of the country should be in daily contact with people who are HIV+ and who may be living with AIDS. Patients suffering from opportunistic infections and conditions arising from being HIV+ such as stroke, psychoses, peripheral neuropathy and muscle weakness to name but a few, can benefit from rehabilitation which can make a significant difference in their lives³. It has been found that after rehabilitation people living with AIDS (PLAs) become more independent in activities of daily living and the degree to which they interact socially with their family and community improves. Returning to work has allowed people living with AIDS to feel as though they can still be contributing members of society and has helped them to direct the focus of their attention away from the disease⁴.

There is very little published worldwide on the effects of rehabilitation on PLAs. According to the publishers Taylor and Francis (Routledge), the best scientific journals are those that provide information not given in other Journals. It would seem therefore that South Africa is well placed to make a significant contribution to the literature in this arena. The Journal would therefore welcome articles providing this information.

To fulfill a unique role, SAJOT should also be publishing research that is unique to the work done in Africa. There is much that the rest of the world can learn from the way in which we adapt and implement occupational therapy methodology and practice to meet our specific needs. The special edition on Human rights in Occupational Therapy also provided a unique contribution to the literature.

In our effort to transform SAJOT into an internationally recognised publication there are other measures that need to be implemented such as having a peer review process that engages the authors in such a way that this process becomes a learning experience. According to information from other journal editors, peer review can take up to two years should this desirable active engagement between reviewers and authors take place during the process. However the speed with which the reviews are conducted and the time taken for authors to respond to the review is still an area of concern and must be addressed. Your Editorial committee is exploring ways of improving this process.

It is also important for the Journal to be integrated into the correct research networks. Currently SAJOT can be accessed on line via the EBSCO site where the abstracts of articles can be viewed and the journal purchased. Other electronic sites are being investigated.

The Academy of Science in South Africa has recently established a National Scholarly Editors' Forum and the editor of SAJOT has become a member. The objectives of this Forum are "generally to support and promote high-quality scholarly publishing in South Africa, and especially to assist in efforts"⁵ to bring this about. "A National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review for South African Scholarly Journals"⁶ has also been published to

guide editors through the editorial process. I am happy to say that the editing process of the Journal meets all of the criteria mentioned. According to the Code of best Practice articles published in SAJOT must conform to the following*:

- *Reported findings must be original*
- *The paper must not be under consideration by another journal*
- *There must be sufficient detail given in the methods to permit replication of the study*
- *There must be no inconsistent or fabricated data*
- *Statistical treatment must be thorough and conclusions reasonable*
- *Existing relevant literature must be appropriately and fairly cited*
- *Special attention must be given to the first lead author and other authors should only be included if they have contributed directly to the production of the work at an intellectual level.*
- *Speculative deductions must be clearly specified*
- *Funding sources must be acknowledged and author affiliations given*
- *Priority for publication is accorded from the date of acceptance of an article and not from its receipt*
- *Post publication errors must be retracted in the same Journal*
- *There is a 'best practice' rule that states that studies addressing a particular question should not be broken up into a series of short publications⁶.*

However, a journal is only as good as the articles that are submitted to it. The editorial board can ensure that it publishes only those papers that meet all the criteria for publication, but a journal is still restricted by the number, type and quality of the articles it receives. The journal committee is pleased that there has been an increase in the number of articles published but to maintain this increase it is important that the number of articles submitted grows from its current rate of fourteen per annum. I would like to thank all of you who presented your research to the journal and hope that there will be more contributions in the future. Let us work together to make SAJOT an internationally recognised publication with articles that are cited world wide.

* The complete unabridged list can be obtained from the Editor or from the Academy of Science of South Africa (info@assaf.org.za).

References

1. Joubert R, Motala N, Mottay N, Christopher C. Occupational Therapy and its potentially positive influence upon the CD4 count of individuals with HIV: A single case study. *SAJOT* 2008; 2: 14 – 18.
2. Human Sciences Research Council Fact sheet, Nov 2005. <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Factsheet-40.phtml> 17/9/08.
3. Concha, ME, Unpublished research report on "Community Care and rehabilitation for people Living with AIDS". Medical Research Council of SA 2007.
4. McReynolds CL, The meaning of work in the lives of People Living with HIV Disease and AIDS, *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 44:2, 104-115.
5. Academy of Science of South Africa, Terms of Reference of the National Scholarly Editors' Forum of South Africa, 2008.
6. Academy of Science of South Africa, A National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review for South African Scholarly Journals, 2008.

Errata

The previous issue: Volume 39, No. 2, July 2008 printed on the cover should have read **Volume 38, No.2, July 2008, ISSN 00382337**. Unfortunately the numbering on the actual pages is also incorrect and cannot be changed. Please place the enclosed sticker over the incorrect numbering on the outside Front Cover.

The authors of the article "Occupational Therapy and its potentially positive influence upon the CD4 count of individuals with HIV: A single case study" published in SAJOT Vol. 2, 14-18, 2008, should read as Robin Joubert, Nasreen Motala, **Nicole Mottay** and Chantal Christopher.

