

## Publishing in Developing Countries: Problems and Solutions

Chair:

**Mildred Cho**

Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics  
Palo Alto, California

Panelists:

**Barbara Gastel**

*CBE Views*  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas

**Ana Marusic**

*Croatian Medical Journal*  
Zagreb, Croatia

**Jeffrey S Mandel**

UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies  
San Francisco, California

Reporter:

**Ann Morcos**

MorcosMedia  
Metairie, Louisiana

### Problems of Small Journals in Developing Countries

Journals in developing countries—currently on the periphery—wish to become part of the mainstream of scientific publishing. A vicious circle exists, said Ana Marusic, editor-in-chief of the *Croatian Medical Journal*. Science Citation Index (SCI) cites fewer than 2% of the journals published in developing countries. Many authors feel that there is a stigma attached to being published in a non-indexed journal, so they send their work to indexed journals. The lack of qualified and reliable reviewers forces small journals in developing countries to open the gates too wide and use reviewers who might lack the necessary knowledge. These journals have a small readership and fewer advertisements and are therefore strapped financially; this makes it difficult to keep up with changing technology. Manuscripts from authors whose first language is not English often must be rejected, not because the science is deficient, but because the English is deficient.

Established journals that are at the center of scientific publishing can help small journals in developing countries grow. They can sponsor smaller peripheral journals, redirect articles to them, and solicit specific articles from them for publication. That will result in the dissemination of knowledge and an increase in competition; the original and unique knowledge of a local environment will spread, and scientific communi-

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cation will be enhanced, as will science in developing countries. Journals in developing countries must help themselves by working to improve their standards and publishing what is peculiar to their countries. And they can help each other by exchanging editors, authors, and ideas.

### Biomedical Writing and Editing Program of the People's Republic of China

Barbara Gastel, who runs the US aspect of a program to teach biomedical writing and editing in China, said the program's main goals are to increase the publication of Chinese international-quality research in the international literature and to serve as a model program for other countries and disciplines. The program includes a course to improve the skills of Chinese researchers in writing scientific papers in English and a training program aimed at developing a corps of Chinese editors to edit biomedical papers and teach biomedical writing. The writing students and editorial trainees have come from 11 Chinese institutions.

The writing course, with about 50 participants a year, entails one lesson per week for 2 semesters. Trainees prepare a manuscript, which is reviewed by an American editor, for possible submission to an international journal. The editor certificate program lasts 2 years; one group of 12 trainees has completed the program and another is enrolled. The training includes an intensive course, in-service training in China, and field practice in the United States.

### International Program Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) University of California, San Francisco

Visiting scientists from developing countries, said Jeffrey S Mandel, codirector of the program, spend 10 to 12 weeks in San Francisco as part of a collaborative AIDS prevention research program. In the last 12 years, 68 scientists from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe have participated in the program; additional scientists have participated in a sabbatical program for the preparation of scientific manuscripts. Applicants to the program submit an AIDS research proposal; they are assisted during the program in conducting small epidemiologic and behavioral studies, both descriptive and interventional. Participants receive \$8000 to \$10000 in seed money, which they use to start pilot projects in their own countries. The program aims to enhance the ability of researchers in developing countries to conduct AIDS prevention research independently and to encourage, develop, and rigorously evaluate innovative AIDS prevention intervention projects implemented by CAPS participants.

With the growth and multiplication of international writing and editing programs such as these, scientific writing and editing in developing countries will undoubtedly progress and become a vital part of international scientific publication. 