

## CORRESPONDENCE

---

### TRAINING OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS IN GERIATRIC CARE

To the Editor,

Focus on specialised geriatric care is rapidly expanding in South Africa. This has been necessitated by the ageing of all population groups. The physiotherapist has a vital and integral role in the multi-disciplinary approach to the management of the geriatric patient.

In the Durban area, 2 Community Health physiotherapy posts and one at The Association for the Aged are vacant, a post at Bill Buchanan Park is filled by a Physical Education instructor.

Addington Hospital's multi-disciplinary geriatric assessment unit — (a 50 bed ward and special out-patient clinic) — is served by the hospital's physiotherapy department with inconsistent degrees of enthusiasm.

It has been noted that physiotherapists who are enthusiastic and motivated, are those who have had post-graduate training or experience in a geriatric facility.

In view of the foregoing and the undeniable expansion of developments in geriatrics, it is urged that specialised training and focus on the Aged patient be included in the undergraduate curriculum at all schools of physiotherapy in the Republic. It is to be hoped too, that specialised post-graduate courses can be offered as interest and demand grows. It is only in this way that the role of the physiotherapist can be enhanced and integrated into rehabilitation and health care of the aged.

Prof. P. de V. Meiring, head of Geriatrics at U.C.T. has experienced similar problems and supports these views.

Dr. G. Futeran  
Head Geriatric Unit  
Addington Hospital

*To our knowledge, Geriatrics is included in the undergraduate physiotherapy course. Some comment from the university departments please. — Editor.*

---

### GOOD NEWS FOR THE DISABLED

The Bromilow-Downing Independent Living Centre, a resource centre for the disabled, recently opened in Mowbray under the auspices of the Association for the Physically Disabled (Western Cape). The centre will be of value to people with disabilities, those caring for disabled persons and health care professionals.

People may telephone, write to or visit the Independent Living Centre to obtain *information* about aids and equipment which can assist a disabled person to function more independently. Information is also available on regular household appliances, fixtures and fittings, and architectural hardware suitable for use by disabled people.

Those visiting the Independent Living Centre will be exposed to a wide range of these aids which are *displayed* in the area in which they would normally be used e.g. kitchen or bathroom. An occupational thera-

pist will demonstrate equipment and assist the person in selecting the product(s) which matches his/her needs.

No aids are sold or hired at the Independent Living Centre. Once a suitable product has been selected, the person will be referred to the relevant suppliers/manufacturers.

People with disabilities, those caring for disabled people and health care professionals are most welcome to make contact with the Independent Living Centre. Visits are by *appointment only*.

The Bromilow-Downing Independent Living Centre is situated at 11 Berkeley Road, Mowbray 7700. Tel: (021) 65-4100.

A similar centre also exists in Johannesburg. The Independent Living Centre, Happiness House, cor. Loveday and Wolmarans Street, Johannesburg 2000. Tel: (011) 724-3225.