

Summary of the African Journal Partnership Program (AJPP) Annual Review and Planning Meeting 2017

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The annual meeting of the African Journal Partnership Project (AJPP) was held on May 24–25, 2017, in San Diego, California, following the annual meeting of the Council of Science Editors. The theme of this year's meeting was *Open Science: Access, Transparency, Data Sharing and Reproducibility*, and the information-packed two days offered a variety of detailed presentations and engaged discussions to further explore the challenges and opportunities facing the AJPP journal teams.

Patricia Brennan from the National Library of Medicine (NLM) opened the meeting with a keynote address on open science. Dr. Brennan offered an overview of the NLM and its structure, resources and activities, tools and databases, and how these serve the mission of providing public access to science and research, which together accelerate further research and public policy. The tools and databases of the NLM, e.g., PubMed and PubMed Central, are of interest and importance to the AJPP journals, their growth and discoverability. There were additional presentations on the topics of “public access journals” and “open access journals” by representatives from sponsoring partners that gave insight into the industry definitions of both access models (and how these relate to the access models of the AJPP journals), how open access is managed at Taylor & Francis and the BMJ, and the mechanics of article processing charges (author fees for open access articles). There was lively discussion on this topic and all presenters gave the journal teams much to consider in reviewing their respective models and options for change.

Following the meeting theme, *Transparency, Data Sharing and Reproducibility*, there were several presentations that provided:

- insights into the best practices for monitoring and reporting journal performance (analytics, metrics, audits, etc.)

- an overview of the EQUATOR Network and its initiatives to “improve the reliability and value of published health research” through “transparent and accurate reporting and “use of robust reporting guidelines”
- how data sharing works at both the *Annals of Internal Medicine* and at *The BMJ*.

In addition, there were presentations about indexing and its importance in improving journal search and discoverability (enhancing open science and transparency).

The meeting also included discussion of operational issues that impact the AJPP journals (e.g., XML conversion services provided by SPi Global, ScholarOne Manuscripts “how to” workshop, review of action items, and financial reporting) as well as updates from two AJPP sponsoring partners: the Elsevier Foundation's Publishers Without Borders Program, and the African Journals Online (AJOL) platform (the latter presenting on the DOI deposit and overall platform metrics).

Of course the meeting would not be complete without specific journal updates, which were presented with the additional context of an extensive review of each journal site done by Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company. The review of each journal site and its digital activities offered a rich and detailed backdrop to better understand the current status of each journal, providing insights into each journal's challenges and opportunities.

We were then treated to a journal “safari” as each AJPP editorial team gave its annual report, citing highlights of the year, plans for the coming year, and ongoing areas of struggle and challenge. Many of the latter were shared across the teams, among them:

- difficulty of finding good reviewers who will respond in a timely manner
- lack of an established scientific writing culture and good English language skills
- engaging and retaining an active, interested editorial board
- availability of personnel resources

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- workflow challenges as they relate to journal management and operations
- getting indexed and improving discoverability

Listening to the reports gave us all profound appreciation for the efforts and commitment of the journal teams and all sponsors, suggesting ideas for continued collaboration and next year's meeting.

All the hard work done by the larger group in preparing, presenting, discussing or listening over the very busy two

days was interwoven with lots of laughter and catching up during the meeting breaks and our meals together. While we were only able to enjoy the beauty of San Diego as we walked in the evenings to and from our group dinners, we experienced the beauty of spirited and human connection in our shared time and confirmation of our commitment to each other and the AJPP. And this was captured in poetic verse by James Tumwine of the *African Health Sciences Journal*, which can be found on the AJPP site at <http://ajpp-online.org/>.