

# GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter January 2011 Issue

**Happy Chinese New Year from GP-TCM!**  
**On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011, we shall be celebrating**  
**the Year of the Rabbit !!**



## Features in this Issue:

### **1. TEST-GP, a grant application led by the GP-TCM community, has been submitted in late January 2011!**

The FP7 Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN) application for 3.6m Euros is entitled “Training EU Scientists Towards Good Practice in Complex Herbal Product Research”. It aims to develop an ITN for 13 PhD and postdoctoral fellows in Europe, focusing on innovation by applying “omics” to investigations of complex herbal products (CHPs); bridging quality control, toxicology and pharmacology; collaborating across nations and sectors and developing a modular structure for research training projects and training events. Of the 30 partners, 25 are beneficiary or non-beneficiary members of GP-TCM.

“We are indebted to all GP-TCM colleagues and friends, without whose firm support TEST-GP could not have been possible,” said Prof. Rudi Bauer, one of the two Co-Coordinator of the bid.

“The proposed TEST-GP network will be built on the GP-TCM guidelines to be produced in the coming ~12 months and the reviews and guidelines will be published as a special issue in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology,” added Dr. Qihe Xu, the other Co-Coordinator, “Upon submission of the TEST-GP application, we should now move on. We should work hard to deliver high-quality guidelines on ‘omics studies of TCM, and open up avenues for more exciting opportunities. If any GP-TCM member has compelling new ideas and/or emerging funding opportunities that need teamwork, please do work on them. The management teams of GP-

TCM truly look forward to supporting new leaders for new initiatives.”

The abstract of the TEST-GP application is as follows: “Due to the multi-factorial nature of many diseases, the classical “single target single compound approach” for drug development is reaching its limits. Meanwhile some traditional medicines, such as those used in Asia, not only provide invaluable knowledge leading to new Western drugs and drug leads, but also highlight different approaches, characterised by personalised medicine and the use of CHPs. Accumulating evidence suggests that using genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and metabolomics (“omics”) methods to revisit traditional medicines will lead to new insights and offer opportunities for new types of medicine. Therefore, an “omics” approach can be used to catalyse innovation. Specifically, a transdisciplinary ITN for a new generation of scientists will be developed, enabling them to pursue innovation through combining state-of-the-art “omics” technologies with knowledge derived from traditional medicines. Extensive knowledge and expertise, which are currently scattered across Europe, will be mobilised to study quality, toxicology and pharmacology of CHPs in an integrated manner. The interdisciplinary and intersectoral ITN will promote excellence in CHP studies, along the guidelines set out by a precedent FP7 consortium. It especially focuses on CHPs that have shown promise in the prevention and treatment of major chronic diseases, the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in Europe. While enhancing interaction among 13 participants from both public and private sectors in 7 EU member states, it will be further supported by 17 associated partners based in Europe, Asia and America. Integrating the expertise of industrial R&D experts, botanists, pharmacologists, pharmacists, toxicologists, bioengineers, clinical scientists and “omics” technologists, this ITN will provide a comprehensive training ground to promote the careers of young investigators in the supra-disciplinary field of drugs and health products, and will contribute to better science and healthcare in the EU, an Innovation Union.”

If you are interested in TEST-GP and wish to get further information, please e-mail Dr. Xu: qihe.xu@kcl.ac.uk.

### **2. GP-TCM Deputy Coordinator’s three-week visit to China set to bear fruit.**

Representing GP-TCM, Dr. Tai-Ping Fan spoke on “New Frontiers in Strategic Alliance in TCM: a European Perspective” in the Government Forum session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference and Exposition on the Modernization of TCM (3<sup>rd</sup> ICE-TCM, Chengdu, 25-26 Nov., 2010). His presentation on GP-TCM structure, its achievements to date and plans to implement its overall goals was very well received. In addition, a number of partnership

## GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter January 2011 Issue

opportunities between China and Europe have been identified.

In Chengdu, he and Prof. Peter St. George-Hyslop FRS have agreed on a collaborative project with Prof. DUAN Junguo of Chengdu University of TCM focusing on the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration by TCM.

He also met the President of the Shanghai University of TCM (SHUTCM), Academician CHEN Kai-xian, and his senior staff. In addition to an existing project on the protective effects of TCM on liver fibrosis [with Prof. LIU Chenghai], they are exploring schemes for student exchange, enabling Cambridge and other UK and European medical students to learn TCM at SUTCM and Shanghai students to experience training in Europe.



