

The 2009 CSE International Scholars in the Spotlight

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Five editors—one from Nepal and four from Nigeria—attended the 2009 CSE annual meeting via CSE scholarships for editors from developing countries. The editors were selected competitively from among applicants. Recipients of CSE scholarships typically attend a CSE short course before the annual meeting and speak at a session of the annual meeting, in addition to attending other sessions.

When I attended their presentations and interviewed them, the scholarship recipients had “editorial stories” to tell CSE. They talked about how they became journal editors, the challenges they face in editing, and their perspectives on the annual meeting. They also indicated how they intend to improve their journals.

Here are the five international scholars: Rabindra Lal Pradhan, Stanley Anyanwu, Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa, Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun, and Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai.

Rabindra Lal Pradhan

Rabindra Lal Pradhan, executive editor of the *Journal of Nepal Medical Association*, is an orthopedic surgeon in Nepal. He not only practices surgery but educates future doctors of Nepal. He has been an assistant professor of orthopedics at Kathmandu Medical College in Nepal since February 2006. Pradhan is the general secretary of the Nepal Orthopaedic Association and a recipient of a fellowship in spinal surgery from the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre in New Delhi.

Pradhan’s path to medical editing is linked to a postgraduate fellowship he did at Akita University School of Medicine in Japan, where he received a PhD in orthopedic surgery in 2001. “While I was in Japan, my graduate adviser realized that my English was better than that of most Japanese,” Pradhan said. “He therefore

encouraged me to review journal articles written by Japanese authors.” Pradhan soon developed a love for reviewing manuscripts. “The professors greatly appreciated my work,” he said. Pradhan also published a number of articles in Japanese and other medical journals.

When Pradhan returned to Nepal, he met with the president of the Nepal Medical Association to discuss issues related to the *Journal of Nepal Medical Association*. “We have heard that you reviewed several journal articles in Japan. Would you be interested in helping to revamp our journal?” the president asked him. Pradhan could not refuse the invitation. He soon was named the editor of the journal with the goal of helping the executive editor. But Pradhan discovered that even as editor of the journal, he was performing the duties of an executive editor, including making major decisions for the journal. Thus, in 2005, he was named the executive editor of the journal.

The journal, which is quarterly, has been indexed since 2005 by PUBMED and MEDLINE. Like many journals in developing countries, it has some challenges. Pradhan mentioned such difficulties as peer reviewers not doing their work properly and pressure from the Nepal Medical Association and senior colleagues to publish their papers even if they do not meet the required standards.

Pradhan attributes the problem with peer review to lack of knowledge of manuscript reviewing and lack of remuneration for peer reviewers.

Pradhan noted that the journal has an acceptance rate of more than 40%. But having attended CSE’s Short Course for Journal Editors, he recognizes the need to be more selective in accepting manuscripts. “I will try to reduce the acceptance rate to 20–25%,” he said. “I will train our peer reviewers to ensure that the articles we publish are of the highest quality.”

Stanley Anyanwu

Stanley Anyanwu—professor of general surgery at Nnamdi Azikiewe University in Nigeria—is editor-in-chief of two peer-reviewed journals, the *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* and the *Nigerian Medical Journal*. Anyanwu said he became a journal editor because of his love of writing. “My experience in reviewing papers of my peers and student dissertations also played a role,” he said.

Anyanwu became editor-in-chief of the *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* in August 2003. Some of his notable achievements are an increase in the print run from 700 to 2000 per issue, an increase in the number of issues per year from two to four since 2007, and an increase in the number of pages per volume from 40 to 124. During Anyanwu’s tenure, the journal has been listed in PUBMED and MEDLINE, Thomson Reuters (Science), and Index Copernicus.

Anyanwu also helped to improve the articles submitted to the *Nigerian Medical Journal* after becoming the editor-in-chief in September 2004. He has facilitated the listing of the *Nigerian Medical Journal* in African Journals Online, thus increasing its visibility. Despite those achievements, Anyanwu mentioned the challenges that he faced in editing the journals. “Poor advertising support base, lack of regular Internet access, and getting committed peer reviewers are some of the challenges the two journals face,” he said.

