

Abstract

Amidst rapid economic growth China faces an epidemic of chronic kidney disease as the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension reach proportions of Western countries. The costs for direct treatment of end-stage kidney disease and associated morbidity could paralyze the Chinese healthcare system by consuming over 20% of the available funds for less than 0.1% of the population. To meet these challenges China needs to perform research into the epidemiology of chronic kidney disease, understand the basic mechanisms of the disease, and prepare its physicians to adopt quickly to new diagnostic and treatment options for patients with kidney disease.

The Institute of Nephrology at Peking University (INPU) and the Harvard Medical School/Brigham and Women's Hospital Renal Division (HMS/BWH-RD) each are recognized academic leaders in their countries. They have joined in a long-term collaboration drawing on the strengths of each division to achieve the following key milestones: a) teach tomorrow's leaders in science and healthcare the mindset and awareness to treat kidney disease, b) "hands-on" experience of kidney disease patterns in the US and the market-driven healthcare system in which they exist, c) provide trainees with the experiences and tools to lead independent epidemiological and basic science research programs upon return to China, and d) to lay the groundwork for a national standard for kidney care in China.

This is the first partnership of this scope and duration between two academic medical divisions from China and the United States. Traditional sources of funding are not available to support the wide range of necessary components.