

CMB-Lancet ChinaHealth21 Initiative

Working draft: 10 July, 2007

RATIONALE

Despite accounting for one-fifth of the world's population, China's health development is under-recognized in the international community. The growing body of Chinese basic, epidemiological, clinical and health services research is largely unknown in the West; so it has little influence on western-based theories and practices of medicine that dominate international perspectives on health. A coordinated series of evidence-based papers on different aspects of health in China collaboratively authored by Chinese and international experts would help clarify the important role China plays in global health. The China Medical Board (CMB)-Lancet ChinaHealth21 Initiative will commission a series of papers to landscape the major challenges for China's health in the 21st century, thereby highlighting the relevance of China's rapidly transforming health situation to global health.

Plans call for the launching of the series in July 2008, timed around the opening of the Beijing Olympics, with a more comprehensive edited volume in Chinese and English released a couple of months later.

Commissioned papers will be written by invited teams of (2-6) Chinese and international authors who have demonstrated track records of successful publication in international journals. A steering committee will invite the authors who would be responsible for the scientific merit of their papers. Draft papers will be revised based on independent peer reviews. All commissioned papers will address aspects of the main theme of the series, aiming, whenever possible, at analyses of new data and bringing forth fresh knowledge, not simply summaries of known information. To ensure adequate coverage of key topics, the number of commissioned papers will exceed those to be published by Lancet; all high-quality papers will be incorporated into an expanded collection of papers in a CMB-sponsored edited volume published in both Chinese and English for wide distribution in China and internationally.

The initiative will be coordinated by a steering committee composed of Han Qide (vice-president of Peking University), Tim Evans (assistant director-general of the WHO) Richard Horton (editor of the Lancet) and Lincoln Chen (president of the China Medical Board). The project will be managed by an operating secretariat composed of a project coordinator based at Peking University (Professor Dong Zhe), an academic coordinator representing CMB (Professor Michael Phillips), and a liaison for the Lancet (Bill Summerskill). Much of the costs will be covered by a grant from the CMB to Peking University.

SERIES THEMES

Much attention has focused upon China's unprecedented economic growth and its consequent prominence in the global economy. The emergence of China's global power, however, is not confined to economics but is gradually extending into many

fields – politics, environment, arts and culture. Global health is one of several fields in which China's focal role is only slowly being recognized by the international community.

There are four dimensions of China under-recognized emergence in global health. Firstly, the sheer demographic weight of China's population experiencing rapid and profound health transitions is of enormous intrinsic global import. For every global health challenge, China is an important player – epidemics of chronic cardiovascular and oncologic diseases; re-emergence of infectious threats such as avian influenza; nutritional transitions due to changing food and diets; and new environmental and behavioral pathologies. In each of these health challenges, China is a major component in the dynamics of global health.

Secondly, China is and has been a major source of health innovations -- whether based on its rich traditional pharmacopeia, its modern cadres of engineers and scientists, or as a source of massive social experimentation. Artemisinin, the most effective drug against the malaria parasite, comes from traditional Chinese medicine. China's universities and modern research laboratories are becoming an increasingly attractive out-sourced base for western pharmaceutical and university research. In health care, China pioneered community health workers in the 1930s that were subsequently refashioned as "barefoot" village doctors, a fundamental innovation for universal primary health care. Currently, China's glaring health inequities are accelerating its search for more equitable and efficient innovations to address market failures in health systems. These actions will likely generate innovations—lessons of potential international import, particularly to other rapidly developing countries.

Thirdly, China is a major actor in the transnationalization of health risks and threats. What happens in China is important for the health for others around the world. Emergence of new influenza viruses and other new infectious pathogens like SARS in China and their spread from China to other countries are illustrative of these externalities. Health threats are also linked to China's growing role in global trade, recently highlighted by the identification of contaminated pet food, cough syrup and toothpaste in several countries that imported unsafe raw materials from China. Moreover, as China's energy consumption grows, industrial pollution including water pollution and carbon production will assume growing transnational health importance.

Finally, China's growing power in global health institutions is insufficiently recognized by the international health community. Among the explanations are China's relatively recent opening to the global economy, its traditional reserved role in international institutions, limitations imposed by the English language, and a health sector that is overwhelmingly internally-focused. China's regional health role, however, is unmistakable given the large migration of people and movement of goods with neighboring Asian countries. But China's global reach is rapidly accelerating, as illustrated by its health assistance to under-resourced countries particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where China already has 40 health teams. China's recent successful campaign to secure the election of the first Chinese head of an UN agency, WHO's Director-General, marked a turning point of China's leadership in global health.

