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Abstract Information

Abstract Title : Embedding research writing skills at a medical school in Sri Lanka
Abstract :

**Background**

Developing country researchers have limited access to locally relevant, locally led training on scientific writing and publishing. Training programmes are sometimes conducted by international organisations and publishers, but they can be expensive, one-time events. One aim of the AuthorAID programme run by INASP is to embed research writing skills at developing country institutions by working with local partners. This abstract summarises the work carried out with one such partner: the Research Promotion and Facilitation Centre (RPFC) allied with the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

**Methods**

INASP has (1) provided £5000 to fund training programmes on research writing at the RPFC, (2) covered the travel and tuition...
expenses (£3300) for an RPFC academic to attend an intensive research writing course at Texas A&M University, as preparation for a leadership role in the embedding effort, and (3) involved INASP associates with expertise in scientific communication and online training to provide ongoing support to the RPFC, such as giving Skype talks, providing learning material for writing workshops and writing clubs, and helping install a virtual learning environment (VLE).

**Results**
Since November 2013, two 1-day research writing workshops and one 2-day mentorship workshop have been organised by the RPFC with support from INASP, reaching a total of 121 medical researchers. A writing club was organised for a 4-month period; there were 31 mentees and 10 writing mentors, all local researchers. Mentors provide advice on writing and research integrity during one-to-one meetings with mentees. In June 2015, the second writing club commenced, with 24 mentees and 6 mentors, and RPFC’s VLE went live.

**Conclusions**
The results of INASP’s partnership with the RPFC suggest that a moderate amount of funding, a clear strategy, and committed professionals may be elements of a sustainable approach to building research writing skills at developing country institutions.