

EDITORS' NOTE: VOLUME OVERVIEW

ABSTRACT

The spring 2014 issue of the International Journal of Telerehabilitation (IJT) contains four informative and timely policy articles: (1) an invited commentary describing the exploratory process underway within physical therapy to create licensure portability for physical therapists, (2) an analysis of state telehealth laws and regulations for occupational therapy and physical therapy, (3) an overview of telehealth evidence and key telehealth policy issues in occupational therapy, and (4) the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT) Position Statement on Telehealth. This issue also contains original research evaluating the feasibility of providing pediatric dysphagia treatment via telepractice, a clinical report of student learning outcomes associated with an innovative experiential learning assignment involving (international) teleconsultation in a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) curriculum, a book review, and announcements from the American Telemedicine Association.

This year is shaping up to be an active year for telerehabilitation policy. The spring 2014 issue of the International Journal of Telerehabilitation (IJT) contains four informative and timely policy articles:

- In an invited commentary, Lane describes the function of the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) within the profession of physical therapy and efforts currently underway to advance an initiative to achieve licensure portability for physical therapy practitioners. These efforts have the potential of creating momentum and processes that will benefit other health-related professions seeking a licensure portability solution.
- Calouro, Kwong, and Gutierrez conducted a study of telehealth occupational therapy and physical therapy state laws and regulations and analyzed the potential effect these laws and regulations could have on occupational therapists' and physical therapists' utilization of telehealth. The authors include a useful table outlining which states have occupational therapy and physical therapy telehealth laws and regulations and identify additional requirements outlined in the laws and regulations. The authors assert that telehealth laws and regulations should be written in a manner that maintains safety but does not unnecessarily inhibit telehealth adoption.
- Cason briefly discusses telehealth efficacy in occupational therapy and reimbursement trends; however, the key focus of her article is licensure portability. Cason highlights two patient populations (children with feeding disorders and individuals with upper extremity prosthetic devices) who have benefitted from interstate practice using telehealth technologies. She asserts that the full benefits of telehealth cannot be realized without licensure portability and identifies important telehealth policy considerations and resources.

- The fourth policy article is the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT) Position Statement on Telehealth. WFOT is an international occupational therapy organization with 73 member countries representing over 350,000 occupational therapists. In June 2014, the Position Statement on Telehealth was approved at the WFOT Council Meeting, which coincided with the 16th International Congress of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in Japan.

In addition to the aforementioned policy articles, this issue also contains original research, a book review and announcements from the American Telemedicine Association.

Malandraki, Roth, and Sheppard evaluated the feasibility of providing pediatric dysphagia treatment via telepractice. Their case study suggests that the use of telehealth technologies may be a viable service delivery model for providing pediatric dysphagia treatment and contributes to the body of evidence in this area.

Foti, Eleazar, and Furphy evaluated student reported outcomes of learning associated with an innovative experiential learning assignment involving (international) teleconsultation in a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) curriculum. Faculty mentored students in the provision of remote services to clients in Guatemala. Analysis of student reported learning outcomes revealed new learning in the areas of occupational therapy process, cultural awareness, and technology.

Rendeiro provided a thorough review of Dr. Russell's book, *Establishing the Efficacy of Telemedicine as a Clinical Tool for Physiotherapists: From Systems Design to Randomised Controlled Trial*. Rendeiro notes that this book thoroughly describes the development of a telemedicine system for physical therapy and outlines the

results of a randomised controlled trial that demonstrates its reliability, validity, and clinical utility. Due to the breadth of subject matter in the book, it is a valuable resource for a wide audience including physical therapy practitioners, policymakers, health care administrators, and other telerehabilitation stakeholders.

The American Telemedicine Association (ATA) announces two upcoming events: The annual Fall Forum in Palm Desert, California and the First China (Tianjin) International Telemedicine Technology Exhibition. The ATA Fall Forum will occur September 6-9, 2014. In addition to two full days of programs related to managing and improving chronic conditions, ATA will host a full-day American-Chinese Telemedicine Forum on Sunday, September 7, 2014. The First China (Tianjin) International Telemedicine Technology Exhibition will be held October 28-30, 2014 at the Tianjin Binhai International Convention and Exhibition Center.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The next volume of the International Journal of Telerehabilitation will be published in fall, 2014. We cordially invite your submissions by October 1, 2014 and accept original research, case studies, viewpoints, technology reviews, book reviews, and country reports that detail the current status of telerehabilitation.

Our peer reviewers constitute a multi-disciplinary group, and include researchers and clinicians from each of the major rehabilitation disciplines, rehabilitation engineers, health information managers, information technologists, and others. We welcome new peer-reviewers and invite guest editors with ideas for special, thematically focused issues. The IJT publication team is agile and can add additional issues as warranted to ensure currency. Please contact Editor Ellen Cohn, PhD (ecohn@pitt.edu) or Associate Editor Jana Cason (jcason@spalding.edu) if you are interested in contributing to a future issue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge the contributions of our authors and the support of new and returning reviewers; colleagues at the Rehabilitation Research Engineering Center on Telerehabilitation; and our publishers, Timothy S. Deliyannides, Director, Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing and Head, Information Technology, University Library System, and Vanessa Gabler, Electronic Publications Associate at the University of Pittsburgh.

Respectfully,

Jana Cason, DHS, OTR/L, FAOTA
Issue Co-Editor and IJT Associate Editor

Ellen R. Cohn, PhD, CCC-SLP
IJT Editor