China's health in this century will not replicate its mixed experiences of the last century! What are the emerging challenges for China's health in the 21st century?

What are the implications of these Chinese trends for global health? These questions are of importance not only for China but for the entire world health community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the ChinaHealth21 Initiative is to systematically focus on China health in the 21st century and to demonstrate its importance to overall global health. A systematic series of original papers will be commissioned that will:

- Engage the finest intellectual and highest-level policy leaders in China and internationally
- Promote scientific research on China's health in the 21st century
- Strengthen research capacity among Chinese scholars and institutions
- Generate international awareness of China's health challenges and innovations
- Increase high-level exchanges between Chinese and international academics, researchers and clinicians

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The initiative will commission a series of scientific papers covering key aspects of health in China during the 21st century. The evolving list of topics is provided below. Teams of Chinese and international authors will consist of established scholars with international publication records. The following outputs are expected:

- Seven high-quality thematic papers (4000 words) on China's health in the 21st century
- One discussion paper (1,500 words) on China's traditional health system
- Seven invited commentaries (800 words) that enrich and contextualize the series
- Compilation of these peer reviewed papers and commentaries into an edited volume for widespread dissemination in English and Chinese
- Publication of most (but not necessarily all) of these papers and commentaries in *The Lancet*
- A major policy conference launching the *Lancet* papers in Beijing in July 2008, prior to the August 2008 Olympics

COMMISSIONED PAPERS

Commissioned authors will be requested to address some aspects of the major theme of the series: How does the subject matter relate to the importance of China in global health? Through which pathways is China's effect on global health evident? What are the future implications for China and the world?

The current list of papers and authors follows; nearly all of the listed authors have already agreed to participate in the initiative.

A: THEMATIC PAPERS (4,000 words)

The challenge of health equity in China

Tang, Shenglan
Meng, Qingyue
Whitehead, Margaret
Bekedam, Henk
Evans, Tim

Control and emergence of infectious diseases

Wang, Longde
Wang, Yu
Koplan, Jeff
Wilson, Mary

Managing risks and the emergence of chronic diseases

Yong, Gonghuan
Kong, Linzhi
Murray, Chris
Lopez, Alan

Preventing injuries and suicides

Wang, Shengyong
Li, Yanhong
Chi, Guibo
Xiao, Shuiyuan
Krug, Etienne
Stevenson, Marc
Ozanne-Smith, Joan
Phillips, Michael

Financing health: Achieving the third transition in China

Hu, Shanlian
Zhao, Yuxin
Xu, Ke
de Ferranti, David
Frenk, Julio
Knaul, Felicia

Benchmarking performance of China's health care system

Rao, Keqin
Liu, Yuanli
Gakidou, Emmanuela

Human resources: Challenges of primary care and scientific excellence

Liu, Minquan
Ke, Yang
Zhang, Junhua
Gao, Jun

Anand, Sudhir
Chen, Lincoln

B: CLINICAL UPDATE (1,500 words)

Traditional Chinese Medicine
Tang, Jinling
additional authors expected

C: COMMENTARIES (800 words)

China's emergence in global health
Chen, Margaret

Biomedical science policy in China: Reaching for the frontiers
Chen, Zhu
additional authors expected

Pharmaceuticals in China: R&D and regulatory developments
Sang, Guowei
additional authors expected

Ethics in medical research: Chinese exceptionalism?
Wang, Ruotao
Henderson, Gail

Reproductive health, gender, and family planning
Fang, Jing
Joan Kaufmann

China's HIV/AIDS pandemic: Myths and reality
Zhang, Konglai
Liao Susu
Yu, Dongbao
Cohen, Mike
Detels, Rogers

Schistosomiasis control: lessons from China
Wang, Delong
additional authors expected

Barefoot doctors, past and present
Zhang, Daqing
Unschuld, Paul

China's organ transplant policy
Huang, Jiefu

Millis, Michael

TIMETABLE (2007-2008)

Planning and Preparation

30 May

Finalize goals, themes, procedures and timetable

30 June

Finalize invitation and authors of commissioned papers

Authors' Workshop

15 October

Submission of first drafts or detailed outline of manuscripts

25 October

Reviewers provide written evaluations of manuscripts

27-29 Oct

Authors' workshop, Beijing

Manuscript Revisions and Reviews

15 December

Submission of 2nd draft of the manuscripts

15 February

Revisions and reviews

30 April

Manuscripts sent to the Lancet.

Launch and Publication

8-10 July

Policy conference to launch Lancet series, Beijing and Europe

15 November

Release of Chinese and English edited volume