

Editorial Board*Chief editor*

Armen Yuri Gasparyan; a.gasparyan@gmail.com

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Website editor

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Original articles and essays

Armen Yuri Gasparyan; a.gasparyan@gmail.com

Correspondence

Penny Hubbard; pennyhubbard@gmail.com

Meeting reports

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*EASE Council*Joan Marsh (*ex officio*)**International Advisory Board**

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frank.krell@dmns.org

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am.simundic@gmail.com

Hasan Shareef Ahmed (Bangladesh);

hsahmed54@yahoo.com

Karen Shashok (Spain);

kshashok@kshashok.com

Angela Turner (UK);

angela.turner@nottingham.ac.uk

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From the Editors' Desks

We've had a busy summer, which is good news, with both the Blankenberge conference and EASE representation at a range of events. Eva Baranyiová was invited to Tokyo for the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME), giving a well received talk on publication ethics (see Eva's report on p100). At the beginning of October, I went to Seoul as the guest of the Korean Council of Science Editors. The occasion was the inaugural Asian Science Editors' Forum, at which we explored the possibilities for the same sort of pan-Regional cooperation as being established by APAME. I was very impressed by the drive and organization of our Korean colleagues. They are gradually training all journal editorial staff in Korea – and using the EASE Science Editors' Handbook as core material. We will continue to discuss opportunities and I hope to see further collaboration between EASE and our counterparts in Asia.

On the other side of the world, Paola De Castro has been working with the Mexican Association of Biomedical Journal Editors and we expect to see a Mexican chapter

affiliated to EASE in the near future.

Closer to home, 85 delegates enjoyed a very successful conference in Blankenberge. Many thanks to Chris Sterken for recommending an excellent hotel in this Belgian seaside town: even the weather held for bracing walks on the seafront. The first day was organized by the International Association of Medical and Technical Editors, while the second day was a joint venture between ISMTE and EASE. It meant that the programme was oriented almost exclusively towards journal editors. As this was an additional EASE event, we hope that our other members won't mind. I had a worrying moment, when someone said to me: "I think I've joined the wrong organization." On discovering that she was a member of EASE who worked as a freelance, I replied that she had joined the correct organization but come to the wrong meeting! Our conference in Split next summer will have something for everyone. Meanwhile, the new member, Elaine Seery, is going to help manage the website. So come to an EASE event and get involved!

Joan Marsh

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Editorial

Education, education, education

In October, *Science* published a description of a sting operation by John Bohannon (no affiliation given). Mr Bohannon had tested the peer review procedures of 304 open access publishers by sending computer-generated versions of a manuscript that contained methodological and ethical flaws. At the time of publication, 157 of the journals had accepted the paper and 98 had rejected it. The paper prompted a flurry of discussion in the blogosphere, including criticism of *Science* and the author for publishing this as a news item rather than a peer-reviewed research article.

Rather than debate the rights and wrongs of this approach, I would like to consider how we at the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) can address the fundamental problem raised which is that journals, many with respected scientists or clinicians on their editorial teams and some published by high profile international publishers, did not have procedures in place to spot the mistakes in the paper. In the *Science* experiment, of the 106 journals that had the paper reviewed, 70% accepted it. Most of the reviewers' comments apparently concerned superficial matters that are the responsibility of the copy editor: layout, formatting and language. Only 36 journals sent reviewer comments that addressed the paper's scientific problems and 16 of those papers were accepted by the editors despite the damning reviews. So, we need to educate both the peer reviewers and the editors.

EASE is pursuing this in several ways. In September, we launched the new edition of our *Science Editors' Handbook*. This contains an excellent section on peer review. I strongly urge all journal editors to read these chapters and to encourage all their editorial staff and board members to do so. To facilitate dissemination of this information to all scientists and clinicians engaged in peer review, EASE has compiled two slide sets that can be used for training. These will be freely available for academics and under licence for commercial use. We are also considering Train the Trainer sessions for journal staff or board members who would be interested.

Straight after the launch, I flew to Korea, to attend the inaugural Asian Science Editors' Forum. This was hosted by the Korean Council of Science Editors, a very dynamic group, with the aim of exploring how different communities of science editors in Asia can communicate. For medical editors, there is already APAME, the Asia-Pacific Association of Medical Editors: a report on their annual meeting appears in this issue. The atmosphere was congenial with everyone keen to work together to improve the standards of editing in their country and throughout the region. EASE will continue to collaborate,

providing materials and perhaps trainers, where possible. We have excellent resources and it is important to share these to achieve maximum benefit, rather than have people spend time preparing materials of their own where these already exist. Our efforts should be on dissemination and education.

EASE has been engaged in another series of training initiatives this year, working with the publisher, John Wiley & Sons. Paola De Castro, Reme Melero and Sylwia Ufnalska are each representing EASE at educational seminars organized by Wiley in association with librarians at various academic institutes in Italy, Spain and Poland, respectively. We hope to continue building this relationship and expanding to other countries.

EASE would welcome approaches from other publishers, journals or institutions to replicate these activities. We would also welcome suggestions for other types of training that would benefit those engaged in science communication. We see ourselves as facilitators: helping to provide educational materials and to link those engaged in similar activities so that we all benefit from synergies rather than competition. There is much to be done: by working together we can achieve more.

Joan Marsh MA PhD
EASE President
president@ease.org.uk

Reference

Bohannon J Who's afraid of peer review? *Science* Vol 342, 4 October 2013 60-65

Front row, left to right: Hye-Min Cho, Shilun Qiu, Jong Kyu Ha, Joan Marsh, Jung-Il Jin, Hae Won Kim, Mitsuo Sawamoto, Komang Gede Wiryanan

Back row, left to right: Eun Jeong Kim, Cheol Heui Yun, Hyun Jung Yi, Hyo Seon Ryu, Myung-Soon Kim, Kihong Kim, Hyungsun Kim, Sun Huh, Eunseong Hwang, Tae-Sul Seo

