APAQ at Thirty

In January 1984 the journal *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly (APAQ)* was “born,” and we are now finishing a 30-year voyage of publishing scholarly manuscripts “to stimulate and communicate scholarly inquiry relating to physical activity that is adapted in order to enable and enhance performance and participation in people with disability” (APAQ mission statement). This purpose is only slightly modified from the original one presented by Broadhead (1984) in his preface to the first issue. The mission statement, which was revised in 2014, now incorporates the current perspective of the International Classification of Function and Disability (World Health Organization, 2001) referring to structure and function, activity, and participation as major intervention outcomes in persons with disability. New in 2015 are the updated reviewers’ guidelines (APAQ Web site) and the language recommendations based on a recent APAQ article (Peers, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Eales, 2014), which may slightly divert from the language recommendation relating to disability in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Following research trend analyses published when APAQ was at 10 and 20 years of age (Reid & Broadhead, 1995, and Porretta & Sherrill, 2005, respectively), Haegele, Lee, and Porretta’s study in this issue (2015) presents and discusses the research trends observed in APAQ based on publications of the last decade.

Among others, Haegele et al. (2015) refer in their conclusions to the limited number of inclusion-related intervention studies, which they found surprising. Today, after the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force and was ratified by 155 nations (United Nations, 2015), this is not only surprising but also worrying. Inclusion and/or universal design for physical education is expected to be the policy and standard practice in the United States (e.g., Lieberman, Lytle, & Clarquq, 2008; Sherlock-Shangraw, 2013), as well as in many other countries. However, student and/or teacher experiences (which have been substantially explored and reported in APAQ publications) still describe many barriers and problems with the participation of students with disability in physical activity.

While other intervention research appears to be entering disability-specific journals, it is not likely that many inclusion-related intervention studies are published in other scholarly journals. Therefore, APAQ remains an important publication avenue for those in adapted physical activity, as well as general physical-education scholars and practitioners who do want to study how to improve service provision in an inclusive and universal physical activity environment.

For this purpose the APAQ editorial board recently decided to add a Brief Research Note section, presenting shorter articles reporting original ideas, information, or insights, including technical or methodological research, case studies, novel techniques, and replication or validation studies. In manuscripts submitted to this section the recommended number of pages is 15 rather than the 30 in a
typical research article. In addition, authors are encouraged to more frequently submit manuscripts for the Application section, which contains applied investigations in settings often requiring unique methodologies, reports of case studies, programmatic developments involving strategies and techniques, and the design of equipment and facilities.

Also disappointing in the trend analysis of the research publications during the third APAQ decade was the small frequency of studies relating to populations, which are the focus of the adaptation needs in physical activity and particularly physical education, such as autism (8%), developmental coordination disorders (5%), and emotional/behavioral disability (3%). The importance of addressing physical activity needs and performance capacity in such populations is signified through the outstanding sixth rank acquired by the article “Motor Skills and Calibrated Autism Severity in Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder” (MacDonald, Lord, & Ulrich, 2014) based on DOI resolution among the 29 Human Kinetics journals in May 2015. While the large majority of APAQ articles are in the Research category, in the current issue two additional sections are represented, namely Applications and Reviews. Both sections are important for consolidating and further establishing the knowledge base in our field of study. I encourage future authors to submit manuscripts to all APAQ sections and take particular consideration of the populations that are still understudied in the physical activity domain.

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References


