

## Representation of low- and middle-income countries on Editorial Boards of psychiatry journals

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Researchers from developing countries have historically contributed proportionately little to the published research output. Reasons given include poor research methods and lack of statistical rigor, as well as unclear presentation and low levels of language competency. Another suggestion was that papers from developing countries are treated unsympathetically by the Editorial Boards of leading journals.<sup>1</sup> In 2003, Saxena et al investigated this by examining the geographical distribution of members of Editorial and Advisory Boards of the ten psychiatric journals with the highest impact factor rating for 2000.<sup>2</sup> They found only four board members based in low- and middle-income countries, according to World Bank criteria, from the total pool of 530 editors and advisory members.

The past decade has seen tremendous growth in the number of papers submitted from developing countries, particularly China, which now ranks second globally in terms of the number of papers submitted to Web of Science-listed journals.<sup>3</sup> I therefore repeated the study of Saxena et al, looking at the composition of the same Boards in 2013. The results show that very little has changed (Table 1). Several journals still have no Board members from low- and middle-income countries. Many of the journals are published by national societies and thus may not claim to have a global remit. The highest representation is found in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, which has an International

Editorial Board to complement its Editor and Associate Editors. *Schizophrenia Research*, which describes itself “THE journal of choice for international researchers and clinicians to share their work with the global schizophrenia research community” has members from China (2, including Hong Kong), South Africa and Brazil.

Saxena *et al* called for the journals to “correct this unsatisfactory situation” pointing out that the lack of representation could adversely affect the dissemination of knowledge generated in developing countries. I suspect that psychiatry is not unique in failing to give researchers from low and middle income countries a voice on their Editorial Boards and echo the call for journals to address this. A start has been made at *The Lancet Psychiatry*, a new journal to be launched in June 2014, where nine members from a Board of 56 come from low- and middle-income countries around the world.

### References

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**Table 1 Representatives from low- and middle-income countries (LAMIC) on editorial boards of leading psychiatry journals**

| Journal   | 2003        |                | 2013        |                |
|---|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
|   | No. members | No. from LAMIC | No. members | No. from LAMIC |
| <i>Archives of General Psychiatry/ JAMA Psychiatry*</i>                   | 34          | 0              | 31          | 0              |
| <i>American Journal of Psychiatry</i>                                     | 25          | 0              | 23          | 0              |
| <i>Schizophrenia Bulletin</i>   | 61          | 0              | 95          | 1              |
| <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i>                                      | 69          | 1              | 75          | 5              |
| <i>Journal of Clinical Psychiatry</i>                                     | 69          | 0              | 60          | 1              |
| <i>Schizophrenia Research</i>   | 65          | 2              | 63          | 4              |
| <i>Psychological Medicine</i>   | 39          | 0              | 53          | 0              |
| <i>Psychosomatic Medicine</i>   | 54          | 0              | 89          | 1              |
| <i>Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i> | 48          | 0              | 42          | 3              |
| <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i>                         | 6           | 1              | 46          | 1              |

\*Title changed in 2013.