

REPORT ON THE 19TH NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

J C Beenhakker*

In summarising the activities of the National Executive Committee, Professor Beenhakker outlined some of the goals that had been achieved and what was still needed to be done.

Strategic Planning

Objectives have been drawn up to take our Society into the new century and plans have been derived for many of these objectives.

- Membership and Development for grooming all physiotherapists to participate in the Society activities and administration.
- Undergraduate education and Assistant training is being undertaken by the Education committee.
- Great strides have taken place in the fields of Post-graduate education and training. Mrs Ntina Themba has been given the brief of establishing a Division of Continuing Physiotherapy education which will be administered centrally. Two other important issues are well on the way to completion due to the sterling work of Miss Sheena Irwin-Carruthers. These are Quality Assurance and hopefully some prototype modules will be produced soon and volunteers will be called for to run pilot audits and to give feedback. The inaugural meeting of the College of Physiotherapists will be held later today and Specialisation will soon become a reality.
- Setting up a Division of Research and Development.
- Ways of improving the Management and Administration of the Society have been considered and some of the plans are being implemented, these include:
 - Fundraising - It was decided to appoint Mrs Lynn Fearnhead to investigate the possibility of raising funds for special projects and the two most important areas are the Physiotherapy Back Pain Foundation and the Educational Trust Fund.
 - Acquisition of Property - Completed.
 - Centralisation - under the very able hands of Miss Lo-an Roux. The Western Province pilot project has proved very successful, and by December all but three members had paid their subscriptions. It is hoped that the rest of the membership will be centralised by the end of May. A formula still needs to be calculated on the money to be given back to branches. While the work at Head Office has increased, it is hoped to appoint a Secretary/Bookkeeper to alleviate the burden.
- Professional Recognition and effective representation of the Society on all bodies concerned with decision making on matters relating to our profession.
- Public Relations. Our PRO, Mrs Elena Stock had to curtail her activities and agreed to act as a consultant to the NEC, the Action Committee or Interest Groups. She recommended that no new programmes be launched until all areas had been thoroughly researched. A survey was drawn up and sent out in Forum and our General Secretary, Lo-an Roux collated the information regarding members needs and opinions. Mrs

Stock also undertook to restructure the organisation of Back Week and the week-end workshops involving the Action Committee and branch representatives proved very successful. The main aim of our PRO was to improve communication between various committee, branches and Special Interest Groups.

Priorities for Action

Fragmentation of Health Services. At meetings with the Minister of National Health and with various departments regarding the deteriorating health services it became clear that physiotherapists will have to find their niche in the field of preventative and promotive health in order to survive. A memorandum on the role of physiotherapy in these fields has been drawn up at the suggestion of the Minister of Health. Our Society has also been involved in the formation of the new Interdisciplinary Health Forum and our representative, Mrs Ntina Themba has been elected onto the steering committee of this forum.

Community Physiotherapy will play a greater role in the new national health plan and a small group of physiotherapists have been attempting to meet some of the urgent needs of health care. However, it is realised that there must be a national policy for bringing physiotherapy services to the largest possible number of people. Mrs Narina Gilder together with the Western Province Community Group in particular have drawn up a policy statement on Community physiotherapy for submission to the Department of health and other relevant departments. In addition a suggested plan of action has been tabled for the incoming NEC.

Unionisation. We need once again to consider establishing a Professional Union perhaps together with other health professionals.

Discrimination against our members and their patients is still being investigated. There is still discrimination against us as regards tax relief for attending congresses, unfair advertising practices by certain health professionals and different levels of employment of physiotherapists as compared to teachers at special schools. Some progress has been made regarding professional pay for members doing their national service.

Marketing physiotherapy as a career, finding out what bursaries are available and establishing how the Society can assist in improving education in black schools have all been tackled by various portfolio holders.

Other matters that have been investigated are veterinary physiotherapy and laser equipment which does not comply with the advertised specifications. In addition the Chairman, General Secretary and some members of NEC and from the different branches of the Society met with physiotherapists from the Goldfields area. We discussed some of the problems, enjoyed meeting with our colleagues and hopefully did come up with some solutions. This method of speaking with one another face to face seems a good one and if any other branch is having problems perhaps they should communicate these to the NEC.

Another matter that needs to be solved is finding ways of improving the effectiveness and functioning of the NEC in view of the large number of members who are away from head office and the increasing costs of travel.

As this was her last term of office, Professor Beenhakker

* Professor Jo Beenhakker, National Chairman

thanked members of Council for the faith they had shown in her during the past six years. She stated that her mission had been to establish what problems our members were experiencing in their daily lives and to seek ways of overcoming any discriminatory practices against members and their patients. This arose from her conviction that this was the way we should be thinking and not in order to placate our colleagues abroad. She thanked the various members of NEC who had supported her over the years with enthusiasm and the staff of head office for their willing assistance at all times.

