

# GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter May 2010

**Is it May or June?** The examination season has just finished at Cambridge. Now the students are busy getting ready for the May Balls in June, to celebrate the end of the academic year.

## Consortium News:

### Appointment of new GP-TCM Members

#### 1. Welcome Dr Daqing MA, MD, PhD, to join GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member dedicated to WP8 (acupuncture) and WP10 (management).

Daqing is Senior Lecturer and Director of Anaesthesia Research, Section of Anaesthetics, Pain Medicine & Intensive Care, Department of Surgery & Cancer, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London. He is the coordinator of the BSc perioperative medicine module of Surgery and Anaesthesia at Imperial and the CSA-Imperial fellowship Scheme and has published more than 70 peer-reviewed original and review papers in the fields of anaesthesiology, pharmacology, neuroscience, neurology and nephrology. His research has been supported by grants from MRC, BJA/RCoA, AAGBI, Westminster Medical School Research Trust and Action Medical Research UK and is keen to develop a line of research on acupuncture and pain. He is a regular invited reviewer for Anesthesiology, British Journal of Anaesthesia, Anaesthesia & Analgesia, Neuroscience, Brain, Stroke, Paediatric Research, etc.

**Warmest congratulations, Daqing!**

<http://www1.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/people/d.ma/>

**2. Welcome Dr Ling DONG, Director of School of Chinese Pharmacology of Beijing University of Chinese Medicine (BUCM), to join GP-TCM as a local assistant to Prof Yanjiang QIAO (Vice President of BUCM), a full member of WP1, WP2 and WP3.** Ling graduated from BUCM and was awarded her PhD degree there in 2006. She is both an active scientist and a social activist in the field of TCM. With more than 20 years of experience in the TCM field since her recruitment into BUCM, she has devoted herself in TCM modernisation research by integrating different modern technologies in her research. She is particularly productive in R&D of Chinese medicines and has so far been granted 1 patent, applied for 6 and there are additional 6 in preparation. **Warmest congratulations, Ling!**

**3. Welcome Dr Yinshan TANG, Deputy Director of Henley Business School (where our First Annual Meeting will be held), University of Reading (UK) to join WP10 (management) of GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member.** Yinshan is not only an established bioinformatician and management leader, but also an investigator and tutor in communications

skills. He is a popular speaker and has talked widely to help people in different walks of life to improve their interpersonal and communication skills. Currently Yinshan is the Deputy Director of Informatics Research Centre at University of Reading [www.reading.ac.uk/irc](http://www.reading.ac.uk/irc).

His current research interest is to combine the Chinese and Western management and communication philosophy and practices. He came to the UK as a research assistant in 1988, and then started his PhD research in 1990 while still working as a research assistant in the Department of Biology, Imperial College, London. His research topic was on the biology and parasitology of Phlebotomine sandflies. Since 1994 he had two terms of Post Doctoral Research experiences in Los Andes University, Venezuela and Keele University in the UK. In 1999, started working for a Consultancy Company based in Stone, Staffordshire, and quickly become a member of the senior management team in the following year. Worked on the development of a benchmarking system for SMEs using Oracle and Web tools. He joined the University of Reading in 2004 and assisted the creation of the Informatics Research Centre. He has held several KTP projects and a few EU funded research projects. He has just developed a new MSc programme in collaboration with Capgemini on Business Technology Consulting. **Warmest congratulations, Yinshan!**

### Consortium Events

**1. GP-TCM Website update-** <http://www.gp-tcm.org/> (English); <http://www.gp-tcm.org/zh/> (中文). All beneficiary and non-beneficiary members of the consortium have been provided with user access details to be able to login to the members' only areas of the project website. All members were also given instructions and guidance to benefit from useful features of the project website such discussion forums, chat facility, user posts, documents registry etc.

**2. 3<sup>rd</sup> WP Website Representatives/Editorial Board Teleconference was held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010.** GP-TCM project manager Halil Uzuner organised and hosted another project website discussion teleconference with the WP website representatives to demonstrate the project website pages as well as to introduce the members' only features. During the teleconference, the attendees were shown the public pages (i.e. external pages) as well as members' only areas of the website (i.e. internal pages). Some of the features demonstrated included adding a new post, managing a post, document registry (creating a new document and managing the existing ones), webinar centre, newsletter submission, wiki pages and posts, discussion forums, live text-based chat facility, surveys, translations etc.

