

Summary of the African Journal Partnership Program (AJPP) Annual Review and Planning Meeting, 2018

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The 2018 annual meeting of the African Journal Partnership Program (AJPP) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, East Africa. The theme of the meeting was *Sustainable Publishing: How Journals Are Adapting to the New Publishing Environment*. David Ofori-Adjei chaired the meeting and acknowledged the important support of the US National Library of Medicine, Fogarty International Center, the Elsevier Foundation, and the Council of Science Editors. He welcomed *The Health Press* of Zambia as the newest member of AJPP, which has joined nine other African medical and health journals (*African Health Sciences*, *Annales Africaines de Médecine*, *Annals of African Surgery*, *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences*, *Ghana Medical Journal*, *Malawi Medical Journal*, *Mali Medical*, *Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, and *Sierra Leone Journal of Biomedical Research*) along with northern partner journals (*Annals of Internal Medicine*, *The BMJ*, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, *JAMA*, *The Lancet*, and *New England Journal of Medicine*). He also thanked African Journals Online (AJOL), Clarivate Analytics, KWF Consulting, and SPi Global Services for their continued support.

Two keynote addresses were given. On day one, the keynote address was delivered by Dr Elizabeth Marincola, Senior Advisor, Communications and Advocacy for the African Academy of Sciences. Dr Marincola's address, "Advancing Science Communication in Africa," covered the history of scientific publishing and publication models from 1665 to the present day. She gave an overview of problems with traditional science publishing and methods used to advance open publishing. The African Academy of Sciences Open Research platform was presented as one of

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the advances in open publishing that is nontraditional and still evolving.

The meeting continued with updates from African partner journals and a review of the respective journal websites. The updates indicate that the AJPP has contributed immensely to improving scholarly publishing in Africa. Some of the successes included indexing many of the journals in PubMed, PubMed Central, and AJOL; increased Impact Factors for the *Malawi Medical Journal* and the *African Health Sciences*; increases in manuscript submissions following implementation of ScholarOne Manuscripts; expanding social media presences; increases in article views and downloads and use of analytics; and training of editors, authors, and peer reviewers. The participation of AJPP journals/editors in the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Council was also acknowledged.

In addition to the several successes highlighted, the African journals also reported grappling with common

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problems such as recruiting high-quality manuscripts, late peer reviews, sustainable business models, and replacement of editors in chief and editorial staff. Aiah Gbakima has taken a position with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and his position as Editor in Chief of the *Sierra Leone Journal of Biomedical Research* has been assumed by Osman Sankoh, who also serves as Statistician-General of Statistics for Sierra Leone. The AJPP partners also acknowledged the death of Hassan Saidi, with James Kigera succeeding him as Editor in Chief of *Annals of African Surgery*. Despite the challenges, the African journal editors were grateful for being part of the partnership, and they all exuded a great amount of sincere gratitude to the Publishers without Borders Program (now Research without Borders), led by Ylann Schemm of the Elsevier Foundation, for sending volunteer editors and publishers to provide training and assist the African partner journals to address some of the problems affecting journal performance.

On day two, the second keynote address, “Working with African Science News Media,” was delivered by Mr Ochieng Ogodo, the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Coordinator of SciDev.Net. Mr Ogodo described Sci.Dev organization and emphasized the role journalists can play in disseminating science, how researchers can benefit from journalists, and how journal editors can communicate research findings published in their journals via news media. He emphasized the value of trained and qualified journalists for interviewing researchers or for working with journal editors to avoid subjective reporting of science.

The keynote was followed by several updates from AJPP stakeholders such as AJOL, SPiGlobal, Research without Borders, Clarivate Analytics, SPi Global Services, PubMed and PubMed Central, the Building Bridges project (which brings together journals, journalists, researchers and policymakers to address important health concerns), and an

overview of the African Centre for Disease Control (CDC) by Jay Varma of the Africa CDC.

The 2018 AJPP meeting had five workshops that were tailored to improving journal functionality and performance. An African mentor journal (e.g., *Ghana Medical Journal*) and mentee journal (e.g., *Sierra Leone Journal of Biomedical Research*) were paired together to attend each workshop. A ScholarOne Manuscripts workshop was run by Ian Potter of Clarivate Analytics and Steve Morrissey of the *New England Journal of Medicine*; a workshop on journal business models and plans was led by Elsevier publishers EJ van Lanen and Louise Curtis, and Mike Schramm of NiSC (a South Africa-based scholarly publisher); a workshop on online journal performance was run by Michael Berkwits (JAMA Network) and Matt Jozwiak (KWF Consulting); a workshop on improving exposure, discoverability, and dissemination of journal articles was run by Mariannne Guenot (*The Lancet*), Linda Kupfer (Fogarty International Center), Susan Murray (AJOL), Dan Gerendasy (National Library of Medicine), Ochieng’ Ogodo (Sci.Dev), and Ylann Schemm (Elsevier Foundation); and a workshop on best practices in editorial operations was led by Navjoyt Ladher (*BMJ*) and Annette Flanagan (JAMA Network).

Plans for diversification of AJPP funding and a way forward was deliberated after the workshops. A committee, led by James Tumwine of *African Health Sciences*, will investigate funding sources and develop proposals that can keep AJPP buoyant for the next couple of years.

The meeting ended on a positive note with a poem by James Tumwine, a resolve by journal editors and partners to press for more progress in the coming year, a plan for the next AJPP meeting in May of 2019 just before the annual CSE meeting, and an Ethiopian formal coffee ceremony organized by Abraham Haileamalak and Tekle Ferede of the *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences*, who hosted the meeting.

From the Archives

To correspond with this AJPP Meeting Report, from the Science Editor archives is a profile of James Tumwine, editor of the journal *African Health Sciences*: **James Tumwine: The Walking Editor** (<https://www.csescienceeditor.org/article/other-than-editing-2/>)