

“Eye Science” in 2011

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2011 is an opportune time for Yanke Xuebao (Eye Science) to launch its bilingual edition as a platform for cooperation between Chinese and international vision researchers. The yearly research output of Chinese investigators in all fields of science, but particularly biomedicine, has been growing recently by leaps and bounds. As an example, the American Journal of Ophthalmology (AJO), one of the most prestigious clinical journals in our field, received more submissions from East Asian authors (Japan, China and Korea alone) than they did from the United States in 2010. Chinese investigators ranked third on the list, climbing rapidly, only after the US and Japan. Top vision research centers in China, such as Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center, where Eye Science is published, now rank alongside Moorfields and Johns Hopkins as among the most prolific institutions in the world, measured by articles appearing annually in peer-reviewed SCI journals.

There are many reasons for China's rapid growth in research productivity. All of us are well aware of the rapid economic development that has recently propelled the PRC past Japan as the world's second-largest economy. Such resources have allowed the Chinese government to invest heavily in both health-care and research, at a time when other countries have been forced by economic circumstances to reduce their support for these crucial areas. Funding for research programs such as the “973” and “Thousand Man” grants has rapidly increased, providing Chinese researchers with unprecedented levels of support.

For many years, China has sent more students and trainees to higher institutions of learning in the US and Europe than any other country. This training would introduce young people to research methods and techniques, while most importantly allowing them to become acquainted with the terms of the international scholarly dialogue in their fields. Many of



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these students remained abroad, developing their own laboratories and research platforms.

In recent years, as China's standard of living has risen, and research opportunities here have blossomed, increasing numbers of these researchers, from those just having completed training to very senior investigators, are now returning to China. They bring with them not only an international standard of research expertise, but also a web of scholarly connections with the broader scientific world. The government and individual institutions are eagerly providing opportunities for these returned scholars to flex their muscles and develop research programs which are often on a scale that might not have been possible overseas, in part due to lower overhead costs in the PRC.

Many challenges still remain for China's biomedical researchers. China still has not yet to produce its first “home-grown” recipient of the Nobel Prize in Medicine, though many laureates of Chinese descent have been honored for their work abroad. Chinese researchers must demonstrate their individual cre-

ativity here at home , not only extending the work of others in interesting ways , but also blazing their own new trails.

China's ophthalmological investigators must also become full participants in the international research dialogue. This means not only publishing , but also serving on editorial boards and reviewing papers and grant applications. To date , the language barrier and geographic considerations have to some extent held Chinese researchers back there ,together perhaps with an over-reliance by universities on the sheer volume of publications as the sole index of a researcher's impact. To return again to the AJO as a salient example , Chinese investigators do not even rank in the top ten among countries producing the most reviewers for the journal. While America leads with 3030 , there are only 49 reviewers in all of China , ranking well behind such countries as India (141) , Turkey , Italy and Singapore. Providing journal reviews is a critical part of participating in the scholarly process ,

though it may go unrecognized and un-rewarded by tenure committees and department heads.

The stated goal of Eye Science will be to encourage collaboration between Chinese and international investigators ,and by doing so to bridge these remaining gaps to a seamless conversation between the world's researchers. English has become the de facto international language for science in the 21st century ,the Latin of the Biomedical Age , and it is with great excitement that we re-launch this venerable journal as a fully bilingual , international publication. Collaboration between Chinese and international investigators is already beginning to yield phenomenal new developments in areas as disparate as clean energy , genetics and telecommunication. With this issue ,Eye Science places itself squarely within the cross-currents of these international collaborations. To what heights this may lead us , only future generations can tell !