

Editorial



North Korean Medical Journals in the Galapagos

Sung-Tae Hong , Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Korean Medical Science*

Department of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine, Seoul National University College of Medicine, Seoul, Korea

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Address for Correspondence:

Sung-Tae Hong, MD, PhD

Department of Parasitology and Tropical
Medicine, Seoul National University College of
Medicine, 103 Daehak-ro, Jongno-gu,
Seoul 03080, Korea
E-mail: hst@snu.ac.kr

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ORCID iDs

Sung-Tae Hong 
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0300-1944>

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One article published in this issue of *Journal of Korean Medical Science* is reporting characteristics of 9 medical journals published in North Korea.¹ The journals were in scopes of medicine in general, internal medicine, basic medicine, and major medical specialties. It is impossible to overview whole medical science in North Korea by this analysis but the articles deliver status of medical research and publishing in part. Another article analyzed reports on infectious diseases in 3 medical journals from North Korea, which compared publication frequencies of tuberculosis, malaria, and parasitic infections between South and North.² The two articles reported that infectious diseases are major health problems in North Korea. Especially intestinal parasite infection is highly endemic in North Korea.^{2,3}

All of the North Korean medical journals had unique uniform of similar layout, about one page length with 10 components in Korean. All of their texts were too short and simple to understand study design and rationale of their conclusions. Some articles had but most of them did not include English titles, author names, and abstract which are globally recommended in non-English journals. All of the characteristics demonstrate poor scientific base of medical research and out-of-date publishing.

In the past, intestinal parasites were highly transmitted in the region of East Asia including Japan, Korea, and China. However, at present, the parasites have been eliminated as a public health problem in this region except for North Korea.

North Korea remains as the Galapagos by isolation in two aspects; one is research and publishing medical journals and the other is high prevalence of intestinal parasites. Both are high priority to collaborate in the near future between South and North Korea.

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