

The Final Joint Newsletters of The GP-TCM Research Association & The FP7 GP-TCM Consortium

1. Warmest invitation from the GP-TCM Research Association (GP-TCM RA) and sincerest thanks from the FP7 GP-TCM project:

The FP7 GP-TCM project was officially launched in May 2009 and has officially completed its activities on 31st October 2012. According to the Technical Annex of the FP7 GP-TCM project and bylaws of the GP-TCM RA, legacies of the FP7 project, including this newsletter, will be succeeded by the GP-TCM RA.

From 1st November, the GP-TCM and GP-TCM RA joint website and newsletters will be replaced by the GP-TCM RA website and newsletters. Your continuous support will be greatly appreciated.

Professor Rob Verpoorte, the WP9 coordinator from Leiden, the Netherlands commented, “GP-TCM has lowered barriers between scientists from the EU and China. The GP-TCM RA will be instrumental in further lowering these barriers.”

Professor Ping-chung Leung, a non-beneficiary member from Hong Kong, China, added, “GP-TCM has demonstrated the potential of collaboration in the vast field of TCM and GP-TCM should be continued.”

Professor Rudolf Bauer, President of the GP-TCM RA, University of Graz, Austria, commented: “GP-TCM succeeded to establish a huge and unique Sino-European network of experts in TCM research, and has resulted in highly valuable recommendations for best practice methods in this field. We have to thank Qihe very much that he and his team achieved to coordinate this project so successfully. It is now the task of The GP-TCM Research Association, to develop these ideas further and to transfer them into practice. Therefore, I am inviting all participants of the GP-TCM project, but also any new interested colleagues, to become members of the new Association and to contribute actively to the future scientific development of TCM.”

Dr Qihe Xu, Coordinator of the FP7 GP-TCM Project, King's College London, UK, echoed Rudi's invitation: “I'd like to extend my sincerest thanks to all GP-TCM members for their dedication and excellent contributions, which have made the teamwork of the whole project fruitful, colourful and a great fun. Now, we have a large network of more than 200 members, 110 institutions from 25 countries and this should not disappear with the cessation of the FP7 funding. Instead, the flames of collaboration and sharing should be further strengthened through our successor organisation GP-TCM RA. I personally have applied for a Life Membership and I encourage all GP-TCM members to register to become either an Ordinary Member, a Life Member or the representative of a Corporate Member. Yes, Ordinary, Life and Corporate

Members need pay some membership dues, but we indeed need funding to run the Association independently, to honour 3 years of free membership to Student Members and to provide scholarships to nurture the next generation of our cause. I sincerely believe that, a GP-TCM RA Membership will prove to be one of the best investments of my whole life and I urge those who are still hesitating for immediate action.”

Dr Tai-Ping Fan, Secretary-General of the GP-TCM RA, University of Cambridge, highlighted “Thanks to the generosity of co-organisers and sponsors of the GP-TCM Congress in Leiden (April 2012), we raised a substantial seed fund for our new Association. To perpetuate the legacies of the FP7 GP-TCM Project, GP-TCM RA President Professor Rudi Bauer, Treasurer Professor Peter Hylands (King's College London) and Membership Secretary Dr Rui Fang (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) and I are actively processing and expanding membership applications. Another exciting project being developed is a 48-page TCM Special Issue invited by the AAAS Science journal. This significant GP-TCM/GP-TCM RA outreach activity will be published in Q3/Q4 of 2013.”

2. On 23rd October 2012, International Symposium on Standardisation and Cooperation of TCM 中药国际标准研究与合作研讨会 was convened by Vice Commissioner of the State Administration of TCM (SATCM), Da-ning Li, GP-TCM Advisers Academician Boli Zhang and Dr. Xiaopin Wang in Beijing. This historic mini-symposium provided a unique opportunity for senior GP-TCM/GP-TCM RA members (see photo) to meet and exchange views extensively with other experts from China, Europe



