

An international dialogue on COVID-19

The Lancet-Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences Health Conference 2020 attracts over 22,000 viewers to a world class line up of Chinese and international speakers.

On 24 January 2020, authors from China published two landmark papers in *The Lancet*. One paper describing [the first 41 patients from Wuhan](#) with COVID-19 and the second paper providing the [first scientific evidence confirming person-to-person transmission of the new virus](#).

Throughout the year, global collaboration – including with colleagues in China - has been key to understanding the SARS-COV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic. With this aim in mind, in November *The Lancet* hosted its annual conference with the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS) – the leading medical research institution in China.

For the first time, the annual conference was held online with simultaneous interpretation in both Chinese and English. Over 22,000 viewers, including over 3,000 international viewers, tuned in from around the world tuned in to hear from a world class [program of Chinese and international speakers](#).

Announcing the conference, [Dr Richard Horton](#), Editor-in-Chief, *The Lancet* said:

“This year’s conference comes at a difficult moment for the health of humanity. A coronavirus that we were entirely unaware of just a year ago has taken the lives of over 1.2 million people on our fragile planet. In many parts of the world, outbreaks of infection are still raging. Communities are threatened. Economies are being shattered. At moments like this, it is vitally important that we protect and strengthen the solidarity between and among us. Only through intensified cooperation will we be able to solve the health predicaments we face together.”

“Our collaboration with CAMS is an expression of this solidarity, an expression of the cooperation between the foremost medical scientific academy in China and a scientific journal committed to advancing the right to health, health equity, and social justice. At *The Lancet* we believe in the power of science to accelerate the pace of progress towards high-quality universal health coverage. We believe that science can be an important catalyst for social action to improve the wellbeing of our communities. During this time, as we struggle to control a pandemic, the collaboration between CAMS and *The Lancet* offers the opportunity for the world to learn from the successful containment of this coronavirus by Chinese doctors and scientists. This international dialogue intends to bring much needed hope to a world living in shadow.”

Discussions featured on the program included public health interventions for COVID-19 control, herd immunity and vaccination, epidemiology of coronaviruses, long-term consequences of discharged COVID-19 patients, COVID-19 vaccine progress and best practice in disease management. [Read Dr Horton’s reflections on the conference here](#).

The conference was organized by *The Lancet* in collaboration with CAMS. Next year, the team will maintain the high quality of this year's content while inviting more international and Chinese speakers as well as *Lancet* authors, and incorporate more interaction and Q&A.

Helena Wang, Asia Executive Editor, *The Lancet* says: “I am very glad to have a conference with audiences and authors from all over the world across time zones. Our meeting with Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences really became a world conference.”