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In This Issue (14:1)

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In This Issue (14:1)

Welcome to this long overdue first issue of the 14th volume of the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*! It seems that the impact of the isolation and sheltering in place from the COVID pandemic is much longer lasting than certainly I ever anticipated. The good news is that this issue has a wide variety of high-quality articles that I anticipate should have some major influence on aquatic and water safety literature. The articles range from research notes and articles to instructive educational articles as well as a major policy statement dealing with water and aquatic competence.

Research Notes and Articles

Our Issue 1 of the 14th volume of *IJARE* is fortunate to feature a full and varied complement of research articles, both empirical and qualitative.

The research section starts off with a paper on autism spectrum disorder. A research group from Marquette University, led by Abir K. Bekhet, along with Norah Johnson, Tana Karenke, and Amy Van Hecke, have authored, “A Swimming Program for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Assessing Critical Parameters from Caregivers’ Perspectives.” They offered a 12-session swim lesson program that involved both children and particularly their caregivers’ perspectives on the program. Of interest to instructors of both children with ASD as well as other children was the critical importance of caregiver water safety instruction about precautions needed around the water to keep the children safe. This study is worth a read.

Two studies which focused on water exercise come from a research group out of Middle Tennessee State University in Chattanooga, TN. John M. Coons, as lead author, with Brandon Grubbs, Vaughn W. Barry, Ryan T. Connors (now from University of Alabama at Huntsville), Sandra Stevens, and Conor Theiss authored “An Exploratory Study of Aquatic Walking on Symptoms and Functional Limitations in Persons with Knee Osteoarthritis: Part 1” and “An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Water Walking on Function and Muscle Activity in Knee Osteoarthritis: Part 2.” The two articles wisely divided the results of a larger study in order to focus on different measures associated with a water exercise study which employed an underwater treadmill. As apparent from the paper titles, the Part 1 study examined symptoms and functional limitations of older individuals with knee osteoarthritis while Part 2 focused on the impact of functional measures along with changes in EMG measures after undergoing a program performed on an underwater treadmill. The studies are quite complementary in their results and discussions.

This next research articles, as Monte Python might say, is “something completely different!” A research group at Texas A&M University, headed by Larry Powell along with Seth Polsley, Drew Casey, and Tracy Hammond have provided “The Real-Time Classification of Competency Swimming Activity Through Machine Learning.” This innovative technical article focused on creating a wearable object that very accurately identifies different strokes and competency skills in the water. As a personal user of a smart watch, I was intrigued at the programming involved in this group’s device which is far more accurate in identifying different strokes, but also water safety and competency activities such as treading water. I suspect many readers will be interested in this group’s results even if the equations and calculations go over their heads like they did mine!

Another excellent practical research paper is a descriptive research study completed by Susan J. Grosse of the Aquatic Consulting and Educational Resources Services using her *Grosse Adapted Aquatics Database: Ten-Year Addendum*, titled “Aquatics for Individuals with Disabilities: An Analysis of Publication Trends.” Sue, who is a frequent and longtime contributor to *IJARE* (my claim supported by her educational article in this issue), has used her database to examine the state of aquatic-related literature over the first 20 years of the 21st Millennium. I think instructors, particularly those who work with adapted aquatics, will be interested in Sue’s findings.

The penultimate research article is “Addressing Swim Safety in Autistic Children: A Pilot Feasibility Study Using Aquatic Occupational Therapy,” authored by Erika Kemp, Rebecca Woodson, and Maria Baldino, all from The Ohio State University. The authors have employed the Water Orientation Test Alyn-2 (WOTA2) and Goal Attainment Scaling to examine the progress that group of children on the autism spectrum made in a clinical occupational therapy aquatic program. This study is quite timely given the recent focus on ASD and the risk of drowning among those individuals.