ARISING FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The College of Physiotherapists in South Africa. An updated report by Miss S Irwin-Carruthers is presented elsewhere.

Quality Assurance presented by Miss S Irwin-Carruthers.

The development of a quality assurance programme has been a very interesting exercise – at times an exercise in frustration! Many people have taken part in it and they cannot all be named – but special thanks are due to several people who have made significant contributions. These are Joy Edeling and the MTG, for their work on a self-instructional package which is soon to be published by Butterworths; Heather Wilson and Helen Isaacs for taking over Management and Administration at a late stage and for organising the workshop to be presented during Congress Week; Anna Bizos and Reinette Lochner who provided valuable contributions on staff cohesion and loyalty and on communication; and Joyce Morton for producing a near-complete module on sport physiotherapy.

The biggest problem has been in trying to find a common standard – both in auditing and in the provision of self-instructional modules. Proposals have varied from extreme detail to the barest essentials, and self-instructional programmes have varied from a 3-page question and answer format to an expensive audiovisual programme.

Delegates were given a "mock-up" of one of the proposed quality assurance auditing modules. This module now needs testing in order to ratify the criteria used. We are thus looking for individuals and/or institutions who treat a reasonable number of adult hemiplegics and/or head-injuries and who would be willing to test the audit over a period of three months. Interested persons can contact Miss Irwin-Carruthers at Faculty of Medicine, P O Box 19063, Tygerberg 7505.

Reports of the Standing Committees

Editorial Board

Miss L Davids presented her report for the last time. She paid tribute to Miss Lo-an Roux and Mr Macnamara for their efforts in bringing the Publication Division into being, but stressed the need for assistance to continue the functioning of the Division.

Miss Davids reported that the number of research papers are slowly increasing but that there is still a need for postgraduate research especially by clinicians.

Over the past eight years the journal has been accepted throughout the physiotherapy world and in a survey in Physical Therapy, our journal was half-way down a list of the most commonly referred to journals.

Miss Davids was sincerely thanked for her work in producing a journal of such a high standard.

Education Committee

Mrs J A Gilder reported the changing role of this committee since the establishment of the Education Committee of the Professional Board for Physiotherapy. The objectives of the various portfolio-holders have been updated and one of the main aims of the Committee will now be to monitor changing health care needs and the competencies required to meet these.

New developments are the establishment of clinical specialisation and the start of the Division of Continuing Physiotherapy Education.

A controversial issue is alternative forms of physiotherapy training and this will have to be investigated by the incoming committee.

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Financial Report

Mrs Rena Bernstein presented her report highlighting some major changes which had been instituted. Major increases in expenses were audit fees, costs of NEC meetings and printing, postage, telephone costs and stationery.

The Branch Levy fund enabled the Society to furnish and equip the new offices and to install the Computer network. The Publication Fund is administered by Mara Communication and the Editor of Forum and has been able to finance both our publications.

Our share portfolio is to be acquired by the PPK fund in exchange for its fixed deposits which will be used to purchase the property when Sectional Title comes through. Mrs Bernstein concluded by stressing that although modernisations have great advantages they do cost more. All expenditure will rise and she suggested that the society must consolidate and adapt to the changes and their implications before undertaking any new major ventures.

Reports of the Sub-Committees

Action Committee

Mrs Frances Glauber reported that Back Week 1990 was a little disappointing and more co-ordination was needed. The first Action Representative weekend proved very successful and it was decided to hold such weekends every six months, although finances are always a problem.

The exercise Education Committee under Mrs Gillian Oosthuizen had been extremely busy and various worthwhile projects and Service Booklets are in the pipeline and one on post-natal has been completed.

Back week 1991 will be held from August 26 – 31 with the theme of promoting back care through physiotherapy in sport. The Action Committee is an extremely active and pro-active Committee of which the Society can be very proud.

Constitution Committee

Miss Sheena Irwin-Carruthers stressed that in a lively and growing society such as ours, a constitution is a dynamic document subject to change as we change our priorities and objectives for our profession. Most of the motions regarding amendments to the constitution were necessitated by the anticipated centralisation of the Society's administration. Clauses have also been inserted regarding establishment of trust funds.

Branch Reports

The reports were read by the representatives and delegates were amazed to hear of the extent of the continuing physiotherapy programmes which are being offered by the branches. It was also remarkable to learn of the great deal of public relations which are being carried out at all the centres on behalf of our society and our profession. The reports showed that physiotherapists really do care.

Reports of the Special Interest Groups

Manipulative Therapist Group

The executive of the Group moved to Cape Town under the chairmanship of Mrs M J van Oordt.

At a special meeting of IFOMT in Gran Canaria in May 1990 Mrs Joy Edeling showed the special video produced for Quality Assurance. The requirements for specialisation in Manipulative Therapy have been completed and could soon be offered to physiotherapists.

The protocol for pre-manipulative testing of the cervical spine was published to give guidelines to all physiotherapists using this technique.

The main objective of the group is to provide education to our members and many courses and workshops have been held in the various branches.

