

# Science Editing Goes Global: CSE International Scholars, Editor Link, and AuthorAID

**Moderator:**

**Iain EP Taylor**  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, British Columbia

**Speakers:**

**Barbara Gastel**  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas

**Rabindra Lal Pradhan**  
*Journal of Nepal Medical Association*  
Kathmandu, Nepal

**Stanley Anyanwu**  
*Nigerian Medical Journal*  
Nnewi, Nigeria

**Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai**  
*West African Journal of Pharmacology and Drug Research*  
Benin City, Nigeria

**Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun**  
*Nigerian Medical Practitioner*  
Ikorodu, Nigeria

**Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa**  
*Archives of Ibadan Medicine*  
Ibadan, Nigeria

**Reporter:**

**Oliver Yun**  
Doctors Without Borders/Médecins  
Sans Frontières  
New York, New York

Journal editors face many tough professional duties every day: evaluating manuscripts, securing peer reviewers, obtaining good reviews, rejecting articles, and publishing in a timely, organized, and accessible manner. Imagine facing the challenges with little or no funding, reviewers who demand remuneration, authors with no Internet access,

and the need for language translation, all at a nonindexed journal. Such difficulties are common for journal editors in the developing world, where technical, financial, and human resources are often lacking.

Moderator Iain EP Taylor began the session with a history of AuthorAID, which emerged concomitantly with an editorial task force established by past CSE President Richard Horton (editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*). The task force (later called Editor Link) sought to link CSE with the UN Millennium Development Goals. Barbara Gastel presented an overview of AuthorAID, which was the brainchild of Anthony Robbins and Phyllis Freeman (editors of the *Journal of Public Health Policy*). AuthorAID's goal is "to help developing-country researchers to write about and publish their work", and its primary components are scientific and editorial mentoring by volunteers, scientific-writing workshops, and development of open-access content. A novel component of AuthorAID is Web-based scientific mentoring and developmental editing.

AuthorAID consists of three initiatives. The largest is a project of the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and is funded by the international development agencies of Sweden (Sida) and the United Kingdom (DFID). Main partners are the WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, the International Foundation for Science, and the National University of Rwanda.

Over the last year and a half, AuthorAID activities have included Web-site development (including a blog and resource library), workshops, and mentoring. Research-writing workshops were held in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nicaragua, and Rwanda. As of 3 May 2009, the Web site had 587 registrants, with more than 100 mentors or potential mentors and more

than 300 mentorees or potential mentorees. From April 2008 to April 2009, the site had more than 15,000 visits—9249 unique visitors in 159 countries and territories. A July 2008 evaluation found considerable interest in the resource library, favorable ratings and multiplier effects of the workshops, and mentoring in the early developmental stages. Future steps include creating an e-mail listserv, training the trainers, expanding the resource library (more languages and more resource types), distributing CDs, and identifying key subjects and countries.

The CSE International Scholars—Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun, Stanley Anyanwu, Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai, Rabindra Lal Pradhan, Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa—each shared their experiences and challenges as medical journal editors in Nepal and Nigeria. Common difficulties included lack of funding, lack of training of editors and reviewers in evaluating and editing manuscripts, late reviews, poor-quality reviews, and reviewers' expectations of financial payment. Other less universal but important problems included lack of editorial staff, poor-quality manuscript submissions, long manuscript turnaround times, loss or lack of journal indexing, and the need to translate abstracts (typically from French to English).

Proposed solutions included increases in financial grants and donations; editor training, guest editors, and support from international editors; expanded reviewer bases, including foreign reviewers and association alumni; technical workshops; offering continuing-medical-education credits instead of remuneration; and provision of regular, reliable Internet access.

The needs of journal editors in developing countries may be rapidly and effectively met by addressing the aforementioned editorial obstacles through these proposed solutions and with the support of initiatives like AuthorAID. ☺