Finally, wrapping up the research articles is an extraordinary qualitative piece authored by Dagmar Dahl (Nord University) and Asa I. Backstrom (Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences) from Norway and Sweden, respectively, entitled, “Meeting, Moving, Mastering – A Text Analysis of the Aesthetic Attractions of “Wild Swimming.” You ask, “what is wild swimming?!” Well, all I can tell you is that you need to read Dagmar and Asa’s tome to find out as well as to enjoy their textual analysis from an aesthetic perspective.

Educational Articles

For this issue, we feature three substantive educational articles for your information and edification.

Susan J. Grosse, of the Aquatic Consulting and Educational Resources Services who I introduced in the previous research article section, has also authored “The Halliwick Concept: Practical Contributions.” I found her article both very readable as well as informative in distinguishing the Halliwick Concept, Halliwick Method, and Halliwick technique for assisting individuals with disabilities in successfully gaining skill and competence in the water.

Robert K. Stallman (Norwegian School of Sport Science, Lifesaving Foundation, Tanzanian Lifesaving Society, Norwegian Lifesaving Society), along with a host of his recent collaborators both in Norway in sub-Saharan Africa (Alex Mwaipasi (Tanzanian Life Saving Society), Ebbe Laakso Horneman (Folk Museum, Lillehammer, Norway), Nils Olof Vikander (North Trondelag University College (ret), Levanger, Norway), Bente Wäinösdatter Horneman Laakso (Lillehammer Community), Haakon-Paavo Laakso Nysted (Jorekstad Recreation Center, Lillehammer), Toni Ongala (Montessori Center, Dar-es-Salaam), has followed up on my long ago editorial, “No Strokes First,” and his own responding guest editorial, “No Strokes First – All Strokes First.” Bob and his colleagues have authored, “Revisiting the Metaphorical Concept of ‘No Strokes First – All Strokes First!’: Part One – Beginning Strokes.” This in-depth educational article is complete with numerous original YouTube videos of each of his recommended “starter” strokes for novice individuals who may have acquired sufficient buoyancy, breath control, and basic control and coordination in the water to begin to propel and locomote themselves in the aquatic medium. Bob proposes a couple beginner strokes with which even I was unfamiliar. Instructors of beginner (and maybe even intermediate) swimming will want to pay close attention to this article.

As if his beginner strokes article was not enough, Bob Stallman and his numerous collaborators (Ebbe L. Horneman (Maihuagen Folk Museum, Lillehammer, Norway), Nils O. Vikander (University College of North Trondelag, Norway), Alexander Mwaipasi (Tanzanian Lifesaving Society), Bente W. H. Laakso (Lillehammer Community (ret), Norwegian Lifesaving Society), Haakon - Paavo L. Nysted (Jorekstad Recreation Center, Lillehammer, Norway), Toni Ongala (Tanzanian Lifesaving Society, Montessori Activity Center, Dar es Salaam) have followed the initial article with “Which Stroke Next? All Strokes Next! Part Two: Strokes for Intermediate and Advanced Swimmers.” This follow up second

part features more original YouTube videos of a significant number of strokes beyond the standard four competitive strokes. The emphasis in the article is that for demonstrating advanced water competence, more advanced swimmers ought to be able to perform another dozen strokes (at least 1-2 of which I was unfamiliar). This article is both an instructive one as well as having historical significance and should be part of every aquatic professional's lexicon.

Position Statement

This issue features what I estimate may be one of the most influential articles *IJARE* has published in its history. Rita Pinto and Juan Antonio Moreno Murcia, both from Universidad Miguel Hernandez de Eiche, have proposed a position statement entitled "Toward a Globalised Vision of Aquatic Competence." Regular readers are probably aware that Larry Bruya and I pioneered the concept of water competence way back in 1995 in our *Aquatic Readiness* text. This position statement is an outstanding complement to what we started 28 years ago. The authors bring together elements of aquatic motor development, ecological, and chaos theory to view water and aquatic competence in a whole new light that is revolutionary. You will want to read it, download it, and read it several times again!