

Meeting report

**Hybrid forum hosted by BMJ Group and the
Chinese Hospital Association on Three Decades
of Leadership among Chinese Hospital Presidents
– Transformation, Exploration, and Future
Directions**



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Overview

The 2025 China Hospital Leadership forum, jointly hosted by the Chinese Hospital Association (CHA) and BMJ Group (BMJ), brought together senior hospital presidents, policymakers, and international experts to reflect on the transformation of hospital leadership in China over the past three decades and to chart pathways for future innovation and global engagement.

The forum was designed to explore evolving leadership paradigms, institutional strategies for high-quality hospital development, and the role of research, innovation, and global collaboration in shaping the future of health systems. The event was divided into three main sessions covering the past evolution of leadership, present strategies for transformation, and future directions in research and innovation.



Opening Remarks

Kamran Abbasi, Editor-in-Chief of The BMJ, opened the roundtable with a recorded message emphasizing the deepening collaboration between BMJ and Chinese medical institutions, and the global importance of understanding leadership in healthcare. He expressed his gratitude to the CHA for organising the event, noting the value of shared learning in an era of complex health system challenges. Dr. Abbasi reflected on the crucial role that hospital leaders play in both responding to current demands, furthering innovation, and shaping future strategies.

Qunan Mao, Executive Vice President of the Chinese Hospital Association, then welcomed delegates and acknowledged the achievements and milestones of Chinese hospital presidents over the past three decades. He outlined the goals of the forum: to celebrate the evolution of hospital leadership, reflect on lessons learned, and collaboratively identify strategies for the future. He noted that China's hospital system had undergone remarkable transformation—from reform-driven development in the 1990s to the current emphasis on high-quality, innovation-led growth. He emphasised the importance of leadership in navigating these changes and in ensuring that hospitals continue to serve both public health needs and national development goals.



Part I: Keynotes

Three Decades' Leadership Evolution in Chinese Hospitals

Changxiao Jin, President, Peking University Third Hospital, provided a comprehensive overview of the historical trajectory of hospital leadership in China, reflecting on major reforms and their impact on institutional culture and management models. He described three key phases: the foundational period of hospital system-building in the 1990s, the reform and expansion phase of the 2000s, and the quality and innovation-driven phase that has shaped the past decade.

He spoke about the evolution of responsibilities for hospital presidents, noting how roles have expanded from administrative oversight to encompass strategic leadership, scientific advancement, talent development, and ethical governance. He argued that hospital leadership in China has matured significantly, with a stronger focus on long-term vision, value-driven care, and integration with national health goals. He concluded by calling for continued investment in leadership capacity and international exchange.

Global Landscape of Hospital Managers' Leadership: Opportunities and Challenges

Helen Bevan, Strategic Advisor, National Health Service (NHS) Horizons, UK delivered a dynamic and forward-looking presentation examining global shifts in leadership within health systems. Drawing on decades of NHS experience, she described how leadership expectations are changing—from top-down control models to collaborative, system-level approaches.

She introduced the concept of “network leadership,” where influence, adaptability, and shared purpose matter more than authority. Helen also highlighted the importance of psychological safety, inclusive decision-making, and frontline empowerment in driving innovation and sustaining transformation. She encouraged Chinese hospital leaders to embrace flexibility, co-creation, and the concept of “leaders everywhere” – fostering a culture where everyone is encouraged to lead from their position in the system



Part II: Leadership in Driving Transformation

Leadership and Hospital High-Quality Development

Yongjun Wang, President, Beijing Tiantan Hospital, reflected on the evolving role of hospital leaders in the context of China's broader healthcare reforms. He stressed that leadership today must drive not only operational efficiency but also clinical excellence and public trust. He spoke of the Chinese government's strategic goals for high-quality development, including improving service equity, promoting innovation, and ensuring cost-effective care.

He argued that hospital presidents are now required to be visionaries, system architects, and catalysts for change. Professor Wang highlighted his hospital's focus on digital transformation, patient-centred care models, and translational research. He also spoke about the role of leaders in creating organisational cultures that embrace learning, resilience, and continuous improvement.

Management Strategies, Innovation and Practice for High-Quality Development of Hospitals

Guangfeng Jiang, President of the Affiliated Hospital of Qingdao University offered a practical overview of management innovations implemented at his hospital to support high-quality development. He discussed the alignment of strategy with national health policies and how performance metrics have shifted from quantity to quality.

Key initiatives included integrating clinical services with research and education, building digital health infrastructure, and improving staff engagement. Professor Jiang highlighted leadership as an enabler of systemic coherence – aligning daily hospital operations with long-term strategic objectives.

Leadership Transformation and Management Innovation

James Mountford, Editor-in-Chief, BMJ Leader discussed the human dimension of leadership in transformation. He argued that innovation is not just about systems or structures, but about people and relationships. Drawing from international examples, he emphasised the need to lead with purpose, authenticity, and humility.

He described leadership as an iterative process of experimentation, reflection, and adaptation. Dr. Mountford encouraged Chinese hospital leaders to embrace uncertainty, build psychological safety within teams, and nurture cross-disciplinary collaboration. He concluded by challenging leaders to measure success not only in outcomes but also in how leadership is practised.



Panel Discussion Highlights: Main Challenges of Leading Hospital Transformation and Suggestions

1. Cross-Sector and Cross-Level Collaboration

The six panellists, Guangcheng Yang, Mingbo Tian, Bin Liang, Kaizhi Zhang, Weidong Li, and James Mountford noted that successful transformation requires strong collaboration across hospital departments and between institutions and regulators. Guangcheng Yang and Mingbo Tian discussed the importance of trust and shared governance structures when pursuing reforms.

