

Editorial

This edition of the journal is packed full of new knowledge, much of it provided by POGP members. There are also contributions from some of the speakers at our 2017 Annual Conference, who have taken time to write up their talks. All the authors are to be applauded. To move ourselves and our profession forward, we need to ask questions and search for answers, and therefore, all of us need to be engaged in research in some way. I hope that this issue will inspire you to get involved.

Our profession really is progressing, especially when you consider that it's only 40 years since we got our autonomy (Williams 2017) via Health Services Circular HC (77) 33 (DHSS 1977). This allowed us to assess, decide how to treat and discharge patients without requiring prescription by consultants. We are now considered to be an evidence-based profession. Since our days as students, each of us has made our own career journeys. I remember initially wishing that I had this elusive thing called experience, and hoping that I could find absolute answers. However, the more I learned, the more questions I found, and the more fascinating this clinical area became. I recommend that you read Judith Lee's insightful reflection on her career, taking risks and rising to challenges (pp. 93–94). We should all be actively engaged in our own continuing professional development for regulatory purposes, but our need to find answers is what moves our knowledge base forward and helps our patients. We seek new knowledge. We create new knowledge. We develop and so does our profession.

It all begins with asking a question. . . .

What question do you want answered? I'm sure that, if you could sit with a cuppa and reflect, you would come up with a long list. Do you know how to find answers? The skills needed to systematically search electronic databases can easily be learned, and I recommend our latest book reviews as a great place to start (pp. 87–89). The research review section is full of articles of interest too (p. 84), and there are more in the journal's extended online content (<http://pogp.csp.org.uk/group-journal>). Once we find research papers, we need to be able to read them critically in order to know whether the results are meaningful and the methods valid.

Again, this is a skill that all physiotherapists are very capable of learning. I highly recommend that you read Dr Lisa Roberts' article (pp. 41–49), which really does a fine job of “demystifying research”.

What happens when we can't find an answer to a question because the research hasn't been done yet? Dr Stelios Myriknas has taken up the challenge of reducing perineal trauma and obstetric anal sphincter injuries by developing an anterior non-episiotomy forceps method of delivery (pp. 50–55). We are proud to publish his paper with Dr Konstantinos Papadakis, and will take great interest in how the use of this technique develops. Our profession is still relatively new, and the evidence base is continually evolving. We must remember that a lack of evidence for the effectiveness of a treatment is not the same as there being proof of it not working; this simply means that the research has not been conducted yet. So, who is going to do it? The answer has to be, “All of us!” I agree with the following statement quoted in Dr Lisa Roberts' article (p. 41): “Everyone in healthcare really has two jobs when they come to work every day: to do their work and to improve it” (Batalden & Davidoff 2007, p. 3). Research does not have to be daunting, and there is much that clinicians can do, even in these hard-pressed times. Dr Kay Crotty definitively answers the question posed by the title of her contribution, “What research can I start on Monday morning?” (pp. 66–68). We may even find solutions that can help each other in these challenging times if we share our research, service evaluations and audits.

Have you got patients whom you want to do more for? Jilly Bond writes eloquently about the spark that started her research (pp. 61–65). She describes how her determination to find answers for a patient has led her on an amazing journey. Conducting research can result in a wide range of benefits and connections that you might not have expected when you began it. As an editor, nothing pleases me more than accepting for publication high-quality original research by POGP members that has been through the rigorous process of peer review. Well done to Katrina Scott (pp. 21–29). I very much look forward to receiving more submissions.

Last year's Annual Conference in Southampton was a wonderful source of fascinating new knowledge, and I am delighted to be able to publish a great range of posters (pp. 71–76). The 2 days made me feel that I was at the cutting edge of our profession. The achievements of POGP members are celebrated in our news section, and our congratulations go to all, including Judith Lee, who was awarded a Distinguished Service Award (pp. 93–94).

I hope that this edition of the journal inspires you to become more involved with research: read it, ask questions, develop your skills and do it. I hope you will search for answers to any questions that you have on your list. Whatever you do, however small, aim to do it well by following good research methods, thus making your results as meaningful as possible. As POGP members, there are bursaries available to assist you with your own research and also fund attendance at courses (POGP 2018). No research cycle is complete without sharing what you are doing, and I hope that you will do this via this journal. I look forward to receiving your audits, case studies, service evaluations and Master's research.

Why not do a poster for this year's Annual Conference? Our meeting in Cardiff will be a celebration of our seventieth anniversary and all we have already achieved as a profession, plus a glimpse of our exciting prospects. What will the future hold? Where will research take us? What will our profession be like in 10 years' time? I look forward to making this journey with you all, and continuing to ask questions and search for answers.

Shirley Bustard

References

- Batalden P. B. & Davidoff F. (2007) What is "quality improvement" and how can it transform healthcare? [Editorial.] *Quality & Safety in Health Care* **16** (1), 2–3.
- Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) (1977) *Relationship Between Medical and the Remedial Professions – A Statement by the Standing Medical Advisory Committee*. Health Services Circular HC (77) 33. Department of Health and Social Security, London.
- Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP) (2018) *POGP Bursaries and Awards*. [WWW document.] URL <http://pogp.csp.org.uk/pogp-bursaries-awards>
- Williams J. (2017) *Knit One, Purl One*. [WWW document.] URL <http://www.csp.org.uk/blog/2017/03/17/knit-one-purl-one>

Copy deadlines

Copy for the Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019 editions of the journal (Nos 123 and 124) must be submitted to the editor by **14 May 2018** and **14 October 2018**, respectively. Please note that academic and clinical articles must be received well before the deadline since time must be allowed so that these can be peer-reviewed. Manuscripts should be presented double-spaced with a wide margin, and adhere to the author's guidelines found on pp. 100–102 and on the POGP website (<http://pogp.csp.org.uk/documents/acpwh-journal-writing-guidelines>). Articles for consideration should be sent to Ms Shirley Bustard, Physiotherapy Department, University Hospital of North Durham, North Road, Durham DH1 5TW, UK.