

◆ *EditorLink—International Scholar-Editors Tell CSE How We Can Help*

Moderator:

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Speakers:

Kenneth R Fernández Taylor

Signos Vitales

San Salvador, El Salvador

Elsheikh Elsiddig Badr

Sudanese Journal of Public Health

Khartoum, Sudan

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How can editors in developed countries help their counterparts in developing countries? The premise of this session: An important way to find out is to ask.

Introducing the session, Iain Taylor, who heads the CSE task force for aiding editors in developing countries, noted that in this role he had recently distributed a survey to editors of African journals in a variety of sciences. Thus far, 25 of the 60 contacted editors had responded. At the session, Taylor provided a handout listing problems identified by respondents at five of the journals. The respondents reported problems regarding funding, infrastructure, staffing, training, submissions, peer review, publishing, circulation, indexing, and other items. The session then featured presentations by two recipients of scholarships to the CSE annual meeting, both of whom edited recently established journals in developing countries.

Kenneth R Fernández Taylor, editor-in-chief of *Signos Vitales*, introduced this independently published medical journal. Founded in 2003 and published every 4 months, the journal has modern graphic

design and is indexed in Imbiomed and Latindex; it is available in print and posted at www.imbiomed.com. Among items included in the journal are case reports, news, and medical-humanities content. Part of the journal's mission is to train editors. A dozen people participate in editing the journal.

Fernández Taylor noted three problems and identified possible solutions. First, El Salvador lacks a culture of ethical editorial practices; greater involvement of such organizations as the World Association of Medical Editors and CSE could improve the situation. Second, there is a lack of training in editing and publishing medical journals. Organizing a journal-editing workshop, as has been done in various regions of the world, could help, as could internships. (Fernández Taylor said he happened to have some editorial background because his grandparents and parents worked in nonscientific editing and publishing.) Third, financial resources are insufficient. He called for international cooperation in that regard and emphasized the importance of stable funding.

Elsheikh Elsiddig Badr, founder and editor-in-chief of the *Sudanese Journal of Public Health* (*SJPH*), reported that Sudan has a long tradition of scientific research and publication. A tendency exists, however, for journals to flourish briefly and then die as resources and enthusiasm diminish. In 2006, the Sudanese Community Physicians Association introduced *SJPH*, largely as a journal in which to publish local research. The journal appears quarterly, both in print and online (www.sjph.net.sd). Distributed locally and in World Health Organization (WHO) Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) countries, *SJPH* is indexed by WHO and by African Journals Online (AJOL) and is Google searchable.

SJPH receives papers mainly from Sudan and other EMRO or African countries.

It has a variety of editors and other staff members, an editorial board, an international advisory board, and a national advisory board; its office is at the ministry of health. Funding comes largely from institutional subscriptions. Some revenue also comes from advertisements, small grants to support printing, and microinvestments (income from stationery services, media services, and research training and support).

The main challenges faced by *SJPH* are gaining coverage by major international indexes, training staff, improving the Web site and electronic systems, increasing manuscript quality, and attaining financial sustainability. Accordingly, the journal's needs include guidance on indexing; technical support, software, and systems; training opportunities (both in editing and in technical and management issues); and advice on journal strategy. Hope was expressed for collaboration with well-established, highly regarded journals; implementation of a user-friendly electronic submission and review system; further development, as an investment, of services to support publishing and research; and full establishment of the Sudanese Association of Medical Editors.

The session originally was also to feature presentations by two other editors who had been awarded scholarships to the annual meeting: Soe Aung, of the *Myanmar Medical Association Newsletter*, and AE Ohwovoriole, of the *West African Journal of Medicine*. However, they had been unable to obtain visas. Hope was expressed that both would be in attendance next year. 🌍