



Book reviews

AMJ 2012, 5,5

Making a difference

Reviewed by: PR Shankar, KIST Medical College, Nepal

I first came to know about HINARI (Health Internetwork Research Initiative) in 2003 when the librarian of Manipal College of Medical Sciences (MCOMS), Pokhara, Nepal informed me of a new scheme launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in partnership with other organisations which aimed to provide educational institutions in developing nations with access to scientific publications. I was excited and remember telling the librarian to go for it and enrol the institution as a subscriber. I first started using HINARI through MCOMS in 2004. This was the start of a beneficial relationship with HINARI and free access to scientific information. In Nepal, like in most developing nations, access to scientific journals remains a big problem.

Recently Research4Life (www.research4life.org), the public-private partnership which launched HINARI and other programmes has come out with a publication titled *Making a difference*. The book is a compilation of stories from developing nations about how access to research is making a difference to the lives of communities. The user experiences are based on a competition conducted in 2011 which asked users how access to scientific information had benefited them, their work, life and community. HINARI along with sister programmes like AGORA (which provides access to research in agriculture), OARE (access to research in the environment) and ARDI (access to research in development and innovation) provides access to over 9000 journals, books and databases to over 6000 institutions in 100 countries. I especially enjoyed reading about the humble beginnings of HINARI and the large number of partners involved in the venture.

The stories are predominantly from Africa where access to scientific literature has long been a problem. There are also two stories from Asia, from Vietnam and Nepal. In the first story a physiotherapist from the University of Gondar in Ethiopia describes how HINARI helped him access medical literature. In Africa lack of internet connectivity and slow internet speeds are a problem in accessing HINARI. I also sometimes face the same problem in Nepal. HINARI has helped Mr Bayisa provide better treatment to his patients and improved teaching-learning of his students. The second

story is from Burkina Faso where agronomist, Dr Kambire did not have access to research publications. AGORA helped him become a more efficient and committed researcher. In Zambia, Tiny Tim and Friends (TT&F) is an organisation which cares for children suffering from HIV/AIDS. Access to HINARI allowed Dr Tim Meade, the country director to put the work of the charity on a sound scientific basis.

In Zimbabwe, midwife Gudrun Witt was appalled by the high maternal mortality rates in her home country and started an organisation, 'New Beginnings' to deliver better care to expectant mothers. Access to HINARI plays an important role in the organisation's work. In Nepal there are many institutions with access to HINARI and the sister initiatives. In the Shree Birendra Hospital in Kathmandu a paediatrician, Dr Arun Neopane uses HINARI to obtain up to date scientific evidence for treatment and for strengthening the *Journal of Shree Birendra Hospital* (JSBH) which is available online through Nepal Journals Online (NEPJOL (www.nepjol.info)). In Vietnam, HINARI helps doctors at the Viet Duc hospital, one of the country's leading hospitals have access to the information required for evidence-based practice. In Sudan, Dr. Ali uses evidence obtained from HINARI to base policy decisions on scientific evidence. Dr Ali as head of the Central Medical Supplies Public Corporation supplies medicines to all public health institutions in the country. There are also stories about how access to HINARI has helped doctors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Ethiopia provide better care to their patients. The stories of how access to AGORA helped agricultural researchers in Africa make for interesting reading.

The book is well produced and the photographs and pull out quotes add a personal touch to the stories and the book. An excellent read for all those interested in HINARI and its sister programmes and how these have revolutionised access to research in poor nations. The publication can be downloaded for free from the HINARI website (www.who.int/hinari/en). The URL link is http://www.research4life.org/Documents/R4L_Making_a_difference_final_LR.pdf.



Invasions of the body: Revolutions in surgery

Reviewed by: Gabriella Zawada, University of Western Australia

Invasion of the Body by Nicholas Tilney is a non-fiction review of the profession of surgery and the many advances that the field has made. The journey Tilney takes the reader on encompasses the revolution of modern medicine including the development of anaesthesia, aseptic technique, professional standards and training, pharmaceutical advances and discoveries and healthcare reform.

The content of the book is extremely interesting and incredibly detailed, however this content is repeatedly let down by the book's editing and punctuation which results in poor presentation of the facts.

Tilney goes into minute detail about the history of the surgical profession, the procedures and the advancements and research that was being completed around the world. This detail however is often lost as the reader struggles to keep up as the narrative jumps back and forward in time and from continent to continent – hospital to hospital.

The lack of punctuation between new topics means that quite often the reader is left confused as one paragraph about cardiac surgery in the 1960s merges into another about the same surgery in the 1930s and then another about a surgeon's findings in 1910.

The book has much to offer its readers in terms of little known history which Tilney has made interesting by including personal asides, stories and quotes from historical notes, which would have consumed numerous research hours.

The text also manages to be quite accessible to medical and non-medical minds alike. Tilney ensures complete understanding of the pathologies, procedures and advancements he is discussing by first providing a full explanation that is uncomplicated enough to be understood by the lay person whilst not being insultingly simple to a medical mind. However medical and non-medical minds alike will soon be lost amongst the twists and turns that is the history presented by this text.

Invasion of the Body by Tilney provides a detailed insight into the development and advancement of surgery both as a profession and as an institution. Tilney provides great insight into the advancements of the practices which make up the modern profession and practice of surgery today. In doing so

Nicholas Tilney also revisits real medical and surgical cases from both his own profession and throughout history which somewhat softens the dry historical nature of the text and keeps it personal.

Tilney has obviously done extensive research on all the topics he discusses in the book. This research means that he presents an accurate, interesting and informative history of surgery. The work is let down solely by the editing/structure which instead of underlining the pertinent points means the reader sometimes get lost trying to find them.

Invasions of the Body – Revolutions in Surgery. By Nicholas L. Tilney. Published in September 2011 by Harvard University Press.