National Hospital Group

This group is strongest in the Transvaal but various new branches are being formed.

Several courses were organised in the smaller outlying areas which proved very popular.

It is hoped to set up a support system for physiotherapy assistants in the neighbouring states and several hospitals have offered their help. Meetings have been held with various government departments to discuss the lack of rehabilitation services, lack of infrastructure for primary health care and the poor salaries in the public sector.

Obstetric Association

Membership of this association has been slowly decreasing due in some way to the relatively small profits per time unit which are made by physiotherapists offering ante- and postnatal classes. Ten very informative newsletters have been distributed to members and heads of training during the past two years and several articles and publications have been completed advertising the physiotherapist's role in obstetrics.

Private Practitioners Association

This association has been computerised which will make it easier for the incoming committee. A very successful new directory has been printed and a tariffs folder designed. The Chairman, Mrs Y Seaman, Mr C de Wet and Mrs H Huysamen comprise the tariffs committee and have made great strides in this area. The annual visit to RAMS has become quite a congenial affair and it was pointed out that RAMS have an amazing file of statistics. In a survey it was interesting to learn that there was a sharp division of opinions regarding first contact physiotherapy. The results of the survey will be used to draw up a memorandum for the Professional Board for Physiotherapy.

The PPA do a valuable service by screening complaints and are able to decide what action must be taken. Members are advised of the ethical rules and the correct use of tariffs on a continuing basis.

Three new interest groups had fulfilled the required criteria and were welcomed to the Council. These are:-

- Acupuncture Association.
- Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Group.
- Sports Interest Group.

Representatives of the Society on National Bodies

The report of CHASA was read by Professor Beenhakker who urged physiotherapists to consider joining this body as individual members. The next conference will be held in August 1992 the theme being Critical Issues in Comprehensive Health and physiotherapists should take part in the discussions and where possible present papers.

In the report of the National Council for the Physically Disabled mention was made of the successful Jubilee Congress held in Cape Town. The proceedings of this Congress held in Cape Town. The proceedings of this Congress are worth studying by physiotherapists in services for the disabled.

Miss van der Velde tabled the various courses run by the SA Neurodevelopmental Therapy Association and those courses still to be held.

Mrs Morton presented the report of the Sports Medicine Association and requested input from physiotherapists for her "Physiotherapy Update" column in the SA Sports Medicine Journal.

In the SA Sports Association for the Physically Disabled report Miss Semple described the successful senior and junior games and urged physiotherapists to attend these events.

Resolutions passed at Council

Amendments to the constitution included changes permitting centralisation of administration, making possible the formation of Trust Funds for specific purposes relating to the Society's objectives and the administration of such Trust Funds. In order to reduce costs, the minimum number of meetings per annum of the NEC was reduced from six to four.

Resolutions passed related to the Society associating itself with

the needs and aspirations of the people of South Africa who were working for peaceful change and support was given to a Bill of Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Other resolutions related to the role of physiotherapy in future health services and appointing a member of NEC to monitor future health policies. The principle of unionisation was approved and more realistic advertising regulations are to be investigated.

English was adopted as the working language of the Society.

The National Executive was instructed to investigate the granting of full legality to physiotherapists working in the veterinary field, the marketing of the profession through the various forms of the media, alternative forms of physiotherapy training and the value of the present system of NEC, NCR and Council meetings.

The NEC was also instructed to make representations regarding VAT and the present salary scale for state employed physiotherapists. The resolution to formulate a management policy for guidance at central and local levels evoked much discussion and highlighted the increased pressures placed on members with the growth of the Society.

Matters for Discussion

When discussing the responsibility of the Society towards members regarding equipment, manufacturers and agents it was agreed that although the Society would act as an information source to members it could not be held financially responsible for any litigation brought by members against manufacturers and agents. It was also agreed that strike action which was to the detriment of patients would be regarded as unethical behavior.

Award of Additional Honours

Honorary Life President:

Mrs K M Levy

Honorary Life Membership:

Miss S Irwin-Carruthers

Miss L Davids

Mrs N Gilder

Honorary Life Membership of a Branch:

Mrs J Morton (Natal Coastal)

Honorary Life Membership of a Group:

Mrs C Cunningham (MTG)

Mrs J Edeling (MTG)

Mrs B Kastell (OA)

Mr K Steenkamp (MTG)

Honorary Vice Presidents

Mrs P Pilkington

Professor A Rothberg

Professor B Sparks

Professor S A Straus

Professor H D Wasserman

National Executive Committee

Office Bearers

President: Mrs A Mathias

Chairman: Mrs F Glauber

Vice Chairman: Mrs J Morton

General Secretary: Miss L Roux

Journal Editor: Professor J C Beenhakker

Members

Mrs C Bennetts

Mrs M Butler

Miss P Duke

Miss A Jamal

Mrs M Klemp

Miss T Komane

Miss L Mullins

Mrs N Themba.