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**3. The 1<sup>st</sup> e-MSM (electronic-Management and Science Meeting) Teleconference was held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010.** The consortium management team has been holding regular meetings called “Coordination Office (CO) teleconferences”, where CO members and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Panel Co-Chairs come together once a month to discuss general project related issues. During the last 11<sup>th</sup> CO meeting, the group has decided to change the meeting format to allow contributions from not only CO members, but also Steering Committee Members (including WP leads), Technological Advisory Committee (TAC) Members, core SOP and Ethics Panel members, which will help the consortium to integrate management and science related issues at one joint platform! The new meeting was named as e-MSM (electronic-Management and Science Meeting) and was agreed to be held on a monthly basis. As part of this change the first e-MSM took place on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010 as a Skype teleconference and gathered thirteen senior consortium members across CO, SOP, and other aforementioned consortium committees. The issues discussed included FP7 Non-eligible costs (VAT), the 4<sup>th</sup> MSM (the First Annual GP-TCM Meeting) plans, the new Society, outstanding consortium issues, SOP Panel discussions (in particular Plant lists and CMM Naming Issue), and demonstration by WP8 Coordination “an interesting view on the listed plant species”.

**4. WP7 (Functional Genomics in R & D of Chinese Herbal Medicines) held its teleconference with WP4 and WP6 Coordinators on 12 May 2010.** Hosted by Tai-Ping Fan, the attendees were Kelvin Chan, Greer Deal, Svetlana Ignatova, Daryl Rees, Lina Svedlund, Janne Üksti and Qihe Xu, as well as Peter Hylands (Coordinator of WP4; Functional Genomics of Chinese Herb Medicine Research In Vitro) and Ken Muir (Coordinator of WP6; Functional Genomics in Clinical Studies of Chinese Herbal Medicines). In addition to discussing actions to be undertaken to fulfill the WP7 deliverables on regulatory issues and R&D of TCM, it was agreed to hold a joint WP4, WP6 and WP7 meeting on 25-27 July 2010 at King’s College London, immediately before the 4<sup>th</sup> MSM in Henley-on-Thames (28-30 July, 2010). The rationale of this proposal is that by pooling their respective funds, these three WPs and GP-TCM as a whole can maximize the number of people who can attend (particularly those from overseas), to review the progress of individual WPs and to explore better intra- and inter-WP interactions.

Specifically, WP7 members agreed that it will be good to establish a closer working relationship with regulatory agencies in US, Canada, Australia and China. At the time of going to press, we are delighted to announce Dr Shaw Chen (Deputy Director, Office of Drug Evaluation IV; Leader, Botanical Review Team of

the FDA) has confirmed his attendance with full support from the FDA. It is hoped that Prof Zhong-zhi Qian (Department of TCM, State Pharmacopoeia Commission, China) and Prof David Briggs (Centre for Complementary Medicine Research, University of Western Sydney, Australia) could attend these meetings as well.

**5. The 3<sup>rd</sup> GP-TCM Plant Lists Teleconference was held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010.** The meeting was attended by Mirko Bayer, Pierre Duez, Peter Hylands, Debbie Shaw, Monique Simmonds, Halil Uzuner, Rob Verpoorte, and Qihe Xu. Halil led a brief review of the topics discussed at the previous meeting; Debbie led the discussions on establishing GP-TCM principles on naming Chinese medicines appropriately to support quality control and good practice in GP-TCM publications, which was debated by all attendees; this session was followed by updates from Monique, Rob, and Pierre regarding the WP1 and WP3 priority plant lists and associated activities within their WPs.

### News in focus

**1. Dr Qihe Xu is on a business trip to China (24 May to 8 June).** On behalf of GP-TCM, Qihe will visit our members and establish new contacts in Zhengzhou, Hong Kong, Macau, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Beijing. We wish him a pleasant and productive journey.

**2. China Medical University delegation visited Cambridge University on 17 May 2010.**

Exploratory talks are being held between Cambridge University academics and officials from China Medical University (CMU; <http://english.cmu.edu.tw>) in Taiwan to see if there is a basis for potential collaboration on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) projects.

The University’s Head of Pharmacology, Professor Peter McNaughton hosted a high level delegation from CMU. The 9-member CMU delegation was led by its President, Professor Jong-Tsun Huang, former Minister of Education in Taiwan. In addition to meeting with pharmacologists and a representative from the InCrops Project, they also visited the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Research Institute, and the Needham Research Institute - the home of the Science and Civilisation in China Project.

Significantly, Prof Lynn Gladden, FRS, CBE – the University’s Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research – had an hour-long meeting with the CMU delegation. Professor Gladden expressed the University’s interest to embrace traditional and modern medicines, emphasising the importance of physical and mathematical sciences in the future of translational medicine. A reciprocal visit to Taiwan has been mooted.

Dr Tai-Ping Fan, who is campaigning to create a centre for TCM, described these initial meetings as

constructive and cordial and believes there is a lot Cambridge can learn from CMU in considering the merits of establishing a TCM centre of its own.

