



NSW Physiotherapists Registration Board

Newsletter
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IAN COLLIER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Board is pleased to announce the successful applicants of the Ian Collier Memorial Scholarship. A total of seven applications were received and two applicants were awarded scholarships under Category 2 – Study Project in the field of Physiotherapy. The successful applicants were:

Ms Karen Blackman who was awarded an amount of \$9,995 for the project titled “A Balance Training Exercise Program for Community-Dwelling Rural Older People: An RCT to Assess Feasibility and Effect on Falls Risk”.

Ms Melanie Boyce who was awarded \$4,462 for her research “A Randomised Controlled Trial to Determine the Effectiveness of a Specific Physiotherapy Programme in the Treatment of Cervical Dystonia”.

Congratulations to Ms Blackman and Ms Boyce, the Board looks forward to receiving the outcomes in due course.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The mandatory reporting of professional development (PD) activities when submitting an annual renewal for re-registration was introduced in 2003 and it is now in its third year. The Board analyses the PD activities

on a yearly basis. In the first year only 63% of physiotherapists out of a sample of 250 returns indicated they had undertaken some form of professional development. The responses ranged from several pages of specific details to one-line responses such as “attended a course and read some journals”. In 2004 the reporting format was changed to collect information in a more structured and consistent way to gain a clearer picture of professional development.

The Board analysed a sample of 301 returns for 2004. Results indicated that 75% of physiotherapists had undertaken some form of continuing professional development. Compared to 2003, there is a slight increase in activity. The key findings of the analysis of the sample were as follows:

- The new reporting format was possibly responsible for the higher level of PD activity compared to 2003, with the average person (of those who attended at least one activity) attending 5 activities during the year, compared to 2.3 activities in 2003.
- 10% of the sample spent 115 hours or more on PD during the year, however about 50% spent 48 hours or less on PD.
- As in 2003, physiotherapists attended more lectures, workshops and courses than other types of PD. However they spent the most amount

of time in reading, in-service training and courses.

- Reading was the most popular form of PD, with 50% indicating they had done some reading. Of those, the average time spent over the year was nearly 40 hours.
- Males and females spent similar amounts of time undertaking PD, although females tended to report attending a greater number of activities.
- Although older physiotherapists attended more PD events than younger ones, there was no significant difference in the amount of time spent. However both groups tended to attend different types, results suggesting that younger physiotherapists might need more encouragement to attend conferences.
- Place of residence seemed to have no effect on the amount of PD a physiotherapist engaged in. Rural physiotherapists attended similar number of PD events but actually appeared to spend a little more time on activities than those in cities, although the difference was not statistically significant.
- As a large number of PD activities were located in hospitals, it may be those working in hospitals spend more time in PD, but data was not available to confirm this.

It is interesting to note that two people indicated that their only PD consisted of "reflective practice". These two were not included in the final sample.

Physiotherapists must demonstrate adequate current knowledge, skill, judgement and care in the practice of physiotherapy. A physiotherapist has

responsibilities under the Act to be competent and accountable. Participation in continuing professional development is an integral part of the registered physiotherapist's obligations. Also, in the current climate, consumers are expecting a consistently high standard of care and professionalism. The Board is continuing to monitor PD activities and advises physiotherapists to maintain an active and relevant personal PD program. The Board would like to see a higher participation rate in PD by physiotherapists.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF BREAST CANCER

The Board is pleased to advise the upcoming availability of "Best Practice Guidelines for the Physiotherapy Management of Women Following Surgery for Breast Cancer" by Dr Pauline Chiarelli. The Board provided Dr Chiarelli with a grant to assist with the development of the guidelines in 2003. Dr Chiarelli states that the guidelines aim to "promote evidence-based clinical practice for the physiotherapy management of women following surgery for breast cancer. The emphasis is on maximising shoulder movement recovery, facilitating the return to normal healthy lifestyle and raising awareness to minimise the risk of lymphoedema." The Guidelines will be published on the Board's website in the near future.

INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBER – SANDRA EVERETT

The Board is pleased to introduce Ms Sandra Everett as the new community representative member on the Board. She replaces Mr Martin Peebles.

Sandra joined the NSW Physiotherapists Registration Board in June 2005 and reports that she is delighted with her appointment and is enjoying the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Board. Her

background is in public administration and includes a career spanning more than 30 years with the NSW government. Of particular relevance to the work of the Board is her experience as the Registrar/Secretary of a number of health professional boards including the NSW Medical and Dental Boards. This experience has given her a solid understanding of the responsibilities of registration bodies and the range of issues confronting the professions and their clients. Her ongoing interest in health matters from the consumer's perspective was sparked by this work with registration boards.

