
EDITORIAL

*But what is freedom? Rightly understood,
A universal licence to be good.*

Hartley Coleridge 1796-1849

The new code of conduct and ethical rules relating to physiotherapy practice will give greater freedom to physiotherapists, but this in turn will require greater self-discipline by us all. As the rules become less descriptive and restrictive, so we will need to be even more careful not to infringe upon the rights of our patients and colleagues. Rules and regulations are there to guide us in our behaviour towards our clients and our colleagues but as Edmund Burke (1729-1791) says. "It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason and justice tell me what I ought to do".

The Committee of Preliminary Inquiry of the Professional Board for Physiotherapy have found recurring complaints against physiotherapists over the years. These included

- Practitioners failing to identify themselves to patients and to explain what service would be rendered to patients in hospital
- Failure to enter into a written or verbal contract with the patient
- Inappropriate or ineffective treatment
- Incorrect billing of accounts
- Touting for patients by, for example, offering free physiotherapy services.

Although most of the complaints received are against physiotherapists in private practice, the failure to identify themselves and failure to enter into contract with the patient will apply to every practising physiotherapist. All physiotherapists and students need to reconsider their approach towards their patients and ensure that their clients are part of the decision-making process.

Part of the role of a professional is to share knowledge with our colleagues. What better way to do this than by contributing to one's own professional journal? Yet relatively few of our members are submitting articles to this journal, and the Editorial Board is having to rely for publications from those outside our profession. Unless members support their own journal and make an effort to share their experiences with others, the journal could be forced to stop publication.

It was therefore a pleasure to receive an article from two students from the University of Stellenbosch, who not only

showed that they were able to undertake research, but were also willing to publish their findings. In the neat study by Sabor and Moll, the effect of preliminary warm-up exercises prior to swimming was investigated. Their study showed that there was some improvement in the swimming performance of those subjects who did the controlled warm-up programme.

In a case study by T Paulsen, the assessment and treatment of pain in the sacroiliac region in a woman who was 24 weeks pregnant are presented. There are many different opinions regarding the treatment of pain in the sacroiliac region and the need for accurate assessment and selection of techniques is highlighted. This is the first case study to be published and it is hoped that there will be a regular flow of articles, especially from our vast majority of clinical physiotherapists.

The importance of educating parents regarding the advantages of breast-feeding is discussed by Berg et al. The perception of obstetric physiotherapists with regard to breast-feeding in South Africa and the role that they may play in its promotion during childbirth education was surveyed by the authors.

Congratulations to Sheena Irwin-Carruthers who was elected chairman of the International Bobath Instructors Association for Adult Hemiplegia (IBITAH) at the recent AGM held in Japan. Miss Irwin-Carruthers was the first recipient of the Smith and Nephew travel bursary and her report of the meeting of IBITAH is presented in this journal.

As South Africa becomes accepted more readily in the international community, the SASP is pleased to be able to host the next executive meeting of WCPT-Africa. This will be held in March in Johannesburg and it is hoped that members of the Society will be able to meet with their colleagues to exchange ideas.

May 1993 be a successful year for all our members both in the practice of physiotherapy as well as in service to the profession. It is a sad reflection on our willingness to give something back to the profession when the biggest branch of the SASP was unable to find enough volunteers to serve on their executive committee. We do need to instil enthusiasm in our students and younger colleagues by example, and convince them of the satisfaction they may gain by serving their own Society.

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