

◆ CSE Continues Support of African Journal Partnership Project

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Diane Berneath Lang, the new CSE president, recently welcomed the attendees to the African Journal Partnership Project (AJPP) annual meeting, which followed immediately after CSE's annual meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, in May. She stated that CSE will continue to support the project, including the handling of its administrative functions.

In 2003, the Fogarty International Center (FIC) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) conceived the idea of an African medical and health journal capacity-building project, later to be called the AJPP, after noting the limited availability of relevant medical literature coming out of Africa. Despite the recognized benefits of medical and health journals for health practitioners, Africa's medical and health journal production and distribution are restricted and therefore do not make research from endemic areas available to colleagues on the continent or in the international scientific community.

The project plan partnered four African medical or health journals with established, highly rated international medical or health journals. During the initial meeting of potential participants in 2003, the objectives of the proposed partnerships were identified on the basis of the expressed needs of the African editors. (Editor's note: For an early account of the project, see *Science Editor*, May–June 2005, p 106–107.)

Because of the success of the project, new funds were allocated in 2008 by FIC and NLM for a follow-on contract, and the project was expanded to six African journal partners. Again, CSE was used as the administrative organization. The current African journal participants are *African Health Sciences*, the *Ethiopian*

Journal of Health Sciences, the *Ghana Medical Journal*, the *Malawi Medical Journal*, *Mali Medical*, and the *Medical Journal of Zambia*. The international journal participants are the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *BMJ*, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, *JAMA*, *The Lancet*, and *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The objectives of this year's 2-day meeting were to orient new member journals; discuss new contract procedures; conduct a review of partnership activities, including successes and concerns; and develop plans for future activities. The first day of the meeting included orientation for new members, a description of the new contract requirements, and review of where the project stands. The second day addressed questions about the project's and the journals' challenges and plans.

A notable success of the project has been the ability to leverage the FIC and NLM funds. First and foremost is the willingness of the international journal partners to provide staff time and travel costs to participate in the project. Second, there has been support from other organizations, including Thomson Reuters/ScholarOne, SPI Services, and WHO/TDR. This year, *Environmental Health Perspectives* expanded its support by providing funds to cosponsor AJPP workshops.

Julia Royall, chief of international programs and director of the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria Communications Network at the US National Library of Medicine, summarized the deliberations at the meeting by quoting John Kachimba, editor-in-chief of the *Medical Journal of Zambia*, who said about his visit to his partner journal, *New England Journal of Medicine*: "The way the whole team worked together was a model for

us. . . . We [journal editors in Africa] tend to do a lot in isolation." She opined that Kachimba's comment goes a long way toward summing up the *raison d'être* for the AJPP and noted that the annual AJPP meeting helped the editors to focus outwardly on visibility and inwardly on further strengthening.

Royall saw differences between this meeting and previous meetings. She saw much more collaboration at this meeting among the editors sharing advice, planning workshops and visits, and encouraging leadership. There was also the clear sense that "we are who we are," with African editors looking to their partners in the United States and the United Kingdom for tools and operational and editorial assistance, so that the African journals can develop their own identities and styles. Royall ended with an Ethiopian adage: "When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion."

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