

FROM THE EDITOR

The first issue of **WORK** was met with much enthusiasm, confirming our belief that professionals are eager to exchange information and to implement interdisciplinary strategies. The current issue reinforces this philosophy and provides a snapshot of work with psychiatrically challenged individuals.

The future holds many challenges for mental health care which will likely be influenced by:

1. research developments leading to innovative clinical care,
2. changes in the health care provision system and its financing,
3. the increasing number and diversity of health care providers, and
4. changing U.S. demographics.

Additionally, provision of care and reimbursement for services for the psychiatrically challenged poor will continue to be problematic.¹

Present statistics indicate that the psychiatrically challenged have the least probability of successful work placement, although they comprise the largest number of cases entitled to vocational rehabilitation.² How do professionals address this dilemma? Clearly of benefit is open communication between professionals, a team approach to client care, a firm understanding and monitoring of the health care system, and the development of business savvy.

In this issue, Lang provides an intuitive historic perspective of work in the context of the psychiatrically challenged client. She lays the foundation for topics that will be described in more detail within the remaining articles. The scope of the articles is wide. Adelstein focuses

on the adolescent, while Jeong describes a geriatric population. The concept of supported employment is a common thread throughout many of the articles, although the articles by Gatti and Brolier and Shepherd focus on this issue to a greater degree. Community mental health is described by Rabin, where an interdisciplinary approach to work programming has been tremendously successful, notwithstanding these turbulent financial times.

Lustman et al. describe a study that examines the relationship of psychiatric disorders to both work hardening and return to work. In a different vein, Gale, Brotherton, and Jensen provide case studies to illustrate the applications of psychological strategies for clients with chronic musculoskeletal pain. Feder presents an overview of occupational stress theories and research and how this stress affects the female worker and compounds depression.

Finally, the issue concludes with Sounding Board. Apropos of the issue's theme, Palmer has entitled it "Practice Burdens or Responsibilities?" Readers are encouraged to respond to this column by sending letters to the editor.

Karen Jacobs

REFERENCES

1. Council on Long-Range Planning and Development: The future of psychiatry. *JAMA* 1990; 264: 2542-2548.
2. Anthony WA, Blanch A: Supported employment for persons who are psychiatrically disabled: An historical and conceptual perspective. *Psychosocial Rehab J* 1987; 11: 5-23.