

## Preface

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This special issue consists of a report about a research area of particular interest: Pediatric Rehabilitation Engineering, a field in which the results of research are eagerly awaited.

Young people with disabilities are not always foremost in the thoughts of decision makers nowadays. They do not yet have a voice of their own, and represent a minority relative to the larger group of the elderly, who demand the attention of politicians and consequently also of researchers, who must necessarily often follow the funding available. Of course the elderly face serious problems in society as well, due to budget shortfalls which result in an insufficient provision of care. But perhaps the major reason for the lack of attention for the needs of young people with impairments is that the effective solutions which could be applied are insufficient: both for training and for compensatory measures.

These youngsters may well have a long life ahead of them, during which they must cope with impairments which have not been well addressed. And we must not forget that parents and care providers also suffer from this unsatisfactory state of affairs. I am reminded of the case of Dutch Railways deciding to provide accessible systems only after current investments are deemed to have been written off. The managers say, without batting an eyelid, that more accessible trains and platforms will only be provided in the year 2022 because that is when the old rolling stock is due to be replaced by new: this means a further decade of inconvenience for the travelling public; a large group in our society.

It is a pleasure to see that the research reported in this issue is taking advantage of work in several disciplines. For a journal about Technology and Disability, this is exactly what we like to see; it is what the journal is all about. It does however present us with a problem in the review process: where can we find the reviewers who can handle this variety of disciplinary approaches?

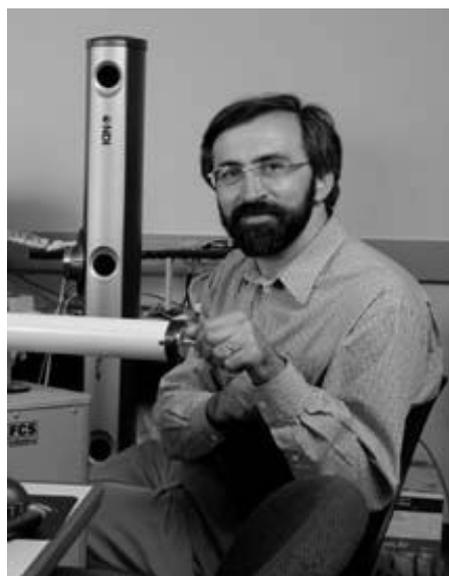
I have two observations with regard to this question:

My first, a general comment, is that we plan to evaluate and extend the editorial board: all associate editors will receive information about this in due course, for now I would just like to say that we will

have more editors who can assist us in reviewing and editing, as always working in teams where the special expertise of one editor is complemented by the expertise of others. This is an open invitation for applications to join our team of specialist reviewers, or to suggest others who you feel would be capable of this worthwhile task.



Dr. Richard Foulds



Dr. Sergei Adamovich



Dr. Imelda de Groot

A comment more specifically related to this issue on “State of the Science for Pediatric Rehabilitation Engineering” is that the review process has been a challenge, as explained above. But we took as our starting point the excellent selection of authors by our Guest Editors, Dr Richard A. Foulds and Dr. Sergei Adamovich. It was their initiative to invite the authors to meet at a

research conference, and they subsequently completed the first step in editing and reviewing. The second step in the process was the review and editing by Dr. Imelda J. M. de Groot of the Radboud Hospital, Nijmegen, in The Netherlands. She possesses the necessary expertise, being herself both a scientist and active clinician, and she is able to see the practical value and potential of the work done by the researchers through the complex web of science. She sees that locomotion, upper extremity functioning, endurance and physical load are the most important issues but also, to take one more specific example, that the swallowing of food is a major practical problem for those with Muscular Dystrophy: this is just to illustrate that research into pediatric rehabilitation – and the part that engineering can play in this matter – faces more challenges than we are aware of at present.

So let me take the opportunity here to express our most grateful thanks to the Guest Editors, to all the participating authors, and last but certainly not least, to Dr. Imelda de Groot.

Thijs Soede  
Editor-in-Chief