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EDITORIAL

The current issue of the *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice* includes a wide range of interesting articles on social intervention practice (Van Doorn, De Graaf, Akkermans, & Kloppenborg), research (Schout & De Jong, Machielse), theory (Van der Zwet, Beneken genaamd Kolmer & Schalk) and policy (Steyaert).

To begin with, Van Doorn *et al.* discuss the impact of the mass media on the presentation of the results of social work research. It seems that the media can selectively highlight completely different outcomes than those originally intended by the researcher. They illustrate this on the basis of their research project on homeless people and the media coverage that followed their research report. The media did not report the results of their study consistently; they were reported out of context, over-generalized and presented in a much more dramatic light than how Van Doorn *et al.* presented them. The authors analyse and discuss this process on the basis of Cohen's Media Hype Theory and provide us with information on how social work researchers can handle the media when presenting their research findings.

In the second article of this issue, Schout and De Jong report the findings of a research project on house evictions. A house eviction is a dramatic event and often the end of a multifaceted and complicated process. Not much is known about the process that eventually leads to an eviction. On the basis of an exploratory, qualitative research project including seven case

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studies, the authors provide us with information on this process. They conclude that the eviction process is indeed complex in nature and that several determinants and mechanisms are at play: actors become each other's adversaries; there is often a need for recognition on the side of the professional that is not met; there is an absence of a joint effort to prevent the eviction; there is a need for a better balance between methodical professional skills and personal competence; and there is often an accumulation of problems. The authors provide us with rich case study material to describe these mechanisms. Schout and De Jong conclude with a general implication for social work practice: the need for the institutionalization of conflict capability.

Machielse presents and reflects on the findings of an extensive qualitative study (as part of a larger research project: <http://www.lesi.nl/onderzoek-advies/project-social-isolement/>) on social isolation among the elderly. This topic was addressed earlier in this journal by Fokkema and Steyaert 2005/02 and Kerklaan 2011/03. Machielse takes the discussion on this topic to another level, stating that the socially isolated form a heterogeneous group. The author presents us with a typology of the socially isolated elderly as a guide for effective social intervention. On the basis of various qualitative, in-depth research methods, Machielse concludes that the socially isolated elderly can be classified on the basis of two crucial factors: the *persistence* of their isolation and their *innate sociability*. Combining these two factors results in eight *intervention profiles*, all with varying implications for practice. The typology clearly shows the possibilities of intervention programmes when dealing with the socially isolated elderly, but it also shows the limits of professional practice; sometimes it is simply not possible to improve the situation and mere consolidation is the only option. Machielse concludes with the important notion that this does not mean that intervention is ineffective: intervention may have a preventative effect and improve the quality of life of the elderly person in general. In this light, the author argues for a renewed discussion on how to assess the effectiveness of social intervention practices, incorporating more than merely objective measures (see also Van der Laan, 2003/04; Melief, 2003/04).

The fourth article continues the discussion and deals with the rise and use of evidence-based practice – a much-debated topic in our journal (for a discussion, see the contributions of Banks, 02/2011; Potting, Sniekers, Lamers, & Reverda, 03/2010; Hermans, 03/2005). In this article, Van der Zwet *et al.* make the case for an interactive approach to evidence-based practice in social work. The authors state that EBP, for no apparent reason, has not generally been adopted and implemented by social workers in the Netherlands and they go on to investigate the reasons underlying this on the basis of a review of the international literature on the topic. Before naming

the facilitating and impeding factors in this process, the authors begin going back to the original definition of EBP by Sackett and colleagues, and underlines some common misunderstandings arising from this definition. Van der Zwet *et al.* then turn to the main impeding factors in adopting and implementing EBP in the Netherlands. A lack of research skills and general resistance to the use of EBP among social practitioners are considered the main barriers to its general adoption. The authors state, however, that it is unfair simply to hold practitioners responsible. After all, other actors are also involved in the process: the employing social work organizations, policy makers and researchers all have their roles to play. Van der Zwet *et al.* therefore call for an interactive approach to evidence-based practice in social work, in which all parties collaborate to make meaningful connections between research and practice.

Steyaert addresses the important question of how new social media impacts on communication between scholars and practitioners all over the world. He states that an important goal of social work research is to shape the professional practice and behaviour of social workers. When departing from this view, it is puzzling and troubling to note that – because of traditional peer-review protocols for instance – many scientific articles stay within the publishers and the universities and are inaccessible for the general public. With the rise of e-learning environments and the rapid diffusion of information on the internet, Steyaert states that new and perhaps more creative ways of communicating research results should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities that the internet can offer. He concludes that it is time to supplement the traditional Science Citation Index with the Google Citation Index and in doing so, bridge the gap between scientific results and professional practice.

The last article of this issue is a contribution from a student. As we have mentioned in the past, the *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice* likes to offer outstanding students the opportunity to publish their work in our student's work section. Articles in this category follow a different review procedure to articles that fall within the categories of research, theory, policy and practice. Generally, the work of these students is not peer-reviewed, but proposed by a board member of the journal, or – as with the article by Van der Krogt – is considered promising by educators in the field.

Van der Krogt was a student in the Social Work programme of the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. Her thesis was one of the articles that was recognized in the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences 2011 Thesis Awards. Van der Krogt reports on the normatively challenging subjects of the wish of a client to die, euthanasia and the role of the social worker. She does this

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by reviewing the literature and laws in this field, but also by reflecting on her own experiences as a social worker.

In the book review section, Willem Blok discusses "The Foundations of Change – towards methodological Freedom" (*Grondslagen van veranderen – Naar een methodiek zonder keurslijf*) by Gerard Donkers, and Meindert Slagter discusses "The New World of Work: on Bricks, Bytes and Behaviour" (*Het nieuwe werken ontrafeld. Over Bricks, Bytes, & Behaviour*) by Baane, Houtkamp, and Knotter.

In our familiar "News from Higher Social Education" column, JSI editor Marlies van der Linden, who has been editing this column for many years and who has always performed this task with great talent and relish, makes an appeal for a successor. Someone who can take over the important task of keeping our readers informed on developments in the diverse range of social intervention educational study programmes, both nationally and internationally, by stimulating educators to reflect on how to make the most of knowledge on social intervention theory, research, practice and policy in training and schooling programmes.

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