

## Guest Editorial

---

Robin M. Newman

*Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1919 West Taylor Street (Mail Code 811), Chicago, IL 60612, USA*  
*E-mail: Rnewma3@uic.edu*

It is my pleasure to serve as the guest editor of this special issue of *WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation* that focuses on cancer and work. This issue highlights interprofessional efforts to address the growing work related and occupational performance needs of cancer survivors throughout their journey and beyond. This issue is dedicated to the millions of cancer survivors worldwide who have much to teach us about their experiences and work-related needs during cancer treatment and into survivorship. It is my hope that this special issue inspires the advancement of comprehensive and interdisciplinary approaches to meet the unique needs experienced by cancer survivors, their families and the communities in which they live.

The introductory articles highlight economic, civil rights and family centered issues central to cancer survivors' return to work experiences. Silver and colleagues review the economic impact of cancer to both the individual and society and the benefits of cancer rehabilitation in addressing long term sequelae of cancer treatments. Murphy and colleagues discuss a pilot study exploring cancer survivors' employment related needs and supports, highlighting the Americans with Disabilities Amendments of 2008 and the need for evidence based interventions to support cancer survivors return to work needs. As family support is central to many cancer survivors, Marshall and colleagues discuss a culturally respectful family education and skill building program that may support meaningful and productive return to work in cancer survivors, called *Un Abrazo Para la Familia*.

The second section highlights issues faced during treatment by cancer survivors. In a case study, Tamminga and colleagues present a hospital based intervention to support return to work in employees with cancer. This case study highlights the experience of

a 35 year old woman diagnosed with cervix carcinoma and her successful return to work experience. Nachreiner and colleagues describe gynecological cancer survivors' perceptions of the effects of cancer treatment on job tasks, highlighting both cancer treatments and their effects on work and the need for effective policies and procedures to facilitate return to work in women with gynecologic cancers. Sesto and colleagues examine employment and retirement status of older cancer survivors. This piece highlights the need for further work to identify work related variables affecting work status and the development of targeted interventions to support return to work in older survivors.

The third section highlights issues faced in survivorship, including inspirational narratives of life missions following recovery from cancer. The first two articles in this section explore functional challenges among cancer survivors through the lens of occupational therapy. Crist discusses the functional challenges among late effect cancer survivors related to work engagement while I discuss the redevelopment of one's occupational self following cancer treatment through an occupational therapy intervention, called Take Action. The next three articles explore work experiences in survivorship from international perspectives. Molina highlights the return to work experience in Spain. Gunnarsdottir and colleagues bring attention to the work experiences of male cancer survivors in Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway and Mehnert and colleague feature the work satisfaction and quality of life of cancer survivors in the first year after oncologic rehabilitation in Germany. The final two articles feature the perspectives of 2 cancer survivors' call to action in survivorship. I am grateful to the authors, Dr. Julie Silver and Yael Derman, BSN, RN, for sharing their inspirational narratives of personal journey and life missions following cancer treatment into survivorship.

Many thanks to the contributing authors for their inspiring work and efforts to address the multi-faceted issues surrounding return to work for cancer survivors from diverse professional backgrounds and international perspectives. It is the hope that this special issue

sparks continued interest in this growing need of how to best meet the occupational performance and work related needs of cancer survivors throughout their cancer journey.