Preface

Chinese medicine, in spite of its long history in development of theories and practices, has been questioned by scientists in terms of modern scientific methods. It would be understandable that traditional Chinese medicine was developed well before modern sciences and cannot have full specification, standardized records, and rigorous statistical design and analysis of experiments all at once. While not all modalities of Chinese medicine have fully developed appropriate scientific methods, some Chinese medicine research methods have been standardized with proper definitions to acquire, analyze and evaluate research results, making Chinese medicine more evidence-based/led. We believe that the evidence-based/led Chinese medicine research will unlock the potentials and demonstrate the effectiveness of Chinese medicine to become a crucial part of health systems. To this end, we organized a series of workshops on Good Research and Scientific Publishing (GRASP) and invited some of the workshop lecturers to write about their current methods and tools for Chinese medicine research.

This series of workshops was co-organized by the Institute of Chinese Medical Sciences (ICMS) at the University of Macau and the International Society for Chinese Medicine (ISCM) in Macao. ISCM is an independent and not-for-profit academic organization mainly funded by the Macao Foundation. ISCM has been maintaining an international platform to promote modernization and internationalization of Chinese medicine. In particular, ISCM is running the Chinese Medicine journal published by BioMed Central (BMC) to promote evidence-led Chinese medicine.

Chinese Medicine journal is an open-access, peer-review academic journal, which has been indexed by the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-E) since July 2013, with a journal impact factor of 1.58 according to the 2015 Journal Citation Reports (JCR). It also follows the international publication guidelines, including Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), BMC and Springer Nature’s guidelines, to promote good research practices among Chinese medicine researchers. The journal currently publishes three types of articles, i.e., evidence-based/led, scientifically justified, and ethical
research reports (research articles), systematic literature reviews (review articles) and commentaries on evidence-based/led research (commentary articles).

The mission to advocate the evidence-based/led Chinese medicine as well as ethical journal editorial process inspired us to organize the GRASP workshops. From the workshops, we noticed so many exciting methodological innovations that would be helpful to meet the methodological challenges in Chinese medicine research. All of these motivated us to take a further step to compile this small collection (“toolbox”) of current methods for those who are eager to start or advance their evidence-based/led research in Chinese medicine. We look forward to further innovations and practical publications on rigorous research methods from and for the Chinese medicine community.

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