

# Regenerative Medicine Expertise Cultivated Through Sino-Irish Cooperation

## My China Story

By Staff Reporters

Professor Timothy O'Brien, a world-renowned Irish expert in the field of regenerative medicine working at Hebei Medical University (HEBMU), was awarded the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 2022. O'Brien said he cherishes the honor and would continue to work with Chinese people to develop his career and build a bright future together.

Since the beginning of the exchange between HEBMU and National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) in 2016, O'Brien has actively facilitated frequent visits and exchanges between senior leaders of both universities to build a platform for potential cooperation. Over the past six years he has been dedicated to this aim, while also training personnel and enhancing academic research in the field of stem cell regenerative medicine through in-depth cooperation with HEBMU.

### Establishing a provincial stem cell research center

O'Brien is currently Dean of NUIG's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences and the foreign director of HEBMU-NUIG Stem Cell Research Center. He has played a pivotal role in preparing, constructing and developing the center, as well as teaching and research cooperation between the two sides for the past few years.



Professor Timothy O'Brien. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Many difficulties arose in the early stage of the operation work. O'Brien actively integrated various resources and led the research team to overcome challenges. With the support of the Chinese and Irish embassies and Hebei Provincial Government, the HEBMU-NUIG Stem Cell Research Center was finally established in November, 2017. At present, the center has developed into the largest public, international joint stem cell research institution in Hebei, leading the way for high-level cellular medicine research and development.

Another challenge that O'Brien faced was how to grow the research center. "I found that there was a great demand for regenerative medicine knowledge among researchers at HEBMU, and everyone was eager to learn about the lat-

est, cutting-edge findings," he said. So from November 2017 to October 2018, he organized a series of academic meetings, bringing the latest discoveries of international regenerative medicine to the teachers, students, researchers and clinicians.

Taking advantage of increasingly expanding international science and technology cooperation, the Stem Cell Center has been approved as the Hebei Province Stem Cell Medical Transformation Engineering Research Center and Hebei Province Medical and Health International Cooperation Research Base. The Center has published 28 academic papers, applied for seven patents, and received several Provincial Science and Technology Progress Awards, actively taking the research level of regenerative medicine in Hebei to a new level.

### International cooperation to cultivate regenerative medicine experts

O'Brien has always been devoted to promoting cooperation between China and foreign countries. He has been appointed as the academic master's supervisor and doctoral supervisor at HEBMU, and through the "integrated training model of undergraduate-master-doctor," six doctoral students have completed their studies.

From 2020 to 2021, O'Brien led a team to apply for the "Hebei Medical University - National University of Ireland Galway Master's Program in Basic Medicine (Regenerative Medicine)," which was approved by China's Ministry of Education, and 12 students went to Ireland in 2022 under the program. In May 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding to apply for the establishment of a Sino-foreign cooperative institution was signed between the two universities, which is sure to bring real benefits to prospective undergraduates in both universities in the long term.

Since 2020, O'Brien has been unable to travel to China due to the pandemic, but he still insists on conducting weekly online academic seminars to help the research team expand their international vision, grasp the frontier of scientific research in this field, and cultivate excellent expertise in regenerative medicine and clinical translational research in regenerative medicine.

This article is contributed by Hebei Medical University.

## Expats Activities

### Hunan Opens First Book House for Expats

By Staff Reporters

On November 9, 2022, the first book house for foreign experts in Hunan province was opened in Changsha (Yanghu Lake) International Talent Innovation and Entrepreneurship Service Base.

The "Book House for Foreign Experts" program is initiated by the Foreign Talent Research Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology. It aims to help foreign experts become better acquainted with the country they live and work in, and be able to better tell China's story to others.

Once open to the public, the book house could provide foreign experts with a convenient and comfortable reading service. Currently, the book house displays about 5,000 books and newspapers, including *Science and Technology Daily* and other works in different lan-

guages. At the same time, it will develop other service functions, such as hosting reading salons and activities to provide platforms for foreign experts to exchange ideas and better understand Changsha.

Zeng Lixin, deputy director of the Science and Technology Department of Hunan province, said the province will step up efforts to construct more book houses for foreign experts, and using them to promote international communication. At the same time, the province will continue to optimize the service for foreign experts in Hunan.

According to reports, Changsha is regarded as one of the most promising cities in the eyes of foreign experts. In recent years, Changsha has made significant strides toward improving the quality of life for foreign residents and workers in the city.

## Xiamen Entrepreneurship Competition Finals Held in UK

By Staff Reporters

On December 16, the finals of the 2022 China Xiamen Overseas Entrepreneurship Competition (UK) were held at the University of Cambridge. The competition is guided by Xiamen Torch Development Zone for High Technology Industries and hosted by Xiamen High-tech Entrepreneurship Center.

Jiang Sunan, Minister Counsellor for Science and Technology at the Chinese Embassy in the UK, delivered opening remarks at the event. Participants from UK universities, associations and those in the sci-tech fields attended the finals of the competition.

Launched in August this year, the event is aimed at attracting talent for a wide range of industries. The judging panel consists of professors from the University of Cambridge and other prestigious institutions, as well as senior executives from prominent local venture capital firms and high-tech companies. Of the 72 submitted projects, 18 made it to the final round, including five from the information technology industry, eight from the artificial intelligence and intelligent manufacturing industry,

and five from the biomedical industry. The Cambridge team was awarded the top prize.

Over the past six years, the Xiamen Overseas Entrepreneurship Competition's influence has continued to grow, and the competition area has gradually expanded to countries including the UK, Russia and Singapore, and has been widely recognized and actively participated in by overseas students and startups.