Front row: De-an Guo 果德安, Rui-chao Lin 林瑞超, Tai-Ping Fan 樊台平, Werner Knöss, Da-ning Li 李大宁, Boli Zhang 张伯礼, Mark Blumenthal, Joseph Betz, Xiao-pin Wang 王笑频, Gerhard Franz, Kai-shun Bi 毕开顺
Back row: Shou-dong Wang 王守东, Xin-min Liu 刘新民, Zu-guang Ye 叶祖光, Ye-xin Lu 陆叶新, Ya-chan Li 李亚婵, Peng-fei Tu 屠鹏飞, Wen-han Lin 林文瀚, Jian-wei Lu 陆建伟, Alexander Shikov, Günter Meng, Qihe Xu 徐启河, Zheng-tao Wang 王峥涛, Yang Ye 叶阳, Lu Zheng 郑璐

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(Dr. Günter Meng, Dr. Willmar Schwabe Pharmaceuticals, Germany) and the USA (Dr. Joseph Betz, NIH; Dr Mark Blumenthal, American Botanical Council).

In true spirit of international cooperation, Dr Fan proposed multi-lateral exchange, understanding and collaborations on European and American herbs as well. This motion was supported by SATCM and the overseas representatives. Proceedings of the mini-symposium and action points were prepared by Prof. Guo and Dr. Xu. After visiting Beijing Haiyan Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd., of Yangtze River Pharmaceutical Group (YRPG), the delegates were invited to a banquet hosted by YRPG President, Mr Jinren Xu 徐镜人.

3. The FP7 GP-TCM Consortium members recommend TCM research a priority under the Health Theme of Horizon 2020: Follow-up report submitted. The report is as follows.

“On 18 May 2012, we proposed that traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) be given priority in EU-China collaboration in the Health Theme under Horizon 2020. Here is a follow-up report.

Horizon 2020 has a significant international dimension. One of the important reasons for international cooperation under Horizon 2020 is to catalyse innovation and to enable the EU to reach our full potential through learning from other cultures.

For example, in priority areas of the Health Theme under Horizon 2020 such as “prevention and treatment of chronic diseases” and “promoting integrated care”, China has unique experiences and resources to share.

In China, TCM, especially Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture, has been successfully integrated with conventional medicine. Accumulating evidence has shown that it is likely a cost-effective mode of healthcare, especially for chronic diseases. Furthermore, TCM is also an important source of modern medical discoveries, as illustrated by the following prestigious international awards to TCM-inspired innovations.

- **The 2011 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award** to Prof. Youyou TU for the discovery of Chinese herb-derived artemisinin, a drug for malaria that has saved millions of lives across the globe¹.
- **The 7th Annual Szent-Györgyi Prize (2012)** to Prof. Zhen-Yi WANG and Prof. Zhu CHEN for their innovative research of Chinese medicine that led to the successful development of a new

therapeutic approach to acute promyelocytic leukemia².

Under FP7, GP-TCM (HEALTH-F4-2009-223154) is the 1st Coordination Action dedicated to evaluating the quality of TCM research, establishing guidelines on good practices in scientific validation, as well as global regulation of Chinese herbal products. Through 3.5 years of hard work, among many other achievements, the GP-TCM project has delivered the following:

- **A large collaborative network** involving ~200 scientists from 24 countries (including 15 EU member states) and 107 institutions³.
- **A European agenda (guidelines, priorities, challenges and opportunities)** on EU-China collaborations on TCM research³.
- **An international society**, the GP-TCM Research Association, which will continue to coordinate TCM research beyond the lifespan of the FP7 GP-TCM project⁴.

It is concluded that, due to its **personalised** and **function-oriented** features and its **holistic** and **pre-emptive** approaches, TCM is highly complementary to the current model of western medicine and thus represents **an important field in which China can help us to achieve our full potential and fulfil our objectives in the Health Theme of Horizon 2020.**

Thus, King’s College London, the coordinating institution of the GP-TCM project, along with 8 other actively participating UK institutions jointly propose TCM be given top priority in future EU-China collaborations in the Health Theme under Horizon 2020.

This proposal is co-signed by UK principal investigators from the above institutions. FP7 GP-TCM members from seven other EU member states, including **Austria, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg and Romania**, as well as an Associated country **Norway** proposed directly to their research offices at the Commission or National Contact Points.

