

# Why is a special section “Healthcare in Mainland China” so crucial for HKMJ?

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In order to promote high-quality research from mainland China among medical professionals in Hong Kong, the *Hong Kong Medical Journal* (HKMJ) Editorial Board launched a Special Section titled “Healthcare in Mainland China” in June 2021.<sup>1</sup> We hope that studies from mainland China in this special section can speak to and shed light on healthcare in other developing countries and regions, and provide insight into Chinese healthcare practice for HKMJ’s international readers.

For the past 2 years, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has exerted a heavy burden on public health worldwide, and there is an increasing body of evidence reporting various effects and impacts of COVID-19. However, few studies have provided epidemiological and clinical characteristics of patients affected at the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In this current issue of HKMJ under the “Healthcare in Mainland China” section, Gao et al<sup>2</sup> report a retrospective study that included laboratory-confirmed 96 cases of COVID-19 in a hospital in Hangzhou City from 15 January 2020 to 30 March 2020. The authors investigated epidemiological, demographic, clinical, radiological, and laboratory features involving these cases; and found that, during the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak, half of the patients were part of familial clusters. Therefore, they suggested that strict prevention and control measures during self-isolation should be implemented. They also found that patients aged >60 years with underlying co-morbidities were prone to lymphocytopenia and severe infection.

China is the world’s most populous country, and the large population presents numerous healthcare issues. For example, China accounted for 24% of newly diagnosed cases and 30% of cancer-related deaths worldwide in 2020.<sup>3</sup> There were also an estimated 93.8 million prevalent cases of cardiovascular diseases overall during 2016 in China, accounting for about 17.8% of the global burden.<sup>4,5</sup> Moreover, nearly half of all vision problems among children globally occur in China.<sup>6</sup> To address such a volume of challenges, China’s total healthcare expenditure was >7.2 trillion yuan in 2020, with >1.0 million clinics and hospitals, and >13.5 million medical personnel.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there is a significant

income disparity between urban and rural areas and between coastal and inland regions in mainland China. All of these factors lead to a broad and diverse wealth of healthcare research in the region.

We highly appreciate and sincerely welcome more researchers and healthcare professionals to submit their research on healthcare in mainland China for consideration for publication in HKMJ. The HKMJ review process is highly selective, and only the highest quality submissions are accepted for publication. We hope to promote global healthcare improvement by providing our valued international and local readers with high-quality research from mainland China.

## Author contributions

All authors contributed to the editorial, approved the final version for publication, and take responsibility for its accuracy and integrity.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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