Anyanwu advocates collaboration between established journals in developed countries and those in developing countries. “In this era of globalization, there is a risk that editors in the developed countries will leave those in the developing countries behind. There is a need for collaboration,” he said. “I thank CSE for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference.”

Anyanwu said that among the top

needs for his journals are online handling of manuscripts, training and assistance for online publishing, and teleconferencing with peer reviewers.

Apart from editing, Anyanwu serves in several leadership capacities. Since 2000, he has been president of the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria and chairman of a committee on continuing professional medical education for Nigerian doctors.

In 2000, Anyanwu established the “Sir S B C Anyanwu Prize for the Most Ethically Conscious Graduated” at St. Paul’s University Awka in Nigeria. Anyanwu has received many awards, including a merit award from a local government for selfless service to humanity and a professional-distinction merit award from a local chapter of the Nigerian Medical Association.

Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa

Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa—a senior lecturer and a consultant urologist in the Division of Urology of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria—is editor-in-chief of the *Archives of Ibadan Medicine*, editor of *Ibadan Surgeon*, and editorial assistant of the *African Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences*, all of which are official publications of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan.

Holding editorial roles at three journals may be tough, but Olapade-Olaopa’s personality may be his weapon: He exudes so much energy. And you may be wrong if you think Olapade-Olaopa had an initial ambition to become a journal editor. “I just stumbled on editing,” Olapade-Olaopa replied when asked how he became an editor. “I was in the UK doing a clinical job, got interested in international medical education, and recognized the need to provide medical updates for people in Africa through journals,” he said. “On my return to Nigeria as a clinician, I got interested in peer reviewing journal articles and eventually became editor-in-chief of the *Archives of Ibadan Medicine* in 1997.” He joined the editorial

teams of the *African Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences* and *Ibadan Surgeon* in 2001 and 2008, respectively.

Olapade-Olaopa said that the *Archives of Ibadan Medicine* is published twice a year and has 10 to 15 peer-reviewed articles per issue. Among his achievements since he became editor-in-chief are the journal’s availability online and its designation as a World Health Organization resource for Africa. He indicated that the *African Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences*, which started more than 35 years ago, has four issues per year, is listed on African Journals Online, has French abstracts, and attracts 250 to 400 submissions per year. *Ibadan Surgeon*—started more than 30 years ago—was initially published regularly but has become “episodic”, Olapade-Olaopa said.

Olapade-Olaopa recounted the challenges of editing the journals, including lack of funding, difficulty in obtaining peer reviewers, and the challenge of publishing good articles. For each issue of the *Archives of Ibadan Medicine*, he concentrates on selecting guest editors and prompting them for new articles for consideration. “I sometimes rely on alumni of the College of Medicine as guest editors,” he said. “I apply pressure on them.”

He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, UK, in 1992. In 2003, he undertook a fellowship in medical education from the Foundation for the Advancement of International Medical Education and Research in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Describing his experience as a CSE international scholar, Olapade-Olaopa said that the conference has enriched his editorial experience. “I encourage more editors to make use of CSE’s opportunities and resources, including its Web site, to improve their journal-editing skills,” he said. He also observed that small journals in developing countries have nearly the same problems as other journals do. “Small journals have a lot to learn from big journals and vice versa. I will let colleagues on my editorial boards know of what I’ve learned to improve our journals.”

Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun

Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun is a professor of internal medicine and neurology at Olabisi Onabanjo University in Nigeria. Since 2001, he has been the editor of *Nigerian Medical Practitioner*. “I’ve been very prolific. My boss identified my prolific writing and urged me to become the editor,” Ogun said when asked how he became a journal editor.

The Nigerian Society of Neurological Sciences established *Nigerian Medical Practitioner* in 1978, Ogun said. Available online and in print, the journal is published 10 times a year. Ogun described how he has been helping to make the journal eligible for indexing by MEDLINE. “In 1998, the journal had a score of 1.5 out of 5,” he said. “But in 2008, the score improved to 2.5.” Currently, a title must receive a score of at least 3.75 to be selected for indexing. “I became very upset when despite all the improvements in the journal, it did not qualify for indexing,” Ogun said.