The UK proposal was coordinated by Dr. Qihe Xu, Prof. Peter Hylands (King’s College London) and Dr. Tai-Ping Fan (University of Cambridge), and was signed by 16 PIs including 4 Fellows of the Royal Society, involving 9 GP-TCM member institutions. **The Norwegian follow-up proposal** was signed and submitted by Professor Odd Georg Nilsen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology Norway.

Updates from more EU member states are to be followed in the next issue of Newsletters...

²<http://www.nfcr.org/index.php/component/content/article/3-newsflash/1532-szent-gyorgyi-prize-for-progress-in-cancer-research>

³<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378874112001110>

⁴ <http://www.gp-tcm.org/association/>

¹ <http://www.laskerfoundation.org/awards/2011clinical.htm>

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4. Petition to protect EU science: The discussions at the next summit of the European Union heads of state or government, which is scheduled for 22 and 23 November, will be decisive in determining the EU research budget for the next seven years. Several Member States are demanding severe cuts on the total EU budget and research will have to compete with other policy priorities.

This is a time when we, the scientific community, should act together and make our case to protect research funding, including that of the European Research Council (ERC), from cuts. Decisions will be prepared in discussions among politicians at the national level. All of us must look for opportunities to affect these decisions and send a strong signal to the heads of state or government.

An open letter signed by European Nobel laureates has recently been published in top European newspapers. The impact of this letter will be increased if it is followed by a mobilization of the national scientific communities. To keep the momentum going, an online petition has been launched: <http://www.no-cuts-on-research.eu>

This action is coordinated by the Initiative for Science in Europe <mailto:ise@i-se.org>; <http://www.initiative-science-europe.org> of which EMBO is a member. Please contact Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, Executive Coordinator of the ISE if you have any questions or suggestions.

5. Three GP-TCM RA members invited by the European Medicines Agency to speak at HMPC (The Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products) Assessors Training on non-European Traditional Medicines. On 25th September 2012, Christine Leon, Rudi Bauer and Tai-Ping Fan spoke on *Authentication of TCM herbs and drugs*, *Ph. Eur. Monographs for TCM and other non-European substances/preparations – specific challenges*, and *Scientific evidence for traditional indications of Chinese medicine and problems with the translation into Western pharmacology and medical terms*, respectively and took active part in discussions at the training course chaired by Prof. Werner Knöss and Dr. Emiel van Galen.



6. Prof. Peter Hylands, Prof. Bruce Hendry and Dr. Qihe Xu, King's College London (UK) visited Chengdu University of TCM on 15th-17th October 2012 to disseminate findings of the FP7 GP-TCM Project and to explore collaboration opportunities in its effort to found King's Centre for Integrative Chinese Medicine.



Prof. Peter Hylands, Prof. Bruce Hendry and Dr. Qihe Xu were warmly received by Prof. Junguo Duan and his colleagues in Chengdu.

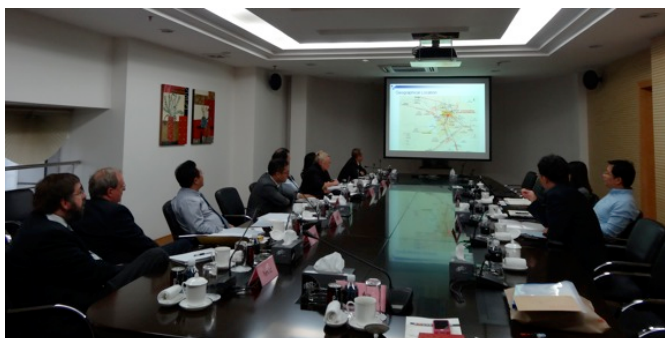
7. Meeting with officials of the "Bonn Project" in Shanghai on 19th October 2012. As reported in the May-June 2012 issue of this Newsletter, 6 GP-TCM RA BoD members attended the First "Dialogue on Human Health between Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture and Western Medicine" kicked off in the Italian city of Bologna on 10th – 11th May 2012 to promote interaction between the Chinese and European medical cultures. As a follow-up, Prof. Rudi Bauer and 8 BoD members had wide-ranging discussions with Mr. Jinliang Liu 刘金亮, Ambassador Junfu Ming 明俊富 and Keli Pan 潘克力 from the Bonn Project. It was concluded that our Association should (i) follow up the progress of the Bonn Project in Germany in their next Dialogue; (ii) invite them to our future conferences and to join GP-TCM RA as a Corporate Member.



