

What Does Student Membership of the South African Society of Physiotherapy Mean to You?

INGRID MARREN

The S.A.S.P. is divided into a number of regional branches. Student membership falls under the branch which serves the area where the training centre is situated.

A student member enjoys a variety of privileges of the Society at a very reasonable price. The S.A.S.P. journal which you receive is paid for out of your subscriptions. Compare your subscription with the price of an individual Journal!

The students as a group should also receive the regional newsletter. This contains information of all local events of interest. Several of these newsletters have summaries of lectures, job opportunities as well as news of courses and seminars presented by the branch. Notice is also given of lectures organized by the local executive. Any other courses or symposia of interest to the profession are also advertised in the newsletter.

The branches present prizes to deserving students for academic achievement. In the case of a needy and deserving person, loans or bursaries are granted to assist in post-graduate study.

The S.A.S.P. is the official mouth piece in negotiations on conditions of service and salaries. Furthermore, it is the official contact with the media viz. radio, television and the press.

There are on-going efforts to familiarise the public with the profession of Physiotherapy. The recently held "Back week" is a good example of this. The aim of

"Back week" was to provide a service to the public with regard to back care and the prevention of back problems. An improvement in the professional image of Physiotherapy was also envisioned. Medical awareness is stimulated by our publishing articles in their journals.

There are various special interest groups to be found in the Society e.g. obstetric, manipulations, private practitioners, hospital and lecturers groups. Students may also join these groups. Lectures and courses pertinent to these specific interests are organized to extend knowledge and expertise. E.g. the private practitioners supply information on the organization of a new private practice.

As a qualified physiotherapist you can be insured against malpractice claims by joining the group insurance scheme.

In the whole of the RSA there are approximately 2000 registered physiotherapists. Not all are members of the Society. Some of the latter argue that the subscription (including insurance and the Journal) is too high. At present the subscription is R39 — i.e. about R4,00 per month — about half the monthly telephone rental charges!

These physiotherapists also maintain that "they" (meaning the S.A.S.P.) do nothing for the individual. Naturally they have never taken part in any Society activities and know nothing about what the Society represents. As a member one has the opportunity to serve on various local committees as well as to suggest any wider changes. These would then be discussed at the biennial Council Meetings.

Every student member is essential in order to make the Society really representative and to keep young in spirit and outlook. Make use of the privilege that is yours.

INGRID MARREN, Nat. Dip. Physio., Dip. Ed. Physio.
Chairman of the Northern Transvaal Branch of the S.A.S.P.
