Occupational Therapy Today Tomorrow

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress of the WFOT, Zurich 1970

Occupational Therapy
Today-
Tomorrow

Its Present Position and the
Possibilities of Development

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Congress Data

Fifth International Congress
of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists,
Zurich, June 1-5, 1970

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Foreword

The editors of 'Proceedings, 5th International Congress of Occupational Therapy, Zurich 1970' much regret that it was not possible to print all papers in their complete form. For reasons of economy this book had to be restricted to a predetermined number of pages. We have tried to make the best of that fact.

First of all it was possible, by shortening some of the contributions, to arrange their contents in a slightly different way. This should enable readers, who did not attend the congress, to find more readily what is of special interest to them.

Secondly we hope that by the very selection of text passages the present position of occupational therapy as well as new development tendencies will here show up even more clearly than the congress itself enabled us to see them.

Any selection is bound to reflect certain subjective aspects and to reveal, to some extent, the position of the selectors. In Switzerland,
where the congress was held, 30 % of all occu-
pational therapy work is carried out with chil-
dren or adolescents. So it is no accident that
treatment of children, especially cerebral
palsied patients, is described in such detail.
That, however, does not signify that we regard
contributions dealing with other fields as of
less importance.
The numerous papers concerning the various
possibilities of approach in psychiatry, dis-
tinctly reflect the many-sidedness of all
endeavour in that field of rehabilitation. Such
contributions are, therefore, instructive for
others, besides occupational therapists. In the
same way, papers dealing with the tasks of
occupational therapy outside the hospital also
transgress the boundaries of the profession in
its more limited sense.
There is in the most varied fields of occupa-
tional therapy a general tendency not to con-
sider the patient alone but as part of his family
and environment. Professional integration,
i.e. earning a living and independence in daily
activities is no longer the aim of social reha-
bilitation, but rather one way towards it.
Wherever its application is sensible it is, of
course, one of the most important features of
our work.
Today we speak of integration when it is in
any way achieved to regain or maintain for a
physically or mentally ill person, recognition
by society and awareness of his human quali-
ties. Not always does this path lead exclusive-
ly via the influencing of the afflicted person
himself. More and more, family and environ-
ment are included in the rehabilitation pro-
gramme.
The aspects which any occupational therapist
today has to consider span from this point to a
fixed treatment method for a given disease or
injury.
Editing this book has been a collective effort.
The editors are much indebted to Miss Marianne Studer, Miss Gwennie Suter and Mrs. Barbara Hoskins who all helped by making decisions and by placing their linguistic abilities at our disposal.

The Editors

Welcome Addresses

It is with great pleasure that I welcome in Switzerland the occupational therapists from all over the world, taking part in the 5th International Congress of their World Federation.

In almost all fields of human activity we are witnessing an increasing specialization, which also manifests itself within the medical professions. A direct consequence of this development is the today’s necessity of teamwork. It is indispensable to co-ordinate at best, above all, the treatment, but also all the measures of rehabilitation which are to allow the sick, wounded or handicapped to be reintegrated in the society according to his individual capacities. This problem is also particularly relevant with aged people in our affluent society, where only too often the sense of humanity disappears in the masses. A danger of this kind is also present in the hospitals where the patient undergoing a great number of examinations and facing numerous specialists caring for him may often feel lost.

It is your privilege through the close contact linking you to all your patients, not only to impart technical knowledge and manual skill, but also, by your smiling presence, to spread human warmth. On behalf of the Federal Council, I sincerely hope that you will take back with you from this congress excellent memories and real encouragement for your future work, which will help so many people
to find new hope and pleasure in life.

