



September Newsletter

International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation

Message from the Directors:

Welcome to the newsletter from the International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR)!

The goal of this newsletter is to appraise the members and stakeholders of the ICDR as well as the wider Rehabilitation Sciences Sector community of some ongoing activities. We are hoping to publish this newsletter a few times throughout the academic year.

In this issue:

- the ICDR-India group provides an update.
- The PIRL group describes the “Asking about disability” online tool. We hope you will enjoy reading the ICDR newsletter.

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Andrea Duncan, PhD
ICDR Co-director, Education

Tim Bressmann, PhD
ICDR Co-director, Research

ICDR India: News and Highlights

Chairs – Dinesh Krishna and Ramasubramanian Ponnusamy

Vice-Chair Education: Chamila Anthonypillia

Vice-Chair Research: Franzina Coutinho and Marie Brien

ICDR-India has been working with [Handi-care Intl.](#) and [Amar Seva Sangam](#) to coordinate fieldwork placements and masters research projects in rural South India.

Field Placements

In total, 5 Physiotherapy, 23 Occupational therapy and 4 Speech language pathology from University of Toronto have participated in field work placements since 2019 in the areas of:

- In-patient Spinal Cord Rehab.
- Out-patient Stroke and Neuro Rehab
- Early Intervention
- School Age Child Rehab
- Community / Home Based Early Intervention and Child Rehab



Students are supervised by OTs, PTs and SLPs at Amar Seva Sangam and are supported by Canadian volunteer therapists in-person or virtually. UofT students often collaborate with students and therapists from other disciplines and universities, as ASSA hosts students from across 11 Canadian Universities.

Placements are \$300 per week and cover accommodation, food and placement related travel.

All students are assigned clients in one or more departments of their choice and are given graduated responsibilities and client load. In addition, all students are given a project that includes producing manuals, resources and/or presentation. Some examples are:

1. An Introduction to understanding Communication, Speech, Language and Swallowing in children.
2. Supporting mental health of stroke patients
3. Mobile Arm sling user guide
4. Fall prevention for stroke patients.
5. Incorporating Play in Therapy
6. Promoting Hand function in Adult Post Stroke
7. Promoting Hand function in Children with Cerebral Palsy



RESEARCH

Starting in Fall 2021, 4 different research projects have been conducted by a total of 8 students as part of their master's thesis project. These studies includes:

1. Exploring vocational outcomes, quality of life, and social inclusion in patients with spinal cord injuries following vocational rehabilitation in India
2. A capacity building intervention for parents of children with disabilities in South India
3. Validating a Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices Survey for Evaluation of School Awareness programs in rural South India
4. Exploring paediatric rehabilitation providers perspectives of assistive technology access after the implementation of an assistive technology provision program in rural South India

The first 2 studies have already been submitted to journals for publication and the other two manuscripts are being prepared.

In this upcoming year, 4 new research projects involving 8 students will be undertaken.

UPCOMING EVENTS / PLANS

On Nov.4, [ICDR-India](#) and [Handi-care Intl.](#) will be hosting a [gala dinner at Borgata Event Centre](#) in Vaughan to raise money for Amar Seva Sangam's Assistive Technology access program. This is a great opportunity to meet ICDR alumni and future students.

OT, PT, SLP student clinical placements and research project matching for 2023 academic year has already begun. We do have more capacity and invite students interesting in doing research or clinical placement in India to see [our website](#) and [contact us](#).

Amanda Hall

Occupational Therapy Student, 2023

"My time at ASSA was exceptional to say the least. The amount of learning that takes place and opportunities offered at the ASSA campus is incredible and enables students to make the most of their time and grow personally and professionally. ASSA provides the opportunity to work with a variety of populations, see many diverse presentations of conditions and work alongside an incredible team of healthcare professionals and fellow students while also having access to amazing resources. There is incredible support from staff and management, and I can truly say I felt valued, embraced, welcomed, and respected every minute of every day."



Asking About Disability in Research: A New Tool to Better Define Disability in Global Health Research

Lynn Cockburn and Soomin Lee

Approximately 1 in 5 people globally lives with disability. Therefore, inclusivity in global health research is crucial. However, given the multifaceted definition of disability, which varies across regions, researchers are often faced with the challenge of how to "ask" about disability. Therefore, our project team, led by Soomin Lee, Natalie Ho, Andrea Kuntjoro, and Lynn Cockburn, created the "Asking About Disability in Research" Tool, an online resource specifically designed to guide global health researchers.

The "Asking About Disability in Research" tool assists researchers in determining the best approach for defining and asking about disability. In addition, this innovative tool considers specific research study designs and variables to provide the best approach to use for a given research project. The tool incorporates approaches such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health, the Washington Group Question Sets, Rapid Assessment of Disability, and the Direct Question approach. From a human rights framework to structured questionnaires, these methodologies provide various perspectives on disability, thus catering to a variety of research contexts. Researchers can use the "Asking About Disability in Research" tool to navigate the complexities of conducting disability-inclusive research, allowing for a more comprehensive and accurate representation of our global community. Access the "Asking About Disability in Research" Tool [here](#).

More details about the specific approaches are available in a publicly available Zotero library and will be available in a peer-reviewed journal article. This project grew from the Partnerships for Inclusive Research and Learning (PIRL) project that ICDR was a partner on; more details about the PIRL Project are available on its website: <https://oticlub.utoronto.ca/research-projects/pirl>



The PIRL Project

"PIRL is short for **Partnerships for Inclusive Research and Learning**...a 3-year, SSHRC funded project" – PIRL Project website



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**International Centre for
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