

# CSE Organizes Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development

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More than 190 journals will publish theme issues on poverty and human development on 22 October 2007 as part of an effort led by CSE. The main goal is to promote global awareness of the state of scientific research on this important subject.

This global theme-issue campaign was initially proposed by Annette Flanagin, managing deputy editor of *JAMA*, during a meeting of the CSE Task Force on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development in 2005. Her proposal was accepted by Task Force Chair Paul Bozuwa, who asked Flanagin to coordinate the effort.

Afterward, Flanagin said, she “asked an initial group of leading science journals to participate and then presented a proposal to the CSE members attending a plenary session at the 2006 annual meeting.” During that session, participants discussed the overall plan; afterwards, Flanagin began to invite science journals to join the initiative via the CSE membership and e-mail lists of other groups of editors. As soon as journals joined the initiative, they were listed on a section of the CSE Web site dedicated to the global theme-issue initiative ([www.councilscienceeditors.org/globalthemeissue.cfm](http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/globalthemeissue.cfm)).

Science journals soon became aware of the global theme issue. At some journals, such as *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* and *Mountain Research and Development*, staff members are actively involved with CSE and therefore learned about the initiative by attending the CSE annual meeting or through member communications. Other journals received an announcement or invitation through an e-mail list or read about the initiative on the CSE Web site.

Molly Dougherty, editor of *Nursing Research*, discussed the initiative with the editorial board of the journal. She recalls that “there was unanimous agreement that the issue of global poverty is an important

one and that nursing has an important part to play in bringing attention to the problem and solving it.” Therefore, *Nursing Research* decided to participate. Matko Marusic, an editor-in-chief of *Croatian Medical Journal*, says that “the theme is pertinent and interesting, and we felt that we can contribute with experiences/data from this part of the world [southeastern Europe]—transition, postcommunist countries.” Daniel Salisbury, managing editor of *PNAS*, states that “*PNAS* decided to participate because this initiative complements *PNAS*’s efforts in launching a section of the journal dedicated to sustainability science.”

Journals will participate in this global theme issue in various ways. Flanagin says, “Some journals will dedicate entire issues to articles on the topic of poverty and human development, some will publish a few articles, and some will publish an editorial or single article.” For example, the October 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* will be on poverty and human development. *PNAS* plans to publish an editorial from two of its sustainability-science editors and six to eight original research articles on poverty and human development. At *Nursing Research*, an editorial board member who is heavily involved in international nursing will write a double-length editorial.

Many participating journals, such as the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, have put out calls for papers in their journals or on their Web sites. Some journals have commissioned specific content. Nancy Johnson, executive editor of the *American Journal of Public Health*, says, “We have routinely reported research from other countries and have had theme issues on relevant topics, so there was very little we needed to do in order to participate.” Gavin Yamey, magazine editor of *Public Library of Science (PLOS)*, has the same opinion: “We already have a strong focus on the health problems of poverty, so for us to participate means

simply doing what we always do.” The *Croatian Medical Journal* turned to its regional editors to look for potential authors. “It is difficult to make a good theme issue—many authors promise reports, few send, even fewer send good reports,” Marusic frankly admits.

Flanagin reports that “plans are under way for an event to announce the publication of what will be hundreds of articles by the participating journals on 22 October 2007. The event is cosponsored by the US National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center and National Library of Medicine and CSE.” In the 27 December 2006 issue of *JAMA*, Flanagin and Margaret A Winker published an editorial about the global theme issue.

*JAMA* has organized two previous global theme issues. In January 1996, more than 200 articles on emerging and re-emerging global microbial threats were published by 36 journals in 21 countries. In 1997, a global theme issue on aging drew participation from 97 journals in 31 countries.

The participating journals in the Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development include some of the most distinguished scientific journals (such as *BMJ*, *Lancet*, *JAMA*, *Nature*, *PNAS*, and *Science*) and some less well-known journals in developing and transition countries. “This is an important subject to draw attention to, particularly for developing-country health journals,” says David Ofori-Adjei, editor-in-chief of the *Ghana Medical Journal*. The global theme issue will cover many diverse topics, including public health, nursing, and sustainability science.

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