
Editorial – November 2015

Before I relate to the current issue, I would like to share some of my experiences from the AOTA conference held last March in Nashville, Tennessee. As in every AOTA conference, a group of Israeli OT academicians attended. They presented their research and projects and were complimented on their topics and the high standard of Israeli OT research. As usual, we were a bit ‘jealous’ of the sense of pride in the occupational therapy profession expressed by the 6,000 OTs participating in the conference. Attending this conference is important in order to feel connected with the ‘OT spirit’, sense the direction in which the ‘wind is blowing’, learn what the emerging areas are and about the new terminology, and above all, meet interesting OTs focused on a variety of topics. It is also very exciting to hear the leading theoreticians and researchers in our profession.

We attended a fascinating event called “Breakfast with the Scholar” that included a dialogue between **Prof. Florence Clark** (head of OT in USC, and former AOTA president), **Prof. Caroline Baum** (head of OT in WU at St. Louis, and former AOTA president) and moderated by **Prof. Glen Gillen** (from Columbia U), a leading researcher and theoretician in cognitive and acquired brain injury rehabilitation. The discussion between the two focused on the



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challenges facing the profession while reflecting on past personal experiences. After the event, one of my first thoughts was how personal history and personality affect one’s professional perspective and even impacts on theory development. I was also impressed by the efforts made by American academicians to contribute to the continued advancement of the profession and its vision for the future.

Despite differences in opinions, a consensus was reached on a number of issues. The two speakers were unanimous in their belief that occupational therapy should connect with current social and political trends and events, and be proactive in shaping the future of our profession. They both felt that due to the changes in the US health care system, occupational therapy is at a major and significant crossroad that calls for action. They called upon the OT community to be proactive at the local and federal government levels to emphasize the relevance of OT. Another topic centered on the importance

of educating the next generation of OTs. The speakers spoke of the need to change teaching and learning methods, not only due to social and technological changes but to **enable** OTs to increase their self-confidence, ability to express themselves and make intelligent use of the science they have learned.

Another interesting topic that came up was the tremendous importance of research to establish the profession among the other health professions and improve the quality of care by creating evidence. They referred to academicians and practitioners as partners in this area. In short, it was an interesting peek at what to expect beyond the here and now and the efforts needed to be made in light of our changing world and diverse communities and especially our role and responsibility as occupational therapists.

And now, to this issue, which closes the 2015 publication year. The articles reflect various topics that are of interest to occupational therapy in Israel. The first article focuses on the relationship between specific cognitive skills and performance, **Memory and Recall: Comparison between Writing and Typing**. The article describes research conducted by undergraduate students and provides compelling information about the dilemma of hand writing versus typing on the computer, from a cognitive perspective.

The second article examines the role of occupational therapy intervention in combat military units, **The Occupational Therapy Role in Combat Reaction Intervention within a Military Unit**. Specifically, it relates to treating PTSD, a syndrome that has received increasing recognition and is unfortunately, relevant to our lives in Israel. The article is important and represents a number of trends: collaboration between occupational therapy and mental health psychologists; and collaboration between clinicians, academic researchers, military personal and civilians. PTSD is a complex syndrome with a negative impact on function and participation. Examining the evidence and constructing effective OT-based intervention can promote much needed therapy. I am sure that readers from various OT domains can learn from the article about creating a therapeutic model that relies on the frame of reference of occupational therapy in structuring tailored treatment to their clients' needs.

Group therapy is the topic of the third article, which has advanced much in recent years in Israel. **"Eating Onn" - A Joint Lunch Therapy Intervention** describes a group activity for students with cerebral palsy, that is based on the ecological model and makes use of contexts and routines in the natural environment. The last article, also written by students as part of a research seminar, relates to a major and complex concept, quality of life:

Subjective Quality of Life of Adults with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities and Autism: Self-report Using a Computerized Questionnaire.

The article refers to the theory and dilemmas regarding the definition and measurement of subjective quality of life and well-being. It describes the process and initial results of using a computerized questionnaire with adults with intellectual developmental disability and autism.

Closing this issue, the **Personal Glimpse** column was written by **Esti Naim-Peled**, and centers on the important concept of 'hope'. The writer participated in a seminar entitled "Circles of Hope" led by **Mrs. Dorit Redlich-Amirav** that prompted her to write about her experience. She describes the concept of 'hope' as seen through the perspective of one of her former patients. She describes both her personal experience of working with this specific individual, and the analysis of this experience through a 'Hope model' developed by Simpson.

Pleasant reading,

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