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Nature Publishing Index charts rapid rise in quality of China's research

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The Nature Publishing Index 2010 China, published today, details a dramatic rise in the quality of research being produced by China. Published today as a supplement to *Nature*, the 2010 Index for China ranks research institutions and cities in mainland China. The ranking is based on outputs in Nature research journals in 2010 with comparative data for 2009. The supplement also presents data from other leading journals – *Science, Cell, NEJM* and *The Lancet* – showing similar rises in quality output from China.

The numbers of papers from China published in Nature research journals has risen from just six in 2000, and a corrected count of two, to 149 and corrected count of 66 in 2010. "Only a few years ago the number of papers in Nature research journals from China would have been too small to carry out the sort of detailed analysis by institution and city that has been achieved here," said David Swinbanks, Managing Director Asia and Australasia, Nature Publishing Group. The supplement also highlights a comparable rise in numbers of papers in other high impact journals - *Science, Cell, The Lancet*, and *NEJM* – from a combined total of 3 papers in 2000 to 27 in 2010 (only papers with more than 50% authors from China were counted in this analysis).

The top ten Chinese institutions in descending order are: the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC), BGI Shenzhen, Peking University, Nanjing University, the University of Hong Kong, Southeast University, Xiamen University and Zhejiang University.

"The majority of these institutions have now established their own areas of expertise," says Felix Cheung, Editor of *Nature China* and of the supplement. "Tsinghua University, USTC, BGI Shenzhen, Nanjing University, Southeast University and Xiamen University, for example, have respectively become leaders in structural biology, physics, genetics, materials, metamaterials and chemistry."

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) has an impressive lead publishing 40 articles in Nature research journals in 2010, with a corrected count of 13.35. With over 100 institutes and over 50,000 researchers, CAS is much better placed to generate large numbers of papers than a single university.

Among the universities, Tsinghua University comes out number one with a corrected count of 6.16 based on 16 articles in Nature research journals, and neighboring Peking University places 5th with a corrected count of 3.44, based on 17 articles. The corrected count takes into account the percentage of authors on a given paper from the institution or city in question. The papers from Peking University had on average a lower percentage of authors from that university than in the case of Tsinghua.

The ranking is a snapshot based on papers published in 2010, with 2009 data included for comparison. The index, updated weekly, is available at **www.natureasia.com/publishing-index/china**.

The Nature Publishing Index 2010 China supplement also presents a ranking by city, a first for the Nature Publishing Index. The top ten Chinese cities for high-quality basic research in descending order are: Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hefei, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Tianjin. These ten cities account for approximately 88% of China's contribution to Nature research journals in 2010, and also house all of the top 20 institutions in the China rankings.

In March 2011, NPG published the Nature Publishing Index 2010 Asia Pacific and a beta release of the Nature Publishing Index Global Top 50. The Chinese Academy of Sciences is the only institution from China in the Global Top 50, ranking at 32/50. The beta website (www.natureasia.com/publishing-index/global), is a collaboration with Digital Science, a sister division of Macmillan Publishers Ltd. The Nature Publishing Index 2010 Asia Pacific provides a snapshot of 2010 rankings in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The Asia-Pacific rankings are available at www.natureasia.com/publishing-index and feature a 12-month rolling window of data, updated weekly.

The dramatic rise in quantity of scientific research papers from China in recent years is well documented. For example, the number of scientific papers from China indexed in Thomson Reuters ISI Web of Science has grown from about 20,000 in 2000, to 130,000 in 2010. The Nature Publishing Index China 2010 shows that the rise in quality is equally dramatic.

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Notes for editors:

Resources and images:

Nature Publishing Index 2010 China: **www.natureasia.com/publishing-index/china**

Available on request
Cover images: print and web quality on requestt
Graphs: available on requestt
• publications from China in major scientific journalst
• scientific publications worldwide, by countryt
• Nature research journal publications from the Asia Pacific region, per country

Important caveats

The Index results should be used with some caveats. The Index only covers *Nature* and the 16 Nature research journals, so while it offers broad coverage of basic research in the life sciences, physical and chemical sciences, coverage of applied sciences, engineering and clinical medicine is relatively limited, and so the index should be used primarily as an indicator of strength in high quality basic research. The online Index itself does not incorporate publication in other high quality journals but the print supplement provides comparative data for other leading journals that is available on request with this press release. The Index also only considers one factor- publication output in one family of journals. It does not weight multiple factors in the way that other rankings do, such as the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities or the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The output of an institution or country obviously depends on its size. Some institutions have very large numbers of researchers that help drive up their rankings. So it is important to take into account the numbers of researchers in an institution, city or country when interpreting the results. Furthermore, some large umbrella institutions are an amalgamation of many separate institutes and this must be borne in mind when making comparisons.

Finally, the number of Nature journals has increased from 8 in 2000 to 17 in 2010 and this must be borne in mind in interpreting the Index. However, while the number of Nature journals has approximately doubled in the past decade, the number of papers in Nature journals from China has increased by a factor of 33 in terms of corrected count. This increase far outweighs the increase in number of journals.

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Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is a publisher of high impact scientific and medical information in print and online. NPG publishes journals, online databases and services across the life, physical, chemical and applied sciences and clinical medicine.

NPG Nature Asia-Pacific is the Asia-Pacific wing of NPG, set up to serve the growing needs of the scientific and medical communities in the region, and has offices in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Seoul, Delhi and Melbourne. For more information, please visit www.natureasia.com.

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