BoD members of GP-TCM RA meeting Chinese representatives of the Bonn Project. Photo taken at Shanghai Green Valley Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd

Four BoD members (Pierre Duez, Peter Hylands, Nicky Robinson, Vivian Wong) also visited the Changshu 常熟 site of the Bonn Project to learn about its progress.

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8. The 1st GP-TCM RA Annual Meeting was successfully held on 20th October 2012 in Shanghai as part of the 2012 Shanghai International Conference for TCM and Natural Medicine (S-TCM; 20th-21st October 2012). This half-day meeting was open to all S-TCM delegates. Various achievements of the GP-TCM Project were showcased, and the GP-TCM RA actively promoted, leading to widespread interest in its membership from both academia and industry.



Prof. De-an Guo chairing panel discussion at the 5th S-TCM in Shanghai



Prof. Rudi Bauer, Academician Xinsheng Yao, Prof. Yang-Chang Wu, Prof. Haruki Yamada and friends in high spirits

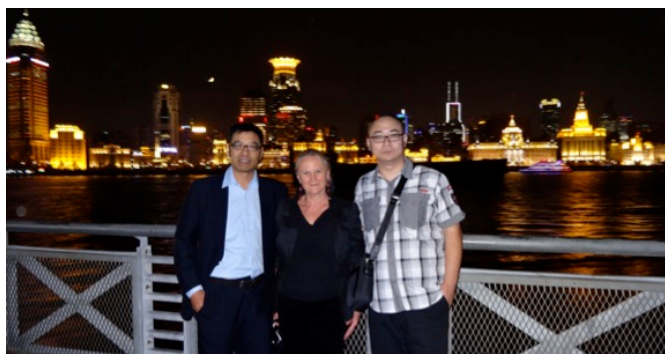
9. The 2nd Face-to-face Board of Directors (BoD) Meeting of the GP-TCM RA was held in Shanghai on 21st October 2012.



Qihe Xu, Vivian Wong, Pierre Duez, Kelvin Chan, Nicky Robinson, Rudi Bauer, Peter Hylands, Tai-Ping Fan and Aiping Lu.

The President, Treasurer and Secretary-General updated and discussed with the BoD on a range of matters (e.g. membership approval, corporate membership, website, fund-raising, monographs). Notably, President Rudi Bauer announced that he had asked HMPC Chairman Dr Werner Knöss whether GP-TCM RA could obtain the status of an "interested party" of HMPC and received positive response.

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Dr. Qihe Xu, Prof. Nicky Robinson and Dr. Fan Qu touring the enchanting Shanghai at night



International delegates celebrating the success of the 5th S-TCM Conference with a toast of *maotai* wine – to your good health, happiness and prosperity



Two brothers in earnest quest for excellence in TCM – Qihe and Tai-Ping

10. Our partners' success - A new EC-funded project – TCM-VASC. As a result of continuous GP-TCM networking efforts and collaborations established over the past 3.5 years, a new “Chinese medicine” related project has been granted by the European Commission to further scientific research studies in this emerging field. The project will enable collaboration between the University of Vienna (Coordinator of the new project, Prof. Verena Dirsch together with Dr. Atanas Atanasov) and Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica (lead PI Prof. De-an Guo). Together, these two institutions received 180,000 Euro EC funding, which covers the costs for a postdoctoral fellow (Dr. Rongxia Liu). The fellow will spend two years working at the University of Vienna, followed by another year in China in the laboratories of the Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica.

Further project details are provided below:

Project number: PIIF-GA-2009-252881 TCM-VASC

Project title: TCM-VASC—Discovery of bioactive natural compounds from Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCMs) used against Cardiovascular Disease (CVD).

