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SHARE OF NATIONS IN 37 INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH JOURNALS: AN EQUITY AND DIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS HEALTH RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING

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Background: International journals, including international public health journals, provide valuable opportunities for capacity development, career building, and impact on health research and practice at international levels not only for authors but also for editors and members of editorial boards. For those concerned with equity, it is obvious that these opportunities should be shared fairly between researchers from less developed and developed countries, and would have a just gender balance.

Objectives: This paper aims to assess the share of different countries in editorial board of 37 international public health journals from equity and diversity perspective.

Underlying values and principles: Equity and diversity

Knowledge base/ Evidence base: There is evidence suggesting that health research is a key for filing the equity gap in health. Hence, equity in health research can contribute to equity in health.

Context of intervention/project/work: The country affiliation of editorial board member of 37 international public health journals referenced by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) as of 2008 was identified.

Methods: The share of each country in access to different editorial positions of the journals were calculated and also categorized in World Bank’s three level income classification of countries. Then, these data were normalized to the population of the affiliated countries to examine the equity ration between the most and the least represented country.

Results and Conclusions: Only 52 countries, more than 50% from high income countries, had contributed to different extent to the production of the international health journals serving on editorial board of the journals. More than 90% of 671 editorial board memberships were from high income countries while USA enjoyed the biggest share followed by UK. Normalizing the data to country’s population showed that some less populated countries like Belgium and Iceland were better off having the biggest share in occupying different editorial position pushing USA down the rank. To examine the equity, Public health editor equity gap ratio (PHEEGR) was developed and calculated.

There is a great need to develop capacities for researchers from low income countries to reduce the inequality that exist in share of high income compared with middle and low income countries in international public health journals and also promote the diversity of perspectives.

The existing inequity and low diversity in health research calls for more urgent and effective research-capacity buildings that may enquire change in the current practice, communication and policies which have led to emergence of the existing inequity

Disclosure of Interest: None declared