H.P. Tschudi  
President of the Swiss Confederation  
Madam President, Guests of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
At long last the great day has arrived. I have the privilege and the very pleasant duty to extend a warm welcome to all participants of the 5th International Congress of our World Federation. We have been looking forward to this day very much, and all the last minute tension somehow helped to create an atmosphere of excitement. It is a most fascinating thing to prepare a Congress and, in spite of all the smaller and greater problems that invariably do arise, I think it is just fun!  
I am not going to tell you anything about Switzerland, its historical development, economic or cultural background, its political or linguistic structure. I am not even going to mention the question of the women's right to vote in our country. I just would like to say that a small association of occupational therapists in a small country did its best to try to plan an interesting and stimulating congress, both from the point of view of the profession and from the point of view of international friendship. And I do hope that by the time next Friday comes around you will feel that this aim has been achieved.  
As Convener of this congress I personally would like to thank you all for your proof of confidence by travelling here, some of you even from very far away. I would also like to render special thanks to our guest speakers. We are extremely grateful to them for giving us the opportunity to partake in their valuable experience. Many thanks, too, to all who helped towards the organization of the congress in some way or another.
I would also like to welcome the representatives of several international and national organizations. The interest they take in our work and in our congress is very much appreciated. May I especially bring to your attention the congress exhibition, where several firms, also from abroad, have very kindly contributed towards the success of our congress by displaying items of particular interest to our profession.

Last, but not least, let me thank all those of you who so very kindly sent your best wishes and crossed your fingers for us. And, shouldn't we also think of our colleagues who could not come to join us here today, but stayed at home to keep things running smoothly, and above all shouldn't we cast our minds back to our patients for whose sake congresses of this nature are really held?

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Congress Committee wishes you a memorable 5th International Congress in Zurich, five happy days, full of sunshine and full of the joy of being and working together.

Miss Gertrud Stauffer
Principal of the School of Occupational Therapy, Zurich

Ladies and Gentlemen,
It is a very great honour to welcome the members on behalf of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists to our 5th World Congress. It is indeed a pleasure to see so many old friends again and a joy to greet new colleagues from around the world.

Sixteen years have passed since that first memorable congress when 425 participants from 20 countries met in Edinburgh. There was a spirit and excitement at that meeting
which we never thought could be captured again. Yet it was recaptured in Copenhagen, in Philadelphia, and in London. It is an aura, an inspirational atmosphere that prevails — a feeling that one can already sense here in Zurich. Is it possible that it emanates from the humanistic nature of our profession, from the conviction we have regarding the service we have to offer mankind, and from the network of friendships that so readily develops within our profession?

Since that first congress in 1954, there has been a steady growth of our profession throughout the world. The growth is evidenced in the registration at this congress alone. There are 1,050 registrants from 30 widely-scarred nations. In this same period, the membership in the Federation has grown from the 10 founder members to 24 at the present time. In Basel last week, we had the privilege of admitting 2 new organizations to full membership and 2 organizations to associate membership. It is a very great pleasure to welcome the following new members: the Associations of Occupational Therapists of Argentine and Ireland to full membership, and those of Ceylon and Japan to associate membership.

In 1954 there were approximately 5,550 practising occupational therapists. Today, as far as can be ascertained, there are over 17,000. The number of schools offering courses acceptable to the Federation has increased from 49 to 88. These latter figures are even more significant when we realize there are schools in 10 countries which did not have educational programmes in 1954 and which now have courses graduating qualified occupational therapists. Since its founding, the Federation has consistently moved forward, adequately carrying out its objectives as a continuing process. We
have seen a rise in the standard of education and, subsequently, in the practice of the profession in many countries. In numerous instances, through its guidance and support, and at the same time with the required degree of flexibility, the Federation has been instrumental in preventing inferior, make-shift programmes from developing under the guise of occupational therapy.

Furthermore, the Federation has been a vehicle through which a closer co-operation, a new understanding, and a unity of relatedness has developed among the national organizations. It is also through the international organization that our profession is represented at meetings and takes part in discussions relative to health programmes and rehabilitation at the highest international levels. Through the sharing of goals, and the pooling of knowledge in these relations, our profession is helping to influence the trends in the field of health care and to determine the course of future rehabilitation for our patients and clients.

This congress, itself, is one of our most important methods of furthering the development of the profession of occupational therapy. It is at these meetings that we share our ideas, make known advances and improvements, and resolve our problems.

