



## “Science Citation Index Worship” in China

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### Dear Editor-in-Chief

The Science Citation Index (SCI) is originally produced by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) and created by Eugene Garfield in 1960, which is now operated by Thomson Reuters. In 1995, the SCI was firstly introduced to China by Nanjing University, and has been considered a scientific, just and objective evaluation system for doctors and researchers since. However, based on the fact that China is ready to surpass the United States in high technology market share after nearly 30 years, the SCI itself has outgrown one of the most conflicting topics full of bipolar ratings among the academic society (1). The scientific circle of China began to call this phenomena “SCI-mania”, “SCI-fever” or “SCI worship”, some of whom even have concluded this as “pathological” (2).

The reason for this diagnosis is simple: publishing higher SCI-rated articles in China is now practically the “gold standard” for overwhelming researchers and doctors to get potential financial funds, annual bonuses and duty promotions. As a result, no matter you are an experienced academician or a rookie resident who just graduated from a second-class medical university, every individual is keen on publishing SCI-rated articles.

After a thorough analysis of this situation, we are able to conclude some forthcoming consequences on Chinese academic circle as follows

1. A catalyst for academic corruptions. Chinese medical doctor is one of the busiest jobs in China, besides large amount of daily routines; would they be able to “squeeze” some extra energy to meet the “gold standard”? Plagiarism, fabricating experimental data, repeated publication on different journals were unfortunately the choices for some of them (3), which have dishonored Chinese scientific community to some extent undoubtedly.
2. A catastrophe to local academic journals and a waste of funding. Majority of scholars consider publishing articles on an SCI-rated journal as their first priority, which is devastating for domestic journals because they need high quality of scientific findings as well. What is worse, an oversea journal is much more expensive to publish compared to its counterparts in China, and all the charges will be covered by scientific funding only.
3. An inadequate bedside experience for clinical practitioners. Instead of improving occupational training and providing better service to patients, quite a few Chinese doctors choose to publish more SCI articles as a shortcut to their expected financial or social benefits, which will undoubtedly add

more dissatisfactions coming from the patients to the already-tense doctor-patient relationship in China.

4. A more unjust evaluation for doctors and researchers. This is quite ironical because SCI system was introduced to China to embody the justice of evaluating individual's daily performance in the first place. It'll be not hard to deduce that a unit where fundamental trainings are provided is unlikely to publish SCI-rated articles, but would that be unjust for the talent tank employed in this unit under this SCI worshipped evaluation system?

In a word, a SCI-based evaluation system for researcher and doctors is no longer supportive for the future development of Chinese medical society. Presently, some of the medical scholars and doctors of China have been annoyed by SCI worship so much that they even jokingly conclude that the SCI is abbreviated just for "Stupid Chinese Idea", which should never be so highly appraised. A novel system like H-index was sug-

gested for better evaluation of a scientific productivity and scholarly impact of individuals or institutions (4).

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