

EDITORIAL

The sub-committee, which was convened to improve the image and scientific standing of the Journal, has met twice and certain proposals have been put forward. Some of the perceived problems identified were that—

- the standard of the Journal does not reflect the current standard of the profession in South Africa
- only a small number of physiotherapists write for the Journal
- the Journal lacks a scientific standard
- many of the physiotherapists and the majority of students do not read the Journal
- using a theme for each edition of the Journal is not always popular.

Some of these points contrast to the findings of an independent survey which suggested that on the whole physiotherapists were reading at least 50% of the editorial and that they were satisfied with the service provided by the Journal. We invite comment regarding the retention of the theme content for each edition or of allowing each Journal to comprise of miscellany of articles.

However, the Publications Committee is aware that there is always room for improvement and will support any constructive advice from the sub-committee and the Editorial Board. The proposal that a scientific editor should be appointed is welcomed and a job description for the editor is being sought. It was also suggested that help should be made available to potential authors and that articles would be published outlining how to write scientific articles and case studies. We look forward to both these suggestions being put into practice which will increase the number of articles for publication.

Although WHO states that rehabilitation is one of the major components of primary health care, these services are lacking in most areas of South Africa. Economically a country can not afford to ignore rehabilitating the disabled persons who could become productive members of society, while caregivers could be employed in more gain-

ful work. It is therefore essential to establish where the disabled persons are, who comprise 10% of the total population, what services are available and who is caring for these people. A few articles in this Journal attempt to address these problems but much more research is needed in these areas.

J Potterton surveyed the epidemiology of cerebral palsy in Giyani as well as the main concerns of the parents or care givers. Amosun *et al* went a step further and investigated the mental health of caregivers of handicapped children. The high level of stress found amongst this group of caregivers suggests that the psychological problems of the caregivers should be addressed and should form part of the treatment of the handicapped child.

Following a request from the Manenberg community, a domiciliary programme was established in this area. The programme was aimed at improving the quality of life of the severely disabled persons and their caregivers with emphasis being placed on the community development process. The disabled persons were encouraged to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation needs and to gain more control over their own lives. This study was written up by M Futter.

Amosun and Dantile evaluated the physiotherapy curriculum of the University of the Western Cape. In their study they found that burnout existed among physiotherapy students and they identified the need to establish the causal factors of burnout and ways of solving the problem. This should be of interest to both educators and practitioners who all experience this syndrome during their professional lives.

The November Journal will contain articles related to exercise and management of joint problems and authors who still wish to submit manuscripts for review must do so before the end of August. Also in the November Journal will be an article by M van Wyk and E Smith highlighting the importance of efficient supervision.

■ J C Beenhakker