Some members of GP-TCM in Shanghai

L-R: Prof. LIU Ping (Vice-President of SHUTCM), Prof. LIU Chenghai, Dr Tai-Ping Fan, Academician CHEN Kai-xian (President of SHUTCM) and Prof. HU Yiyang (Director of SHUTCM ShuGuang Hospital). (the date should have been 04/12/2010!)

Led by the Vice-President of Guangzhou University of TCM, Prof. WANG Nin-sheng, adverse drug reactions and pharmacovigilance of TCM products are being actively explored. They will be sending staff to several labs in Cambridge to learn functional genomics, proteomics and metabolomics.

At the invitation of Prof. ZHENG Xiaohui, Dr. Fan signed a collaborative agreement on TCM with Research Institute of Tsinghua University in Shenzhen. He also had a productive day at Pfizer Hong Kong, working on regulatory issues with Stephen Leung's team. The meeting with the Executive Director of Hong Kong Jockey Club Institute of Chinese Medicine, Prof. Sarah Hui, opened up exciting possibilities of her institute joining forces with Cambridge and GP-TCM.

### 3. EU-Sino study spotlights traditional Chinese medicine - GP-TCM News release on the EC website.

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN\\_NEWS\\_FP7&ACTION=D&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=012d7f9587a6:ff32:5763058d&RCN=32952](http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=012d7f9587a6:ff32:5763058d&RCN=32952)



When they are feeling under the weather, Europeans work with what they are most familiar with: Western medicine. But what about the virtues of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)? A EU-funded team of researchers is working to inform the public about the safety and efficacy of TCM, which focuses on a tailor-made, holistic approach to treat patients. The GP-TCM ('Good Practice in Traditional Chinese Medicine Research in the Post-genomic Era') project is funded under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) to the tune of EUR 995,100.

Using a functional genomics approach via knowledge and skill exchange, the project partners are placing special emphasis on informing Europeans on the use of Chinese herbal medicines and acupuncture.

The researchers from 13 EU Member States, Australia, Canada, China, Norway, Thailand and the US are assessing the current status of TCM, as well as identifying issues and providing answers on quality control, extraction and analysis of Chinese herbal medicines through 10 Work Packages that have been developed for the project.

'In contrast to the reductionist approach of Western medicine that is based on modern anatomy, cell and molecular biology, TCM uses a unique theory system and an individualised holistic approach to describe health and disease, based on the philosophy of Yin-Yang balance with an emphasis on harmony of functions,' explained GP-TCM project coordinator Dr Qihe Xu, a researcher at King's College London in the UK.



## GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter January 2011 Issue

'These two medical systems disagree with each other in many situations since they observe health from their own limited perspective. GP-TCM aims to inform best practice and harmonise research of TCM in the EU using a functional genomics approach through exchange of opinions, experience and expertise among scientists, clinicians and pharmaceutical sector in the EU and China.'

Dr Xu pointed out that as the 10 Work Packages address the fundamental issues that weigh on people's minds, the GP-TCM partners are diligently working on emphasising the use of functional genomics methodology in research on the safety, efficacy and mechanisms of Chinese herbal medicines and acupuncture. 'It will include the application of the technique in *in-silico* modelling, cell-based models, animal models and clinical studies,' he said. 'Guidelines about good practice and agreed protocols in related research areas will be published to harmonise future TCM research in the EU and online tools and research resources will be made available to all EU Member States.' The consortium will publish guidelines about good practice and agreed protocols to help stimulate TCM research across the EU. In addition, Member States will also have access to online tools and research resources.

Launched in 2009 and due to end in 2012, GP-TCM will create and maintain the European Society of Chinese Medicine Research, thus ensuring the guidance and coordination of EU-China cooperation in TCM research.

**4. Feature Article “Integrative Medicine – Traditional Chinese Medicine, A model ?”** by Prof. Nicky Robinson, published in the January 2011 issue of *Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine*, is now available online at SpringerLink.

<http://www.springerlink.com/openurl.asp?genre=article&id=doi:10.1007/s11655-011-0602-9>



June 2006, Professor Robinson, one of the 100 lucky Winston Churchill Trust Fellows selected to receive a silver medallion at Buckingham Palace from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

### GP-TCM Activities:

**1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the GP-TCM consortium will be held in Braga, Portugal (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Braga>), on 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> July 2011.** As part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM, the Consortium is planning to organise a satellite Scientific Symposium (21<sup>st</sup> July 2011), coupled with the Annual Meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> July 2011). This will be an excellent opportunity for our members and their co-workers to present their work as posters and lectures as well as discuss topics related to the evaluation of TCM in terms of efficacy, toxicology and pharmacology aspects, etc. This satellite meeting intends to provide a platform for discussion forums and sharing knowledge devoted to a wider audience than just the GP-TCM meeting attendees.