China Medical University was established as China Medical College in 1958 and transformed itself into CMU in 2003. It is the first academic institution in Taiwan where Chinese medicine and pharmacy programmes are provided. CMU has steadily grown to its present position as one of the foremost medical universities in Taiwan, with six colleges where western medicine, Chinese medicine, pharmacy (including Chinese herbs), healthcare (including nursing), life sciences, and public health educational, research and practice programs are provided.

Dr Fan said: "The Taiwan delegation was impressed with our ambitions and have invited us to visit them. I will be going to China in August to follow up other opportunities identified to help us progress our dream of a dedicated TCM centre in Cambridge. We have to demonstrate the benefits to Cambridge of such a centre and then set about leveraging sentiment to raise the necessary funding to bring the vision to reality."

### Editor's Choice

**1. Mapping the potential distribution of high artemisinin-yielding *Artemisia annua* L. (Qinghao) in China with a geographic information system.** Huang L *et al. Chinese Medicine* 2010, **5**:18.

**Background** *Artemisia annua* L. is an important source for artemisinin, a potent drug for treating malaria. This study aims to map and predict the potential geographic distribution of *A. annua* L. in China. **Methods** The Geographic Information System for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM-GIS) was developed and used to map the potential geographic distribution of *A. annua* L. **Results** Climatic, edaphic and topographic characteristics of *A. annua* L. microhabitats in Youyang County were mapped to find distribution patterns. The maps identified that certain habitats in the Chongqing region and some potential regions, especially in Guizhou Province, possess similarity indices of  $\geq 98\%$ . In particular, high quality microhabitats *A. annua* L. were found in the Wuling mountains region. **Conclusion** The present study demonstrates a GIS approach to predict potential habitats for *A. annua* L. TCM-GIS is a powerful tool for assessing bioclimatic suitability for medicinal plants.

**2. Are acupoints specific for diseases? A systematic review of the randomized controlled trials with sham acupuncture controls.** Zheng HW *et al. Chinese Medicine* 2010, **5**:1

**Background** The results of many clinical trials and experimental studies regarding acupoint specificity are

contradictory. This review aims to investigate whether a difference in efficacy exists between ordinary acupuncture on specific acupoints and sham acupuncture controls on non-acupoints or on irrelevant acupoints. **Methods** Databases including Medline, Embase, AMED and Chinese Biomedical Database were searched to identify randomized controlled trials published between 1998 and 2009 that compared traditional body acupuncture on acupoints with sham acupuncture controls on irrelevant acupoints or non-acupoints with the same needling depth. The Cochrane Collaboration's tool for assessing risk of bias was employed to address the quality of the included trials. **Results** Twelve acupuncture clinical trials with sham acupuncture controls were identified and included in the review. The conditions treated varied. Half of the included trials had positive results on the primary outcomes and demonstrated acupoint specificity. However, among those six trials (total sample size: 985) with low risk of bias, five trials (sample size: 940) showed no statistically significant difference between proper and sham acupuncture treatments. **Conclusion** This review did not demonstrate the existence of acupoint specificity. Further clinical trials with larger sample sizes, optimal acupuncture treatment protocols and appropriate sham acupuncture controls are required to resolve this important issue.

**3. Genome, epigenome and RNA sequences of monozygotic twins discordant for multiple sclerosis.** Baranzini SE *et al. Nature* 2010, **464**(29):1351-6. In the first-ever sequencing of twin genomes, researchers searched deep into the genetics of multiple sclerosis - and came up empty-handed.

<http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100428/full/4641259a.html>

### Other interesting news

1. CONSORT 2010 Statement: updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials

<http://www.trialsjournal.com/content/11/1/32>

2. Medical research in the European Union

[http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/Cultures/en-GB/Left+Navigation/Non-FP+News/100427\\_medicalresearch.htm](http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/Cultures/en-GB/Left+Navigation/Non-FP+News/100427_medicalresearch.htm)

3. European Commission Joint Research Centre Annual Report (2009):

[http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/NR/rdonlyres/854B0A1C-A2CA-43E8-B398-F2198072172B/8334/100428\\_jrc\\_ar\\_2009.pdf](http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/NR/rdonlyres/854B0A1C-A2CA-43E8-B398-F2198072172B/8334/100428_jrc_ar_2009.pdf)

4. EU and China Sign Second Renewal of Science and Technology Agreement:

[http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/Cultures/en-GB/Left+Navigation/FP+News/091210\\_inco\\_china.htm](http://ims.ukro.ac.uk/Cultures/en-GB/Left+Navigation/FP+News/091210_inco_china.htm)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/china/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/index_en.htm)

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