



Boosting Research Careers

Dr Zihan Pan, with the Breathe Well China team, left to right - Dr Zihan Pan, Prof Rachel Jordan, Prof Chunhua Chi, and Dr Xia Kong.

Zihan Pan is a Resident of Peking University Third Hospital specialising in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

How did you become involved with the IPCRG?

My PhD supervisor, Prof KK Cheng at the University of Birmingham, was working on the Breathe Well project and asked me to become involved. The IPCRG had connected the 5 countries to the project and played a key role in facilitating, networking and bringing people together, including us in China.

We worked on COPD in primary care looking at screening measures and rehabilitation. The project allowed us to publish 4 papers, including two reviews published in Chinese and it allowed me to complete my PhD.



Zihan Pan

How have the opportunities in IPCRG enabled you to grow in the field of research?

IPCRG helped a lot in providing the opportunity to be involved in international research and helping us to understand each other. The Chinese IPCRG member group has a good relationship with IPCRG and we make good use of the resources that the IPCRG produce. For instance, Asthma Right Care and COPD Right Care resources are very helpful for primary care in China. We hope there will be more opportunities for international research with the IPCRG.

What do you think your key achievements have been?

I think that COPD screening is the most important thing I've been involved with. It is estimated that ninety per cent of the estimated 100 million people with COPD in China are undiagnosed, and so our national policy is prioritising early identification. The best place to do this will be primary care, but we need to research how best to do this. In Breathe Well the accuracy of COPD screening tools was assessed in China and Brazil. Our study was on evaluating the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different screening strategies for identifying undiagnosed COPD amongst residents (≥ 40 years, (BMJ Open). In China the questionnaires, COPD handheld devices and peak flow devices were found to be the most effective tools. Having this information allows us to advise on COPD screening across China and helps us move more people towards a correct diagnosis.

What advice do you have for researchers starting out?

Finding something that you want to do is the main thing. It also really helps to find a piece of work that helps to open your eyes and minds to how people work across the world. I would also say look to see where the research in your area is going, so follow conferences and publications to keep up to date and to understand what is happening.

What do you plan to do next?

Having just finished my residency in the top University Hospital in Beijing, I have more time to consider new opportunities. I will continue to work in the hospital but will also look for research projects, particularly in primary care, which is important in China. In the past few decades we paid little attention to primary care, but now we understand its importance and the top hospitals are working in this field.

What I would like to do is to understand more about how the tools I have tested work in real world, and to see how they may work differently in different settings. Getting input from physicians will be important here.



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If you have a story to tell about how IPCRG helped you, or are looking for our help, please contact neil@ipcrgr.org