Braga is located in North West Portugal, and is the oldest Portuguese city and one of the oldest Christian cities in the world, founded during the times of Roman Emperor Augustus (around the year 20 BC). Braga is located in the centre of a geographical area (in a radius of less than 50 km) containing several interesting points: Porto and Guimarães (human heritage), Viana do Castelo, Ponte de Lima, Barcelos, Ponte da Barca, Caminha (typical medieval villages of the Minho Region), the Peneda-Gerês park (a wild hilly region) and the north sea coast between Porto and Caminha.

How to reach Braga? The best airport to reach Braga is the Porto airport (approx. 40 km from Braga); it is served by several low cost flight companies; The meeting organisers suggest the utilisation of the following website: <http://www.momondo.com/>, as a good way to find flights. From the Porto airport to Braga, you can take a taxi (around 70 Euros) or you can take the Metro (from the airport) to Campanhã Train Station (in Porto) and then take a train to Braga. For those arriving by car, take the A3 Highway to Braga.

You can also take a flight to Lisbon airport and then take a train to Braga (Alfa-train, ~3.5 hours) or a bus (~4.5h). Be aware that the schedules of the direct trains are scarce (4 times a day). Further meeting details as well as travel information will be provided in due course.

## GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter January 2011 Issue

**2. Free resources exclusive for GP-TCM members - The East Linden World Traditional Medicine Patent Database (WTMPD):** In kind return to our support to a grant application led by East Linden, the company provided the GP-TCM consortium free access to WTMPD: <http://www.wtmpd.com/>. The database covers all patent literature related to natural medicines issued by 22 countries and 2 international organisations since 1985. All patents, both in Chinese and English, totalling 150,000 (more than 400,000 family patents), are high-quality manually processed, indexed and translated. WTMPD has several auxiliary databases, such as natural medicine database, chemical substance database, Chinese medicine formula database.

Based on the above rich resources, professional searching functions are provided to facilitate the efficient utilisation of patent information, including quick search, form search, advanced search, IPC search, chemical structure search, natural medicine search, Chinese medicine formula search, as well as Chinese medicine formula similarity search. In addition, this database provides over 30 search entries and supports multi-language search, synonym expansion search and cross-database search. Any GP-TCM members who are interested in this database please contact Dr. Halil Uzuner ([halil.uzuner@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:halil.uzuner@kcl.ac.uk)) for further information.

**3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SOP Panel teleconference was held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010** as Skype teleconference and brought together ten senior consortium members across WP coordinators, Coordination Office, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Panel and other consortium committees. The issues discussed during the teleconference included (i) Current SOP Manual, (ii) SOP Panel composition and (iii) Discussion of SOP Panel focus areas from January 2011.

**4. A GP-TCM guest commentary published in a BioMed Central Journal *Chinese Medicine*:** <http://www.cmjournal.org/content/5/1/42>

### GP-TCM Announcements, Appointments and Labour Division:

**1. Appointment of New SOP Panel Members:** On behalf of the GP-TCM SOP Panel Co-Chairs Prof. Pierre Duez, Prof. Kelvin Chan and Dr. Debbie Shaw, we warmly welcome Prof. **Rudi Bauer** (University of Graz, Austria), Dr. **Alessandro Buriani** (University of Padova, Italy), Ms. **Christine Leon** (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK), Prof. **Olavi Pelkonen** (University of Oulu, Finland), Prof. **Nicola Robinson** (Thames Valley University, UK), Dr. **Jandirk Sendker** (Institute of Pharmaceutical Biology and Phytochemistry, Germany), and Dr. **Youping Zhu** (CMC Tasly Group BV, the Netherlands) to join the Panel. Key functions of

the SOP Panel are to provide principles, quality control protocols and technical support throughout the 3-year lifespan of the GP-TCM project. The SOP Panel recommendations will continue to be updated/refined throughout the remaining period of the project. Developing a dynamic and authoritative SOP guideline is an important deliverable of the whole consortium and will need continued inputs and efforts from all consortium members, especially SOP Panel members. **Warmest welcome and congratulations Rudi, Alessandro, Christine, Olavi, Nicola, Jandirk and Youping!**

**2. Appointment of Prof. Thomas Efferth (University of Mainz, Germany) to the GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member** devoted to WP3 (Toxicology; jointly led by Prof. Pierre Duez, ULB, Belgium, and Prof. Xinmin Liu, IMPLAD, China), WP4 (In vitro pharmacology; led by Prof. Peter Hylands, KCL, UK), and WP10 (Management; led by Dr. Qihe Xu, KCL, UK). Thomas is Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology, Institute of Pharmacy and Biochemistry. He is a biologist by training and has published over 200 original papers, over 80 reviews, 4 patents and 1 textbook in the field of cancer research, pharmacology, and pharmacogenomics and natural products. His scientific outcomes were communicated in over 120 oral presentation and invited lectures and over 100 poster presentations at national and international conferences and meetings. He is co-editor and editorial board member of 11 scientific journals and scientific advisory board member of several institutions. He is a winner of Ludolf-Krehl-Prize of the Southwest German Association for Medicine (1991) and the Willmar-Schwabe Award of the Society for Medicinal Plant Research (2006) and is an honorary professor at the Northeast Forestry University, Harbin, China. Thomas's research focuses on tumour pharmacology and the development of novel options for treatment and diagnosis of cancer. A major topic is research on natural products derived from medicinal plants, including (i) *Molecular pharmacology and toxicology of natural products*; (ii) *genome-wide expression profiling and genomic aberrations in tumours*. **Warmest welcome and congratulations, Thomas!**

<http://www.pharmazie.uni-mainz.de/Ak-Efferth/103.php>

**3. Appointment of Prof. Elisabet Stener-Victorin (the Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden) to GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member** devoted to WP8 (Acupuncture and Moxibustion studies; led by Prof. Xiaomin Wang, CCMU, China). Prof. Stener-Victorin is a researcher at Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, Department of Physiology at Sahlgrenska Academy, Göteborg University in Sweden and she held a scholar chair professorship at Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the First Affiliated Hospital, Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine, Harbin,



## GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter January 2011 Issue

China. She works clinically with western acupuncture since 1987 and with acupuncture research since 1991. The main focus in her research is to investigate the effect of acupuncture (manual and electro-acupuncture (EA)) in reproductive medicine both in clinical and experimental studies which ended up in a Ph.D. at the department of obstetrics and gynaecology 2000. She has continued as a researcher with particular interest in polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) investigating the effect and possible mechanisms of action of acupuncture and also physical exercise on sympathetic nervous, endocrine system and on immune functions. Elisabet has been in Japan for postdoctoral research in collaboration with professor Mieko Kurosawa. From 2005 she works full time as a researcher with grants from the Swedish Research Council. She has international collaborations in US, Europe and China and is a well known lecturer at international conferences and at acupuncture courses in Sweden, Spain, Portugal and UK. She has published 75 peer-reviewed articles and is in the Editorial Board of Focus on Alternative and Complementary Therapies (FACT), Acupuncture in Medicine and in Journal of Physiology. **Warmest welcome and congratulations, Elisabet!**  
[http://www.neurophys.gu.se/sektioner/fysiologi/endo/elisabet\\_stener-victorin/Personal\\_Profile/](http://www.neurophys.gu.se/sektioner/fysiologi/endo/elisabet_stener-victorin/Personal_Profile/)

### EU Funding and Events:

#### 1. MUST READ and WATCH: Three deadly sins of grant writing!

<http://blog.the-scientist.com/2011/01/04/three-deadly-sins-of-grant-writing-2/>  
<http://grantdynamo.com/get-started/>

#### 2. Bioscience for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Emerging Frontiers and Evolving Concepts – 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America, Guangzhou, China 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011: <http://www.scbameeting2011.org/>

#### 3. New ERC calls are now open - deadline for submission of proposals is 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7De tailsCallPage&call\\_id=385](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7De tailsCallPage&call_id=385)

#### 4. The 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Chinese Medicine to be held in the UK, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011: <http://www.2011wccm.com/>

#### 5. The 59<sup>th</sup> International Congress and Annual Meeting of the Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research (GA) to be held in Turkey, 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011: <http://www.ga2011.org/>

6. The 2011 EU-China Year of Youth was officially launched. 2011 was designated as the EU-China Year of Youth at the 12<sup>th</sup> EU-China summit with a view to "further promoting and deepening partnership between Europe and China". The opening ceremony was held on 11 January 2011 in Brussels. The Year was officially launched by Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner

for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth and Mr. Wang Xiao, President of the All China Youth Federation. <http://2011-ecyy.teamwork.fr/en/programme>

### A memorable day in your Editor's life



After the intensive 3<sup>rd</sup> ICE-TCM in Chengdu, Editor Tai-Ping Fan enjoyed the rare company of a young giant panda.

### For connoisseurs of Chinese calligraphy and paintings, here is a treat for you.



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