Attending the CSE annual meeting has opened Ogun’s eyes to ways to deal with issues in journal editing. He has also become more aware of the state of his journal. “Before I came here [to the CSE annual meeting], I did not totally understand why our journal received a low mark from MEDLINE,” Ogun said. “Now, I think MEDLINE was generous to give us even 2.5 out of 5.”

Ogun said he was planning to recruit international peer reviewers to improve the journal. He also indicated that 20 to 30% of the journal consists of advertisements—a policy that, although it helps to fund the journal, needs to be changed. That is because interspersing advertisements among the articles reduces the chances that a journal will be indexed on MEDLINE, he said.

Ogun’s interest in journal editing stems from his desire to publicize outside academic communities. “Academic communities undertake much research, and we need to let people know of research results through journals,” he said.

International continued

He is also a peer reviewer for several national and international journals, including *Stroke*, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, and the *African Journal of Neurological Sciences*.

Outside editing, Ogun serves Olabisi Onabanjo University in many capacities, including being the dean of the faculty of clinical sciences (since August 2007) and being a faculty senate member (since 1995). Ogun's research interests include HIV/AIDS. He is the founding director of the Center for Special Studies Nigeria—an HIV care initiative involved in holistic care of people living with HIV/AIDS. And he is involved in educating the general public on emerging health threats.

Among honors and awards Ogun has received are the Nigerian Medical Association Prize in 1983 for final year MBCHB examination and a British Council Award on HIV/AIDS Management in 1996.

Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai

Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai has been editor-in-chief of the *West African Journal of Pharmacology and Drug Research* since October 2001. He is also professor of pharmacology at the University of Benin, Nigeria.

The *West African Journal of Pharmacology and Drug Research*—established by the West African Society for Pharmacology in 1973—is published annually and was initially abstracted by MEDLINE. In 1983, MEDLINE stopped abstracting it because of irregularities in the journal's publication and poor management, Omogbai said.

Omogbai is a member of several learned societies, including the Nigerian Veterinary Medical Association, the Scottish Pharmaceutical Sciences Group, and the Nigerian Association of Medical Scientists. In 1988, he received a British Technology Group postdoctoral research fellowship.

Omogbai's experience in journal editing started in 1996, when he became a member of the editorial board of the

West African Journal of Pharmacology and Drug Research. His interest in editing then soared. It did not surprise him when he was elected eventually as editor-in-chief.

"When the West African Society for Pharmacology elected me as editor-in-chief, the journal was heavily indebted to printers," Omogbai said. "Now, we have joined African Journals Online, and royalties from our articles have helped us to get out of debt. We're also making a profit."

Omogbai was elected for a 3-year term. When his first term ended in 2004, he was re-elected. In 2007, when he expected to hand over the journal to another person because the constitution mandates only two terms, he was refused. "The society has realized how I have transformed the journal and therefore wants me to continue," he said.

But life as editor-in-chief is not all rosy for Omogbai: Many editorial problems stand in his way. "We have to beg peer reviewers to refine our articles, and sometimes we even have to threaten them," he said. Omogbai also noted that some authors do not follow manuscript guidelines, thereby creating problems for his editorial team and peer reviewers. Because the West African Society for Pharmacology serves both Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, publishing French abstracts of the papers is necessary, but finding French translators has been challenging.

Despite those challenges, Omogbai hopes to transform the journal into a quarterly. To facilitate the transition, the journal adopted online manuscript submission last year. He also has plans to pursue indexing of the journal.



Rabindra Lal Pradhan, Shamsideen Abayomi Ogun, Emiola Oluwabunmi Olapade-Olaopa, Pamella P Erickson (chair, CSE Education Committee, 2008–2009), Eric Kelly Inanemo Omogbai, and Stanley Anyanwu.

Omogbai expressed his joy at being able through the CSE scholarship to interact with science editors from different countries. "Editing requires training and networking with fellow editors. This conference has been an eye opener for me," he said. "I have learned a lot—use of peer reviewers and overcoming the problem of delays and more. I will recommend this meeting to every editor, whether from a big or small journal."

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The CSE Education Committee thanks the individuals and organizations that supported the 2009 International Scholarship Program.