Funding scheme: Marie Curie Actions—International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)

Abstract: Major aim of TCM-VASC is the discovery and characterisation of bioactive natural compounds from medicinal plants successfully used for centuries in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) against Cardiovascular Disease (CVD). The discovery of such compounds is of great interest since CVD is the number one cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide. For many TCMs beneficial action on CVD are documented, but their mechanisms of action and the responsible bioactive compounds are largely unknown. The identification of bioactive compounds that are responsible for the efficacy of TCMs will have a big social impact since it will contribute to TCM standardization, resulting in improved effectiveness and safety benefiting patients and consumers. Furthermore, such compounds might be interesting leads for the development of new pharmaceuticals or could be used as dietary supplements with health-promoting or disease-preventing properties. To achieve TCM-VASC's objectives, medicinal plants traditionally used in China for the treatment of CVD will be selected based on the expertise of the Applicant (Dr. Rongxia Liu) and the Return Host (Professor De-an Guo, Director of Shanghai Research Centre for TCM Modernization). For identification and characterization of the bioactive compounds TCM-VASC will apply a combination of phytochemical methods that will be established and used by the Applicant, with a set of cell-based assays relevant for CVD that are available in the lab of the Incoming Host (Professor Verena M. Dirsch, Head of the Department of Pharmacognosy at the University of Vienna). The identified/isolated pure compounds exhibiting activity in the cell models will be further investigated, to obtain indications for their mechanism of action. Several of the most promising compounds will be ultimately analyzed in in-vivo models to assess their ADME (Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Excretion) profiles.

11. In September 2012 Professor Nicky Robinson was an invited speaker for the 16th International Conference in Oriental Medicine in Seoul where she talked on integrated health and the collaborations and work that developed as a result of GP-TCM. There were 16,000 conference attendees and a large exhibition from industry. The meeting was also a pre-Expo launch of the World Traditional Medicine Expo to be held in Sancheong in Korea (starting 9.6 2013 for 45 days). It will be billed as the UNESCO year of commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Donguibogam ‘a literary work on public health medicine’ promoting Korean medicine to the world.

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Prof. Nicola Robinson and Prof. Jianping Liu (Beijing University of Chinese Medicine) also presented at 'the First Clinical Guideline Meeting on a 'Traditional Clinical Practice Guidelines' at the Korean Institute of Oriental Medicine (KIOM) in Daejeon, South Korea. KIOM was established under the Ministry of Health and Welfare in October 1994 and is still the only government-funded oriental medicine research institute in Korea. It became a WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine in 2011. Lessons learned were shared and comparisons made between guidelines on Korean Oriental Medicine and Korean western medicine and the current Chinese medicine clinical guidelines. This was with a view to develop a coherent universal strategic approach for use in clinical practice. She also spoke at 'the First Clinical Guideline meeting on traditional clinical practice guidelines' meeting the Korean Institute of Oriental medicine (KIOM). KIOM was established under the Ministry of Health and Welfare in October 1994 and is still the only government-funded oriental medicine research institute in Korea. It became a WHO collaborating centre for traditional medicine in 2011. Lessons learned were shared and comparisons made between guidelines on KOM, Korean western medicine and the current Chinese medicine clinical guidelines with a view to develop a coherent strategic approach which could be used more universally. Prof. Jianping Liu (Beijing University of Chinese Medicine) also presented at the same meeting.



12. More dissemination of GP-TCM activities in Xi'an and Tianjin, China. At the invitation of the President of Northwest University (NWU), Xi'an, Deputy Co-ordinator of GP-TCM, Dr. Tai-Ping Fan attended the 110th Anniversary celebration ceremony of NWU on 15th October. He joined Academician Yukui Zhang 张玉奎院士 as keynote speakers of the NWU Yang Zhongjian Lecture Series, and shared their experiences and views on *New Frontiers in Strategic Alliance in Traditional Chinese Medicine - a European Perspective* 《中医药战略联盟的前沿—欧洲视角》 and *Advances in Chromatography – Research and Training of Personnel* 《色谱进展—色谱研究及人才培养》, respectively.