Professor Wang Liliang (right), from Imperial College London, presented the award to the Cambridge Team. (COURTESY PHOTO)

# Chinese Wine: 5000 Years of Brewing

## Traditional Eastern Wisdom

By BI Weizi

Chinese rice wine occupies a significant place among the world's three major brewing wines—rice wine, grape wine and beer. Ancient Chinese brewing technology was unique and has become the representative model of the Oriental brewing world.

Instead of using fruit, which is the usual ingredient for wines, grains (rice, wheat, sorghum, etc.) are fermented to produce Chinese wine. Historically, the raw material for the production of rice wine is mainly corn in the north and rice in the south. Due to the political, cultural and economic centers moving south at the beginning

of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the production of rice wine was limited to several southern provinces. During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), Shaoxing rice wine in south China's Zhejiang province gained popularity at home and abroad.

Ancient China's brewing technology, before written records, can only be analyzed from its brewing appliances. In 1979, archaeologists discovered a 5,000-year-old set of wine-making equipment in the burial site of the Dawenkou culture in Linyin River, Shandong province. This provided valuable information to unravel the mystery of wine-making technology at that time. The set of brewing utensils includes a pottery tripod for cooking, a large-mouthed Zun for fermentation, a leaky jar for filtering wine, a pottery urn for storing wine, and drinking utensils such as single-ear

cups and high-handled cups, totaling more than 100 pieces. According to the archaeologists, the tomb owner might have been a professional winemaker

during his lifetime.

The above archaeological data confirm the existence of a brewing industry during the time of the Yellow Emperor.



White Pottery Gui, unearthed at Dawenkou Site of Shandong province, is on display at China National Museum. (PHOTO: VCG)

# Guidelines on Home Treatment for Asymptomatic or Mild COVID-19 Cases

## Service Info

Edited By BI Weizi

On December 8, the Chinese government released a guideline on home treatment for asymptomatic or mild COVID-19 cases, emphasizing the need to effectively fine-tune epidemic prevention and control measures, and provide services while the infected people are staying at home for treatment. On the same day, a scheme was rolled out to guide those in need on how to properly take a COVID-19 antigen test. Here are some of major guideline points.

### I. Homebound patients

1. Infected patients with no or mild symptoms.
2. Infected patients who have stable underlying medical conditions and do not need hospitalization.

### II. The home environment requirements

If conditions allow, homebound patients are advised to stay in separate rooms and use their own bathrooms, and they should be supplied with a thermometer, tissues, surgical masks, single-use gloves, sanitizers and a trash can with a lid.

### III. The self-management requirements for homebound patients

1. Health monitoring and treatment for mild symptoms. Patients need to take their body temperature in the morning and at night daily, and take oral medicines accordingly if having a fever, cough and other symptoms. If necessary, they can also contact the medical staff of community hospitals or consult the relevant medical institutions online. No medication is required for those who are asymptomatic. When taking medication, homebound patients must follow the drug instructions and avoid abuse of

antibacterial drugs. If you have an underlying disease, stick with the recommended dose of the medicine when your condition is stable.

2. Referral for treatment. If the following conditions occur, call for an ambulance or drive to hospitals.

- (1) Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath.
  - (2) Body temperature continues to be higher than 38.5°C for more than 3 days, even after medication.
  - (3) The original underlying disease is significantly aggravated and cannot be controlled.
  - (4) Children with drowsiness, persistent refusal of food, feeding difficulties, persistent diarrhea or vomiting.
  - (5) Pregnant women present symptoms such as headache, dizziness, panic, breath-holding, or abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding or fluid flow, abnormal fetal movement.
3. Try not to go out. Homebound

patients should not venture out of their homes unnecessarily. Personal protection measures are recommended for those who have to go out for medical treatment, and do not take public transportation wherever possible.

4. Personal protection. Homebound patients should avoid contact with other family members if possible. If the patient is a breastfeeding mother, she could continue to breastfeed her baby on the basis of good personal protection.

### IV. Conditions for ending quarantine

If the homebound patients' symptoms improve significantly or they have no obvious symptoms, and the antigen test is negative, and the Ct value of two consecutive nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 were  $\geq 35$  (the interval between the two tests is more than 24 hours), the quarantine period can be ended and the patient can resume normal life and go out.

# Dongzhi: Shortest Day of the Year

By Staff Reporters

The Winter Solstice Festival (Dongzhi in Chinese) marks the longest night and shortest day in the northern hemisphere, which falls on December 22 this year.

Chinese people celebrate Dongzhi in many different ways. The most popular are worshipping heaven and ancestors, and eating dumplings and glutinous rice balls (tangyuan).

The custom can be traced to the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD) and was preserved until the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty (1368-1911). The well-preserved Temple of Heaven in Beijing was constructed for that reason. It was believed that worshipping heaven would bring an abundant harvest and good health for the coming year.

In some regions of China, people take food to their ancestors' tombs and pay respects to their ancestors during this time.

Like other traditional festivals in China, Dongzhi also has some featured festival foods. As it takes place in winter, most foods have the effects of warming the body up and enhancing the resistance to cold weather.

Dumplings have been the most traditional food in the north of China for a long time, where a popular saying says eating dumplings on the day of Dongzhi can protect ears from frostbite. The saying comes from a story about Zhang Zhongjing, a famous doctor in ancient China. He found that many people suffered from ear frostbite in winter, so he wrapped mutton and Chinese medicine into pieces of dumpling dough, boiled the pieces and gave them to people to cure the frostbite. It worked well and the custom has been passed down.

In southern China, tangyuan is the most popular Dongzhi festival food. The implied meaning of eating tangyuan is a family reunion.