

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Prama House  
267 Banbury Road  
OXFORD OX2 7HT, UK

Letters Editor, *The Guardian*

13 February 2007

Sir

Dr Goldacre ("Bad Science" Saturday 10 February) says "access to medical literature in developing countries" is difficult. This claim is repeated in today's Education Supplement ("Open Season for Researchers", 13 February). Both are incorrect.

Since 2002, via the HINARI programme, over 3,600 key medical journals have been made available for researchers, clinicians and students in 114 developing countries by 100 international publishers working through WHO: access is entirely free for the majority of these countries. Since 2003, through FAO's AGORA programme and to the same 114 countries, 36 publishers provide free or nominally priced access to over 900 agriculture journals. From 2006, through the OARE programme, researchers in the environmental and related sciences now have access to 1800 journals from 34 publishers.

These initiatives do not solve all the problems; there are still major infrastructure and technology challenges. However, it is inaccurate and unfair to imply that science journal publishers have ignored providing access to those developing countries that need it most.

Yours sincerely



Michael A Mabe  
Chief Executive Officer