With Prof. Xiaohui Zheng 郑晓晖, Prof. Yinmao Wei 卫引茂, Academician Yukui Zhang 张玉奎, Prof. Guifang Zhao 赵桂芳, Prof. Jian-Bin Zheng 郑建斌 and Dr. Xinfeng Zhao 赵新峰 of NWU



Dr Tai-Ping Fan joined Academician Yukui Zhang 张玉奎 as keynote speakers of Yang Zhongjian Lecture Series of Northwest University, Xi'an

On 24th October, Dr. Fan met with Executive President Xiumei Gao of Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TJUTCM). On behalf of Prof. Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, he also visited Tianjin International Joint Academy of Biotechnology and Medicine (TJAB), where Vice President Cheng Yang and Director Yan Zhu of TJUTCM gave a tour of their impressive infrastructure for drug discovery and TCM research. Both institutions expressed strong interest in joining GP-TCM RA.

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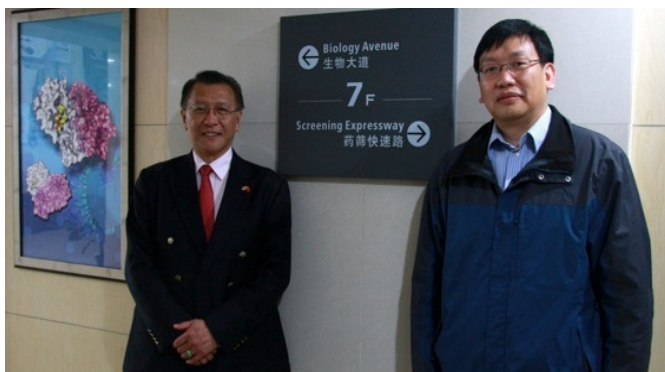
With Executive President Xiumei Gao 高秀梅, Prof. Limin Hu 胡利民 and their colleagues at the famous Gou Bu Li Restaurant in Tianjin.



State-of-the-art facilities for R&D of TCM directed by Prof. Yan Zhu 朱彦



Aiming high at TJAB with Vice President Cheng Yang 杨诚



Biology Avenue or Screening Expressway?

13. Prof. Olavi Pelkonen (University of Oulu, Finland) delivered an invited talk on 'Safety evaluation of herbal medicines - a personal view' in Session VI: Safety of Botanicals in Food and Drugs of the 33rd European Meeting of The Toxicology Forum in Brussels on 25th October 2012. Other speakers included Vittorio Silano from the Tor Vergata University of Rome (The EFSA List and How it was Derived) and Anne Constable from Nestle (ILSI Europe Decision Tree for Safety Evaluation of Botanicals). The Chair of the Session was Michael Knowles from The Coca-Cola Company. According to Olavi, the most important take-home message of the talk was the necessity of the paradigm change in safety (and efficacy) evaluation of herbals and botanicals, with the GP-TCM as a prime example.

14. To pastures new - Our project manager Dr. Halil Uzuner unveiled his new and exciting job at Royal Botanical Gardens Kew. From November 2012 onwards, Halil will start working as a Business Development Manager - Head of Consultancy at Kew Innovation Unit (KIU). KIU was set up in 2008 to maximise income through consultancy and research and development projects that utilise the wide diversity of plant and fungal expertise at Kew as well as the unique range of collections. Halil thanked all partners for their support and hard work over the past 3.5 years and invited them for future collaboration.

15. Warmest congratulations to Prof. Vivian Wong on being elected the CEO of Modern Chinese Medicine International Association (MCMIA)! MCMIA has a regular column (新天地) in *Ta Kung Pao* 大公报 - the oldest active Chinese language newspaper in China since 1902) every Friday. In the past, MCMIA patrons such as Da-ning Li 李大寧 and Dequan Ren 任德權 (former Deputy Commissioner of the State Food & Drug Administration) have contributed to this column, which is meant to deliver messages to the Hong Kong Government about Chinese medicine development. GP-TCM RA will join forces with MCMIA to promote TCM.

16. Black Cohosh and liver failure? The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) reminds people about the risk of liver problems with the herbal remedy Black Cohosh – a product commonly used to relieve menopausal symptoms.

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/NewsCentre/Pressreleases/CON199545>

Acknowledgements: We thank Rudi Bauer (Austria), Greer Deal, Tai-Ping Fan, Nicky Robinson, Halil Uzuner, Qihe Xu (all from UK), Leon Chen, De-an Guo, Limin Hu, Xiaohui Zheng (all from China) and Vivian Wong (Hong Kong SAR, China) for their contributions.