Many people have come from many lands to Zurich. We have an exciting and busy week ahead of us. Switzerland is frequently referred to as ‘the playground of Europe’. With the programme we have before us, it is doubtful that we shall have an opportunity to test the validity of the statement.

We have come to discuss ‘Occupational therapy today—tomorrow’. This is a rather over-
whelming task with which the congress committee has challenged us. Is it not difficult at times to understand just what occupational therapy is today, with its myriad roles and in the changing society in which we serve? To determine what it will be in the future is indeed a challenge. Yet this is the very thing we must do for the continuing effectiveness of the service we provide and for the viability of our profession.

The growth of a profession involves a gradual but continual shift of its emphases and its goals in relation to changes in society. Never before has society changed at such a rapid speed. Someone stated that a thousand changes occur while one is out to lunch. In attempting to keep up with these changes, how often we have felt somewhat like Alice in Lewis Carol's 'Through the looking glass' that we have to run fast to stay in the same place. Unfortunately, we are realizing that 'running fast' is not a sufficiently rapid pace for the 'space age' in which we now live. In this decade — the Age of Aquarius — when the forward look is the thing — we cannot afford to cling to our self-righteous image of the past. We must be prepared to make a realistic appraisal of our services and extend beyond the limits of yesterday.

It is only natural that occupational therapy is caught up in this world of change. The purpose of our therapy is 'to educate patients in patterns of work and living so the patient can return to society'. This impels us to keep up with changes in society. There has been a bewildering growth of knowledge; the very pace and breadth of which is difficult to assimilate. Science and industrial techniques are developing at a frightening speed. Each time a scientific advance is made, each time another process in industry is automated, each time there is further motorization in
road construction, in agriculture and in shipping, our problems are compounded. As these changes occur, society itself alters. Within this highly-automated, technological society, the meaning and concepts of work have changed, bringing with them changes in the attitudes towards work. There are changing attitudes towards human rights, changing attitudes towards the handicapped. Our patients are coming from and returning to a changing community. In effect, the needs of our patients are changing and our problems become as complex as the society which is generating them.

As we attempt to realistically identify the problems of our contemporary patients and evaluate the needs of today — and tomorrow — in terms of a new and different society, we must realize that we, ourselves, change; our views, our values, our insights. It is imperative that somehow we try to anticipate these in terms of tomorrow as well.

The complex changes in society give us a great responsibility and, at the same time, they provide great possibilities. However, there is a need for unusual foresight and discernment that is greater today than it has been in the history of our profession. There is a tendency when one is caught up in a fast-moving endeavour to lose perspective. As we pace forward, we must also take a little time for grazing and looking back at where we have been in order to keep a true perspective and a balanced interpretation in all areas. Our changes must be objective and goal-directed. Random innovation, and change for the sake of change without a goal, in terms of the needs of our patients, achieve nothing. This type of change can result in the destruction of our profession leaving a gap for a new helping profession to be created. While our procedures must be oriented to changing needs, to future
trends and innovations, they should remain based on established, accepted concepts. We must alter or discard that which is ineffective in meeting the needs of our patients but we must retain what has proven to be good. Using the poor judgement of the obsessive compulsive in a ritualistic house-cleaning can jeopardize the continuing success of occupational therapy just as much as resistance to change and clinging to the style of yesterday. This week is providing the opportunity for us to exchange views on successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses. Our changing role can be determined only through close cooperation and the readiness to learn and benefit from the experience of others. This is the goal of this congress.

Just as our profession transcends national boundaries in our aim to be of service to mankind, so a world meeting of our members transcends political barriers, cultural, religious and racial differences. At the same time as our deliberations are helping us to deliver better services to our patients throughout the world, I believe that the desire for peace and the friendliness that is generated here can be a force towards world peace. It is in this belief and with this confidence in our profession that I have pleasure in declaring the congress open.

Mrs. M. Thelma Cardwell
President of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists