

Forging a distinctive Chinese identity and pursuing global excellence: introducing the *Chinese Medical Journal*

Yuanyuan Ji¹, MMed, Xiuyuan Hao²*, MD

¹ Deputy Managing Director, Chinese Medical Journal, Beijing, China

² Managing Director, Chinese Medical Journal, Beijing, China

* Corresponding author: haoxiuyuan@163.com

This article was published on 28 Dec 2023 at www.hkmj.org.

Hong Kong Med J 2024;30:4–6

<https://doi.org/10.12809/hkmj2311319>

Brief introduction

As a leading journal in the China Scientific Journal Excellence Action Plan, the *Chinese Medical Journal* (CMJ) has a 136-year publishing history. This journal was established in 1887 and is regarded as the official journal of the Chinese Medical Association. The CMJ covers all areas of medicine and is recognised as the most influential and authoritative journal in the field of medicine in China. Thus, it serves as an important window for medical exchanges between China and the world.

The CMJ is an international peer-reviewed and fully open access journal published semi-monthly in English. It has been indexed in many world-renowned databases, such as Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed, PubMed Central, MEDLINE, Directory of Open Access Journals, and Embase. As an English-language medical journal, the CMJ has the largest circulation in China, as well as exchange relationships with more than 100 countries and regions around the world. Academician Wang Chen, the Editor-in-Chief of the CMJ, is also the vice president of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the president of both the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College.

History of the journal

Considering the CMJ's profound historical legacy, its editorial ambitions and roles have evolved alongside the sweeping changes of the times. From its inception in 1887 to the present day, developments in the CMJ have paralleled numerous monumental events that have shaped China and the wider world. The CMJ's journey mirrors the ebbs and flows of history across four distinct eras: its founding by foreign missionaries (1887–1931), a period of Sino-foreign collaborations (1932–1941), the tumultuous years of World War II and its aftermath (1941–1949), and the transformative era following the birth of the People's Republic of China (1949–present day).

In 1886, a group of missionary doctors in Shanghai came together to form the China Medical Missionary Association. By March of the following year, the Association had published the inaugural

issue of *The China Medical Missionary Journal*, which is now considered the foundational volume of the CMJ, with John G Kerr as its first Editor-in-Chief. In 1907, the journal was rebranded to become *The China Medical Journal*. By January 1932, the journal had been amalgamated with the English-language section of the *National Medical Journal of China* and officially received the title of *Chinese Medical Journal*. In 1941, the outbreak of World War II led to the division of China into occupied zones and areas behind the front lines of its conflict with Japan. During this turbulent era, the CMJ was produced in three separate editions: Shanghai, Chengdu, and Washington, D.C. By December 1945, however, only the Shanghai edition remained and would continue until 1951. In that year, the CMJ's editorial operations followed the Chinese Medical Association's move to Beijing. With contributions from across the nation, the CMJ featured diverse content which attracted subscribers from 37 countries and regions.

Achievements in recent years

Since its inception 136 years ago, the CMJ has chronicled the progression of medical science in modern-day China and bore witness to dramatic changes in Chinese health care. The journal has emphasised the significant roles of contemporary medical techniques in fostering better health, reducing sickness, and extending the lifespan of Chinese people. Significant studies have been published during this time, including the groundbreaking 1957 study by Feifan Tang and colleagues concerning the pathogens responsible for trachoma, which represented a crucial contribution from China's medical experts to the field of pathogenic microorganisms. The 1960s were particularly fertile years for medical research in China, with some studies recognised as world-leading. This status was highlighted in 1965 when the CMJ published Zhongwei Chen's report of the first-ever successful reattachment of a severed finger, which asserted China's position in the forefront of microsurgery globally. In addition, the esteemed Nobel Laureate in Medicine, Professor Youyou Tu, published two of

her seminal papers in this respected journal in 1979 and 1999.

Promoting scientism

One of the CMJ's critical roles is to foster scientism and facilitate scholarly studies. In 1915, Liente Wu penned his aspirations for collaborative efforts between the Chinese Medical Association and the China Medical Missionary Association, with the aim of advancing national health through medical science. Fast forwarding to 1953, Naiquan Gong's writings captured the strides made in health endeavours shortly after the emergence of a new China. Entering the new millennium, Linhua Tang's 2000 retrospective highlighted half a century of triumphs in combating malaria. A notable development in 2020 was the journal's publication of the pivotal 7th rendition of the guidelines for diagnosing and managing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which supported scientific efforts to battle the worldwide health crisis. The following year marked an enlightening contribution from Longde Wang, a distinguished member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, who detailed the substantial progress made since 2011 in the field of stroke prevention and control within China.¹ This article received widespread recognition and was cited in various esteemed publications, such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Circulation*, and *Lancet Neurology*.

