
EDITORIAL

At the time of writing this editorial, the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors' 4th National Conference is a fortnight away. The program is a wide-ranging scientific symposium as befits an organisation celebrating 25 years of professional life in Australia. Keynote addresses will be given from Dr Paul Leung of Deakin University, Mary Hawkins of Workcover NSW, Dr Nick Buys of Griffith University and Dr Leal-Idrigo of San Francisco State University. The Conference is a well-established and valued component of rehabilitation research and practice in Australia. This Journal, as an official publication of the Society, and in anticipation of an informative and lively convocation, wishes the Conference every success in its forthcoming meeting. This editor in particular extends a warm welcome to all Conference delegates meeting in Coffs Harbour — a city which hosts one of the regional campuses of Southern Cross University.

The articles in this issue cross a broad arena of professional involvement for rehabilitation counsellors and a broad lifespan. Kylie Dearn and Lynda Matthews provide a thoughtful and very timely discussion on the not so uncommon links between posttraumatic stress disorder and childhood sexual abuse and the role of the rehabilitation counsellors in such situations. The authors canvass a clearly articulated set of considerations and professional practice which are of present and potential use to rehabilitation counsellors and particularly useful in assessing inter professional collaborations in this area.

Robyn Vertongen, Frank Deane and Graeme Beamont provide a longitudinal study of the effects of transferring long-stay chronically mentally ill patients from a psychiatric hospital to community placement. Rehabilitation counsellors generally will be quite familiar with programs and policies of de-institutionalisation and their sequelae over the last 15 years in Australia and longer in other countries. Vertongen et al. provide valuable longitudinal data which raises several important issues, and in particular, point to the need for more structured rehabilitation around the development of adaptive behaviours for community living.

Nancy Pachana, Bernice Marcopulos, and Janet Leatham examine a rapidly growing demand area in cognitive rehabilitation with older adults. They commence their discussion by noting that the percentage of the population over 65 years of age is consistently growing in most western countries and the need to provide services for this segment of the population will not abate. Rehabilitation counsellors have a vital role to play and need to understand and integrate current cognitive rehabilitation strategies particularly in the areas of head injury, depression and dementia. Their article provides several case studies to illustrate the application of cognitive rehabilitation skills and provides an opportunity for rehabilitation counsellors to review their own needs to practice in this area.

Two articles are provided by Dianna Kenny. These articles are complementary and provide foci in the first instance of the self-perception of rehabilitation provider outcomes in the management of workplace injury. In the second instance, she reports on the perception of key stakeholders on these rehabilitation provider outcomes. The results of the first article provide some helpful comment on role and function clarification for rehabilitation providers generally, and identify several crucial areas that are common flash points for a breakdown of quality service provision. The second article

provides wide ranging comments from several data collections including two employer surveys in New South Wales, and an interview and survey information set of injured workers. In addition, further data from insurers and medical practitioners are noted. This triangulation of data sources provides a valuable set of discussion points and a further tangible set of recommendations for professional practice.

Finally, I would wish readers to note that the publication deliveries for the Journal that I advised in the last issue, are proceeding as planned. Volume 5, Issues 1 and 2 will publish in 1999 as advised (July/August, and November/December are expected publication times). Astute readers will have noted a number of minor layout issues have occurred from Volume 4, Issue 1, and a change of cover can be anticipated from Volume 5 onwards.

Herbert C Biggs Ph.D
Editor

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Rodney Stinson, developer of the Job Prospects series, researched and wrote the new database. It replaces Job Prospects, whose name, concepts, and presentation style have been imitated but not matched in quality.

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phone (02) 9955 9320

fax (02) 9959 3960

e-mail rodneystinson@ozemail.com.au