



## News

# World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) launched

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Last week editors, doctors, and scientists from around the world met in Bellagio, Italy, and launched the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). “Medical editors,” said Iain Chalmers, director of the UK Cochrane Centre, who was at the meeting, “are important people because they control the primary means for communicating the results of billions of dollars of publicly funded research. Yet we see deficiencies in standards of medical editing, and we are understanding better that most of the world's medical editors work with limited support, no training, and inadequate contacts with other editors. These editors need support, training, information, and help to raise their standards. I hope that WAME will meet these needs and contribute to raising the standards of medical editing.”

Those at the conference—who included editors from Britain, Canada, Chile, Hungary, India, Kenya, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Singapore, Sweden, and the United States—all agreed to publish the following statement in their journals.

“The World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) was launched in Bellagio, Italy, on 16 March after a three day conference to discuss international collaboration among editors of peer reviewed journals. Formal constitutional arrangements for this new organisation remain to be agreed.

“Twenty two editors, physicians, and scientists from 13 countries were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation to discuss the increasingly complex problems that editors face in maintaining and improving the quality of published medical research. Lack of knowledge about the peer review process, variable standards in medical writing and editing, and inadequate support and training for new journal editors all contribute to the obstacles and challenges confronting editors worldwide. Given that the publication of medical research is the final common path of substantial publicly funded programmes, such deficiencies are alarming and must be countered. WAME will address all these acute needs by stimulating means to educate and promote good standards among editors with the eventual aim of improving the quality of medical science and practice.

“A critical component of the new association's activities will be to develop the electronic communication network between medical editors which was established in advance of the Bellagio meeting with the help of the US National Library of Medicine. The association has created an electronic network task force to take this initiative forward.

“Bellagio participants also elected officers of WAME, a board of directors, and committees to define membership, raise funds, and set ethical criteria for the new organisation. The board of directors includes editors from western and eastern Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia-Pacific. Before WAME, no organisation existed to tackle the global concerns of medical editors.

“WAME invites editors of peer reviewed medical journals, together with researchers interested in the editorial process, who wish to be placed on a mailing list for further communications about the association to contact Dr Richard Horton, The Lancet, 655 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10010, USA (tel [212] 633 3850; email [r.horton@elsevier.com](mailto:r.horton@elsevier.com)) or Richard Smith at the BMJ.”

WAME has produced a draft mission statement, constitution, short term action plan, and medium term strategy and hopes to be fully established in time for the third international congress in peer review that will be held in Prague in September 1997.—RICHARD SMITH, BMJ

Should we introduce trainees and medical students to the idea of uncertainty earlier in their careers?

Yes

No

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