

China Medical Board Program in Biomedical Writing and Editing

Background and Goals: The China Medical Board (CMB) program in biomedical writing and editing, which ran from 1996 through 2007, was developed to help increase publication of Chinese and other Asian biomedical research in international journals. The program also was intended to serve as a model for pursuing similar goals in other regions and disciplines.

Main Components: The program, designed to promote self-sufficiency in biomedical writing and editing, had two main, interrelated components: (1) a course intended principally to strengthen the skills of Asian biomedical researchers in writing scientific papers in English and (2) a training program designed to develop a corps of Asian editors skilled at editing biomedical papers and teaching biomedical writing.

Support: This program was funded by the China Medical Board, an independent US foundation.

Leadership: The program director was Zhe Dong, PhD, of Peking University Health Science Center, the program headquarters. The US coordinator was Barbara Gastel, MD, of Texas A&M University. Zhang Jian, of Peking University Health Science Center, and others provided administrative support. US and Canadian editors participated in various aspects of the program, such as designing curriculum, reviewing manuscripts, and hosting editorial interns.

Source of Trainees: Participants in the writing course and editorial traineeship were drawn from institutions with grants from the CMB. Participating institutions included leading medical schools in China, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The Writing Course: The writing course was given, in part via computer network, to researchers at CMB grantee institutions. Each week throughout the school year, participants completed a lesson. The course included preparation of a manuscript for potential submission to an international journal. Each manuscript was reviewed by a CMB editorial trainee. Many of the manuscripts were then edited by experienced biomedical editors in the United States.

The Editor Certificate Program: The editor certificate program enrolled four cohorts of about a dozen trainees each, drawn from faculty and professional staff at CMB grantee institutions. The program began with a 6-week intensive orientation course. Trainees then returned to their home institutions for 2 years of in-service training, which included helping to teach the writing course and receiving online lessons in editing. Trainees did approximately 10-week editorial internships in the United States or Canada during their second year.

Continuing Activity: Teaching that is derived from the program continues, and a substantial proportion of the editorial trainees remain active in biomedical editing or related pursuits. Experience gained in the program is being used in the more general program AuthorAID (www.authoraid.info), which is intended to help developing-country researchers from a variety of disciplines to write about and publish their work.

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