

Celebrating 100 years of Physiotherapy Education in New Zealand

On behalf of the Honorary Editorial Committee of the New Zealand Journal of Physiotherapy I would like you to join with us in celebrating 100 years of Physiotherapy in New Zealand and to congratulate the University of Otago's School of Physiotherapy on its centennial birthday. What a magnificent achievement, 100 years of physiotherapy education! Congratulations are also extended to AUT's School of Physiotherapy as they celebrate their 40th anniversary. To mark these auspicious occasions, we are publishing a special issue of the New Zealand Journal of Physiotherapy. In this issue are invited papers commenting and reflecting on articles published in the first issue of the journal in September 1938.

The first issue of the journal, the "*Official Organ of the New Zealand Trained Masseurs' Association*", was published under the editorship of Miss PK Trimmer, of the Wellington branch. It was funded by a £2.10 contribution from each of the branches and 500 copies were published. The editorship remained in Wellington until 1942, after which it was rotated around the branches. Later a non-practising physiotherapist took over the role of editorship for an honorarium. In 1957 a professional editor was appointed, Mr APS Smith. Mr Smith was not a physiotherapist and he reportedly found it difficult to provide oversight on the content of the journal, although he did establish a sound financial base for it. So in 1961 a committee of physiotherapists once more took over the editorship, assisted again by the branches. Miss Glen Park, followed by Mrs LC Gardiner in 1964, established the journal's present high professional standard. Pen Simmers was appointed editor in 1974, and she was followed by six equally competent editors (Michael Lamont, Rocky Lowdon, Bryan Paynter, Sandra Bassett, Sue Lord, and Haxby Abbott) who advanced the journal onto the international stage, listed now in the CINHALL (Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature) and AMED (Allied and Complementary Medicine Database) databases. Incidentally, Bryan Paynter still remains involved with the journal as our proficient copy editor. Looking back over past editorials and historical articles of the journal, I noticed a common theme, one of lament over insufficient submissions. Hopefully this trend is slowly changing; last year we had a few bumper issues of the journal and the growing size of some issues meant we had to hold over accepted manuscripts for subsequent issues! The Honorary Editorial Committee is now working to have the journal Medline listed.

Our journal does not however attract cutting edge research from New Zealand's leading physiotherapy researchers; in today's neoliberal atmosphere of audits and compliances, academics are forced to publish their work in high profile journals with impressive impact factors. I do not see this as a problem, it is gratifying to see our New Zealand physiotherapy research leaders published and acknowledged in the international arena. Our journal instead occupies a niche market, one of encouraging and nurturing emerging researchers, clinicians with important messages to impart, and research of predominantly New Zealand interest. In 2010 when the remarketed *Journal of Physiotherapy* of the Australian Physiotherapy Association asked for our journal to amalgamate with it, Physiotherapy New

Zealand decided against the merger. The importance of our small yet historically important journal was thus acknowledged.

Our journal appears to be the fourth oldest physiotherapy journal in the world. The oldest journal is the American Association of Physical Therapy's journal - *Physical Therapy* - established in 1921. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Journal, the *Journal of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses* was first published in July 1915 (now known as *Physiotherapy*) and *Physiotherapy Canada* dates back to 1923. The *Australian Journal of Physiotherapy* (now called the *Journal of Physiotherapy*) first came out in 1955. We are historically important.

The Physiotherapy profession has a proud history in New Zealand. Our two Schools, our professional body (Physiotherapy New Zealand), and our journal have ensured this. This proud history is evidenced (as rightly so in this era of evidenced based practice) by this issue's papers which comment and reflect (an appropriate process, one required of us now to maintain our professional registration) on those of our first issue in 1938. You will read of the incredible work of New Zealand physiotherapists in establishing and growing our profession internationally; yet you will probably be quietly amused that in many ways our profession has not changed, just the evidence for it more firmly established.

Leigh Hale, PhD

Editor

New Zealand Journal of Physiotherapy

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