MEETING REPORT

Introduction of the Institute of Dermatology, Anhui Medical University

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The Institute of Dermatology, Anhui Medical University, is located in Hefei city; the capital of Anhui province in China. Now it consists of a department of dermatology, the First Affiliated Hospital of Anhui Medical University, Key Lab of Dermatology, Ministry of Education and the Innovation Center for Severe Skin Diseases, China. The Institute reflects the fact that dermatology has been selected as a key discipline and key clinical specialty for the state. It is an important research center for skin disorders and is well-known by its leading genetic studies for skin diseases.

There are a total of 60 people in the staff, including 12 full-time professors and chief physicians, 6 visiting professors, and 13 associate professors/associate chief physicians. Among them, Professor Xuejun Zhang, Professor Sen Yang, and others hold several international and national academic positions. The director, Professor Xuejun Zhang is the Board of Director, International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS) and President of Asian Dermatological Association.

This Institute confers degrees such as M.D., Ph.D., and master of Science, and offers post doctorate programs in dermatology. More than one hundred students have graduated in the past fifteen years. Among them there were several students who received awards in China as follows: one was awarded the National Excellent Doctoral Dissertation Award, two were nominated for the National Excellent Doctoral Dissertation Award, two were awarded the Science and Technology Award for Chinese Youth, and three were given the Anhui Province Science and Technology Award for Youth. In addition, one was selected as Outstanding Youth Talent, CPC Central Committee, National Natural Science of Excellent Youth, and National Outstanding Contributions of Young Expert of China. One was selected as national “One Thousand Young Expert Plan” and two were selected as New Century Excellent Talents Ministry of Education of China.

There are forty inpatient beds. Over 300,000 outpatients and around 1600 inpatients receive care annually. There are special expert outpatient clinics, famous expert outpatient clinics, general outpatient clinics, STD clinics, hereditary skin disease clinics, skin fungal clinics, cosmetic dermatology center, pathology clinics, laboratory of immunology, and the skin surgery center.

This Institute focuses the genetic and genomic research for skin diseases such as psoriasis, vitiligo, and systematic lupus erythematosus (SLE). It has built a comprehensive laboratory with nearly 5,000 square meters and established a series of platforms and equipment for genetics and genomics as well as molecular function studies, such as high-throughput sequencing, genotyping, cell culture, and cell biology platforms. Moreover, there are seven major basic research departments such as epidemiology, bioinformatics, skin-pharmacology, toxicology, gene function, and so on.

Institute researchers constructed a comprehensive genetic resources bank of skin diseases and led the largest consortium for skin genetic disorders in China. More than 300,000 samples for skin diseases or healthy controls are deposited in this bank, with a wide spectrum of 10 polygenic skin diseases and 100 monogenic skin disorders.

In the past 15 years, more than 50 projects were funded by the National High Technology Research and Development Program of China (863 Program), State Basic Research Development Program (973 Program) and National Natural Science Foundation of China. The faculty have published more than 240 peer-reviewed papers including 17 in Nature Genetics, one in the New England Journal of Medicine, and 22 in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology, among other journals. Of these findings, ~50 were cited by Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man (OMIM), SciBX (Science Business Exchange), Nature China and similar repositories. They also were awarded the Natural Science and Technology Award in 2007, the Natural Science Award of Ministry of Education in 2009, and the Chinese Medical Science and Technology Award in 2005 and 2006. Furthermore, Institute researchers have received the Top Ten Science Advance in China and Top Ten Science and Technology Progress of Colleges and Universities in China. They have also edited and published the Textbook of Dermatology (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th editions) for Chinese undergraduates in medical colleges of China.

The Institute’s faculty launched the Genomic Study for Complex Diseases Workshop jointly with Nature Genetics, which happens each year in China. Until now, four excellent workshops have been held and were well received by attendees. They have established collaborations with many international research departments and universities such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS), Mayo Clinic, University of British Columbia, the Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) and the Craig Venter Institute (JCVI), which bridges the Institute to an extensive wide range of collaboration with others around the world.

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