

◆ Retreat, Part 1: Task Force on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development

Moderator:

Ana Marusic
Croatian Medical Journal
Zagreb, Croatia

Panelists:

Pippa Smart
International Network for the
Availability of Scientific Publications
(INASP)
Oxford, United Kingdom

Annette Flanagan
JAMA
Chicago, Illinois

David Ofori-Adjei
Ghana Medical Journal
Accra, Ghana

Barth N Ekwueme
Global Journal of Educational Research
Calabar, Nigeria

Phyllis Freeman
Journal of Public Health Policy
Boston, Massachusetts

Reporter:

Carrie Cameron
University of Texas M D Anderson
Cancer Center
Houston, Texas

The CSE Task Force on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development was established in 2005 to invigorate the CSE membership to reduce barriers faced by authors and editors in the developing world; Part 1 of the retreat highlighted progress made. Task Force Chair Paul Bozuwa, reviewing the last year, urged members to continue supporting publication efforts in regions where scientific progress is needed most. Moderator Ana Marusic underscored the importance of creating global partnerships in and open access to medical science, citing a *BMJ* survey that voted this scenario

as the most desirable future for science.

Pippa Smart, of the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), gave an overview of scientific research and publishing in Africa. According to data from the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), Science Citation Index, and the National Science Foundation, while science and engineering publication worldwide increased by 51% from 1986 to 2003, publication in sub-Saharan Africa decreased by 9%. To increase the publication of African research locally and internationally, INASP has established a publishing support program that offers workshops to familiarize African journal editors and publishers with editorial, production, promotion, and indexing best practices that can then be localized. Workshops have been conducted in eight African countries and outside Africa. INASP also provides print materials, support for online publishing, and other resources.

Annette Flanagan, of JAMA, and David Ofori-Adjei, of the *Ghana Medical Journal (GMJ)*, reported on the African Journals Partnership Project. The purpose of the partnership, coordinated by CSE and sponsored by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), is to enhance the visibility and quality of African medical journals. Four partnerships of African and Northern Hemisphere journals have been established since 2004 in countries with NIH-funded research projects. The partnerships are *African Health Sciences* and the *BMJ*, the *GMJ* and *The Lancet*, the *Malawi Medical Journal* and JAMA, and the *Mali Medical Journal* and *Environmental Health Perspectives* with the *American Journal of Public Health*. Issues include editor, author, and reviewer training; identification of equipment needs; support for online publishing; financial support for managing editors; and establishment of business plans for sustainable publishing. Achievements include exchange visits, training, online publishing initiatives, and delivery of equipment. Ofori-Adjei noted a

deepened understanding on both sides.

Barth Ekwueme discussed his efforts to establish regular, high-quality academic publishing in Africa through the *Global Journal Series (GJS)*. A resource-sharing consortium of disparate African journals, *GJS* was founded by Ekwueme in 1995 with one journal and few resources. It has grown to include 10 journals that share editorial, publication, and printing facilities. Through commitment to consistency in best practices, realistic self-funding efforts, and support from such foreign institutions as INASP, the series has received more than 600 manuscripts (including some from abroad), been indexed by African Journals Online and other indexes, and been assessed by various organizations, including ISI.

Ofori-Adjei described challenges faced by the *GMJ* when he became editor in 1998 and the state of the journal today. The journal had faced serious reverses and suffered from an irregular production schedule and lack of administrative support. Working with the African Journal Partnership and the Forum of African Medical Editors, the *GMJ* has increased its visibility and developed plans for sustainability.

Phyllis Freeman reported on the AuthorAid program for developmental-editing assistance since its endorsement by the task force in 2005. AuthorAid is committed to helping authors worldwide overcome barriers to publishing developing-world research. The AuthorAid concept includes matching authors with senior scientists to provide mentoring for content and author's editors to assist in preparing manuscripts, building a Web-based community of knowledge and resources, and creating a format of online knowledge-sharing that can be adapted for other purposes. A proposal for funding a demonstration program was being considered by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency at the time of the meeting, and AuthorAid has received commitments from leading journals, publishers, and CSE itself. 