Global perspective

During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the CMJ swiftly and proactively orchestrated the compilation of studies from various prominent bodies, including the Institute of Pathogenic Microbiology at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Tongji Hospital at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology, and the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center. This initiative was aimed at global dissemination of China's insights and strategies for combating the pandemic. On 25 January 2020, the CMJ accepted its first research paper on COVID-19, entitled "Identification of a novel coronavirus causing severe pneumonia in human: A descriptive study."² This paper was expedited for online preview by 29 January, enhanced with informative graphics and videos, and concurrently distributed via social media platforms and EurekaAlert! This publication played a pivotal role in delivering essential scientific evidence that helped to uncover the origin of the virus, understand its modes of transmission, and devise effective countermeasures for the pandemic.²

Embodying cultural confidence

The CMJ is committed to conveying China's medical

narratives by spotlighting key Chinese data, clinical trials of homegrown innovative medications, and innovative research at the forefront of international science. In the past 3 years, for instance, the CMJ has published six studies related to the world-leading China Kadoorie Biobank project, a cutting-edge, large-scale cohort involving the largest biobank within China, which contains over 500 000 samples. This extensive population cohort has significant implications for precision disease management, diagnostics, therapy, and pharmaceutical innovation. In 2023, the CMJ unveiled the findings of Phase III trials of anaprazole, the first proton pump inhibitor developed entirely in China. After its feature report in the CMJ, this ground-breaking treatment for duodenal ulcers received the green light for market entry in June 2023.³ In a report that made waves in 2020, the CMJ covered the first case worldwide of a patient with COVID-19 who received a lung transplant. This bold move highlighted China's learning, resolve, and bravery in the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴

Official journal of the Chinese Medical Association

As the official journal of the Chinese Medical Association, the CMJ is responsible for expressing the Association's stance on various issues to medical societies worldwide. In March 2020, the CMJ featured an article authored by the Chinese Society of Organ Transplantation of Chinese Medical Association, titled "Development of the organ donation and transplantation system in China,"⁵ which informed an international audience about the development of organ donation and transplantation in China, dispelled misconceptions, and highlighted progress China has made in the field of organ transplantation.

Emphasising win-win cooperation

The CMJ has established a strong partnership for scholarly exchange with *Archivos de Bronconeumología*. In the 2022 edition of *Archivos de Bronconeumología*, a CMJ editorial board member, Professor Yongchang Sun, detailed the measures currently in place for managing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in China, and Professor Luzhao Feng described China's revised tactics for responding to the evolving COVID-19 crisis. As part of the exchange, the Editor-in-Chief of *Archivos de Bronconeumología*, Professor Miguel Angel Martinez-Garcia, contributed to the 2022 edition of the CMJ with his perspective on the complex relationship between bronchiectasis and COVID-19, titled "Bronchiectasis and COVID-19 infection: A two-way street."⁶ This collaborative approach has significantly broadened the readership

of the two entities and enhanced their cultural and intellectual interactions.

To the readers of *Hong Kong Medical Journal*

The CMJ focuses on publishing epidemiological data, review articles on hot topics, clinical studies with high levels of evidence, and translational medical research with the potential for clinical transformation. As the CMJ's international influence continues to grow, its impact factor also steadily increases. According to the latest Journal Citation Report, the impact factor of the CMJ in 2022 was 6.1, which ranks the journal within the first quantile in the fields of General and Internal Medicine. As an international English-language medical journal, we look forward to establishing academic and journal exchange relationships with the *Hong Kong Medical Journal* to jointly promote the development of medicine and benefit the public.

Author contributions

Concept or design: Both authors.

Acquisition of data: Y Ji.

Analysis or interpretation of data: Both authors.

Drafting of the manuscript: Both authors.

Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Both authors.

Both authors had full access to the data, contributed to the study, approved the final version for publication, and take responsibility for its accuracy and integrity.

Conflicts of interest

Both authors have disclosed no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Chao BH, Tu WJ, Wang LD; Stroke Prevention Project Committee, National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China. Initial establishment of a stroke management model in China: 10 years (2011-2020) of Stroke Prevention Project Committee, National Health Commission. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2021;134:2418-20.
2. Ren LL, Wang YM, Wu ZQ, et al. Identification of a novel coronavirus causing severe pneumonia in human: a descriptive study. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2020;133:1015-24.
3. Zhu H, Pan X, Zhang L, et al. Effect and safety of anaprazole in the treatment of duodenal ulcers: a randomized, rabeprazole-controlled, phase III non-inferiority study. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2022;135:2941-9.
4. Chen JY, Qiao K, Liu F, et al. Lung transplantation as therapeutic option in acute respiratory distress syndrome for coronavirus disease 2019-related pulmonary fibrosis. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2020;133:1390-6.
5. Shi BY, Liu ZJ, Yu T. Development of the organ donation and transplantation system in China. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2020;133:760-5.
6. Oscullo G, Gómez-Olivas JD, Beauperthuy T, et al. Bronchiectasis and COVID-19 infection: a two-way street. *Chin Med J (Engl)* 2022;135:2398-404.