LETTERS

Geographical Composition of the Editorial Boards of Leading Pharmacy Journals

To the Editor. Serving on the editorial board of a peer-reviewed journal is a prestigious and influential position for those in academic pharmacy. Individuals are asked to occupy these positions based on their expertise, research, publications, and other accomplishments. Editorial board members have an important role because they provide peer review for submitted manuscripts and may suggest authors and topics for future publications.

Studies have found that individuals from developing countries are underrepresented on the editorial boards of medical journals.¹⁻³ I decided to evaluate the situation in pharmacy and determine the geographical composition of editorial boards of leading pharmacy journals.

Nine MEDLINE-indexed pharmacy journals were included in the analysis: *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*, *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*, *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*, *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics*, *Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy*, and *Pharmacotherapy*. The official Web site of each journal was examined between September 2011 and May 2012, and the country of affiliation of each editorial board member was documented. The countries of affiliation of the editorial board members were also classified according to the World Bank income criteria.⁴ The data collected was publicly available information and the study did not require institutional review board approval.

There were 548 persons from 28 countries on the editorial boards of these journals. The United States (78.1% of board members), United Kingdom (4.7%),

Canada (4.2%), and Australia (3.5%) were the most common countries of affiliation. Individuals from other countries represented only a minority of the editorial board members. Of the 548 editorial board members, 538 (98.2%) were from high-income countries, 9 (1.6%) were from upper-middle income countries, and 1 (0.2%) was from a low-income country. None of the board members were from lower-middle income countries.

Even though several of the analyzed journals describe themselves as international or aim to advance pharmacy knowledge throughout the world, individuals from developing countries were underrepresented on the editorial boards of these journals. There could be several reasons for this finding, and journals should consider addressing the situation. The very small number of individuals from low-income and middle-income countries on the editorial boards of leading pharmacy journals is probably not sending an encouraging signal to researchers and potential authors from developing countries. This is also concerning because it may potentially have a negative effect on the dissemination of knowledge that is generated in the developing world.

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