Her career also includes 11 years working in the environment portfolio, managing teams that provide the Minister for the Environment with strategic advice on a wide range of environmental issues. This work involved the providing advice and solutions to address concerns raised with the Minister by members of the public. As a consequence Sandra has a keen appreciation of the importance of sensitively addressing concerns and complaints from community stakeholders and the value of understanding differing points of view.

More recently her work has been as a management consultant and covering a broad spectrum of management issues and functions. In addition, Sandra is an appointed layperson available to sit on Professional Standards Committees and Tribunals to consider complaints against various health professionals. (Most panels for Tribunals and Committees are comprised of a legally qualified person, representatives of the relevant profession and a layperson). Sandra emphasises that she is pleased to be able to represent the perspective of consumers of health care services through her participation in numerous Tribunals and Committees. She indicates that this role has enhanced her knowledge of the challenges and difficulties facing health professionals in general.

What about Sandra's other life? She is interested in art and heritage issues and is a

volunteer guardian for the National Trust at the S H Ervin Gallery. In her spare time, Sandra can also be found gardening and enjoying her round of golf, gruesome or otherwise!

The Board is very honoured and happy to have Sandra on the team.

THE ROLE OF THE IMPAIRED REGISTRANTS PANEL

Physiotherapists like the rest of the community can suffer from physical or mental illness, whether it be a temporary condition or a gradual deterioration associated with a chronic illness. If a physiotherapist is impaired there is the possibility this will affect his or her ability to care for patients.

For purposes of the Physiotherapists Act 2001 No 67, an impaired physiotherapist is one who suffers from any physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect the physiotherapist's physical or mental capacity to practise physiotherapy. It includes a physiotherapist who habitually abuses alcohol or is addicted to a deleterious drug.

Registrants are required to declare impairment to the Board, how the impairment impacts on practice and what strategies are in place to manage impairment. Many physiotherapists with impairment manage this very well. However some impaired physiotherapists may not be aware they have problems and therefore resist any offer of support or help. Other impaired physiotherapists, who are aware of the implications of their impairment, may attempt to mask their problems. In these situations it is often only a matter of time before there are serious consequences if a physiotherapist continues to practise without seeking professional assistance.

Any person can notify the Board of a matter they think indicates that a registered physiotherapist suffers or may suffer from an impairment. A registered physiotherapist can also approach the Board for assistance in relation to his/her own health problems rather than risking the lodgment of a complaint.

When dealing with these matters the Board sets up an Impaired Registrants Panel consisting of 2 persons, at least one of whom is a registered physiotherapist. After inquiry, assessment and medical examination, where appropriate, the Panel may recommend participation in a rehabilitation program and/or placed conditions placed on the physiotherapist's registration to allow him/her to continue to practise. The objective is to assist physiotherapists to continue to practise but with appropriate limitations and supports to protect the public interest.

Processes for managing impaired practitioners are separate from complaints and disciplinary systems, although a complaint about a practitioner may be the first indicator of an impairment.

REGISTRATION OF TRAVELLING PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

In Australia each State and Territory has different registration requirements of physiotherapists moving across borders to practice eg physiotherapists accompanying sports teams inter-state. This can be confusing for traveling physiotherapists and lead to non-compliance with the registration requirements of the state or territory they are visiting. ACOPRA has now compiled a list of the interstate registration requirements - the document is attached to this newsletter. Physiotherapists will find this resource useful when planning short-term interstate work or participation in courses.

REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF BOARD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The Board is currently reviewing/developing the following policies:

- Physiotherapists and sexual misconduct
- Physiotherapy assistants
- Medicines sold supplied or used therapeutically by Physiotherapists
- Professional conduct

The following guidelines are also being reviewed /developed:

- Application and removal of plaster/casts
- Use of new or non-traditional interventions in physiotherapy
- Standards of documentation
- Standards of supervision – physiotherapy students

STATISTICS

As at 1 December 2005 a total of 6544 Physiotherapists were registered in NSW.

For the period 1 July 2005 to 31 December 2005 there were 85 new registrations, of these:

- 5 NSW graduates
- 10 Interstate graduates
- 41 Mutual Recognition
- 23 Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition
- 6 Overseas graduates

Copies of the NSW Physiotherapists Act 2001 and Regulations can be obtained from the Government Information Service Bookshop, Goodsell Building, Hunter Street, Sydney.

*Legislation can also be ordered by phone and charged to a credit card by:
Calling (02) 92380950 in Sydney or
Freecall 1800463955 outside Sydney or
Online at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au*

Visit the NSW Physiotherapists Registration Board website:

www.physioreg.health.nsw.gov.au

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