Letters to the Editor

Likes Case Reports
My copies of AJOT are becoming dog-eared since you instituted the Case Report section of the journal. The articles are quite helpful and have stimulated our team to be more resourceful in developing methods and modalities for providing active treatment to our clients. I hope to see this department continue.

Patricia Dunleavy, COTA/L
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Editor's Note
AJOT received only a few case report papers last year, not enough to publish one in each issue—a goal for 1990. Let's hear from others.

Therapist Uses Pain Reduction Techniques in Private Practice
Guy L. McCormack’s article, “Pain Management by Occupational Therapists” (September 1988, pp. 582-590), which reviewed the physiological mechanisms involved in reducing pain, was timely and reconfirming.

I have been treating postacute and chronic pain patients since 1984, working with an occupational health physician. During this time, I have gradually and successfully used many of the procedures described by Mr. McCormack, such as pressure to trigger points, acupressure, myofascial release, relaxation tapes, and visualization. I believe that reducing or managing pain is important in the realm of occupational therapy practice to allow patients to progress and increase their activity level in the occupational therapy clinic, at home, in the community, and at work.

From my experience, occupational therapists working in physical disabilities or hand clinics or in work-hardening programs have difficulty increasing patients’ activity levels due to the occurrence of pain, which could be successfully dealt with by the therapist at the time it occurs. Also, it could be used as a preliminary to the activity. In addition to those pain-reducing techniques mentioned in the article, there is craniosacral therapy.

Thank you for including this article in AJOT.

Bette L. Passian, OTR
New Hope, Minnesota

AJOT Articles Helpful for Practitioners Interested in Research
Beginning clinical research is a big step for any occupational therapy department. Staff members from Occupational Therapy Consultants, Inc., in Bridgewater, New Jersey, are currently planning to begin such a project. As part of the preliminary steps, a planning group has begun to meet and develop assignments for a needed literature review. Reading research articles as part of the literature review can prove a formidable task for those first attempting research. Two articles in the September 1988 issue of AJOT proved very valuable in helping the group move forward in a more knowledgeable way.

The article by Stephen A. Heck, “The Effect of Purposeful Activity on Pain Tolerance” (pp. 577-581), was used as the basis for a study guide in the companion article “How to Read a Research Paper” by Helen Cohen (pp. 596-600). Together, these articles helped those of us who are more familiar with the treatment than with the research aspects of therapy to understand how to get the most out of published clinical research literature.

The members of the study group felt that Ms. Cohen’s article was clearly written and presented relevant, concrete information. Concerning the typically complex job of conducting a comprehensive literature review, the participants indicated that the article would make it easier for them to find the desired details from published papers they were reviewing and to do so in less time. After reading Ms. Cohen’s paper, the group felt more competent to critique research publications that may be useful for their purposes. The participants also commented on the value of being reminded of the details important for planning, conducting, and reporting clinical research.

“How to Read a Research Paper” served to motivate the group to read and discuss current findings in occupational therapy literature.

Maureen Viru, COTA
Paula Emma, BS, COTA
Bridgewater, New Jersey

Children’s Social and Emotional Development Appears in Book
Having read and reread decades’ worth of journals and texts in preparation for the first and second editions of Occupational Therapy for Children (Pratt & Allen, 1989), I take exception to Florey’s notion that the social-emotional development of children and treatment aspects are largely ignored in the occupational therapy literature (“Nationally Speaking—Treating the Whole Child: Rhetoric or Reality?” June 1989, pp. 365-369). It is up to other authors to debate points of their own work with her. However, the authors and editors of Occupational Therapy for Children made an exhaustive effort to saturate the book with concern for the social and emotional aspects of children’s development and treatment. We did this because of our shared commitment to treatment of the whole child. Therefore, I was dismayed to read Florey’s statement that the book merely “contains one chapter on the emotional problems of children” (p. 365).

Even in a cursory review of the text, there is not a single chapter that does not address social and emotional issues. The only chapter that is weak in this respect is Burke’s presentation of the organization and administration of a private practice. Stephen’s chapter on schoolwork and occupational therapy in the school system is particularly pertinent to Florey’s article. In fairness to Florey, perhaps her literature search was diluted by an attempt to locate references that separate social-emotional treatment from general pediatric practice.

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