2. Workforce Engagement and Change Management

Bin Liang and Kaizhi Zhang spoke about the challenges of engaging frontline staff. Strategies like transparent communication, leadership development programmes, and empowering middle management were highlighted as critical to maintaining morale and momentum.

3. Adapting Global Practices to Local Contexts

James Mountford reflected on lessons from the UK and urged hospitals to adapt international practices rather than adopting them wholesale. Contextualisation – understanding local systems, cultures, and expectations – was deemed vital for success.

4. Innovation with Accountability

Panellists agreed that innovation should be guided by clear accountability frameworks. Mingbo Tian stressed the need for leadership to ensure that innovations align with patient outcomes and institutional values.



Part III: Moving to Lead for Research and Innovation

Research Platform and Talent System Construction

Bin Liu, President of the First Hospital of Jilin University outlined the foundational elements required for advancing hospital-based research. He described the creation of integrated research platforms that link clinical care, data science, and basic science. A particular emphasis was placed on talent cultivation, including mentorship pipelines, interdisciplinary collaboration, and academic recognition systems.

He also noted the importance of international exchange in strengthening research capacity and spoke of recent institutional efforts to benchmark against global best practices.

Cultural Construction Promotes the High-Quality Development of Hospitals

Hui Sun, Vice President of Wuhan Union Hospital's presentation focused on the cultural and ethical underpinnings of hospital innovation. He argued that a hospital's internal culture – including values, norms, and leadership philosophy – is foundational to achieving sustainable innovation.

He shared experiences from his hospital, where leadership culture was intentionally nurtured through staff development programmes, transparent governance, and recognition of excellence. Professor Sun concluded that innovation is unlikely to flourish without a culture that values curiosity, accountability, and shared purpose.

Forward-looking and Innovative Leadership Strategies in Hospital Management

Göran Henriks, Chief Executive of Learning and Innovation at Qulturum in Region Jönköping County, Sweden presented global reflections on the future of hospital leadership, drawing from his experience in Sweden's health system. He introduced the idea of "leadership for learning" – a model that positions hospitals as adaptive learning organisations.

He argued that future-ready hospital leaders must be capable of co-creating solutions with patients, staff, and system partners. Innovation, he stressed, is a collective endeavour, and leadership must facilitate continuous feedback, reflection, and iteration. He challenged the traditional role of senior leadership, urging a shift toward shared leadership models and purpose-driven transformation.



Panel Discussion: Conditions Needed to Improve Hospital Research and Innovation

1. Institutional Support for Research Infrastructure

Panellists including Hui Wang and Jin Yang stressed the need for sustained investment in research infrastructure. Suggestions included dedicated funding streams, data integration platforms, and stronger links between hospitals and academic institutions.

2. Talent Development and Career Pathways

Yong Li highlighted the importance of building clear academic career trajectories for clinical researchers. Mentorship, protected research time, and performance evaluation reforms were seen as key enablers.

3. Interdisciplinary and International Collaboration

Göran Henriks and Yingwu Wen spoke about the value of co-creation and learning across sectors and countries. They encouraged greater involvement of patients and communities in defining research priorities.

4. Aligning Innovation with Purpose

Dongwei Gong summarised that innovation should not be pursued for its own sake but should directly serve hospital missions and societal needs. Clarity of purpose, he argued, helps to align incentives and measure impact meaningfully.



Closing Reflections

Yuyan Kong, General Manager of BMJ China, closed the forum by reflecting on the shared journey of Chinese hospital leadership over the past thirty years. She acknowledged the pivotal role hospital presidents have played in navigating reform, improving quality, and responding to both national priorities and global health challenges.

She emphasised the forum's core message: that strong, visionary, and adaptive leadership is essential for sustaining innovation and ensuring high-quality hospital development. She expressed appreciation for the thoughtful contributions from speakers and delegates, whose insights spanned local experience and international perspective.

She reiterated the commitment to continued collaboration between CHA and BMJ. She affirmed the value of open dialogue, mutual learning, and evidence-informed leadership in advancing health systems globally.

She concluded by encouraging participants to carry forward the spirit of reflection, innovation, and partnership into their own institutions, helping to shape a resilient and people-centred future for healthcare in China and beyond.

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda

Time (UTC)	Session	Description
	Moderator: Changxiao Jin Secretary of the Party Committee, Peking University Third Hospital	
07:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Qunan Mao , Executive Vice President of the Chinese Hospital Association Kamran Abbasi , Editor-in-Chief of The BMJ (recording) Representative of Sponsor
	Part I: Keynotes Moderator: Lidong Zhang , President, The Affiliated Hospital of Inner Mongolia Medical University	
07:10	Three decades' leadership evolution in Chinese hospitals	Changxiao Jin , Secretary of the Party Committee, Peking University Third Hospital
07:30	Global landscape of hospital managers leadership: opportunities and challenges	Helen Bevan , Strategic Advisor, NHS Horizons (UK)
	Part II: Leadership in driving transformation Moderator: Xiaoping Xu , President, Shenzhen Hospital, The University of Hong Kong	
07:50	Leadership and hospital high quality development	Yongjun Wang , President of Beijing Tiantan Hospital, Capital Medical University
08:10	Management Strategies, Innovation and Practice for High-Quality Development of Hospitals	Guangfeng Jiang , President of the Affiliated Hospital of Qingdao University
08:30	Leadership transformation and management innovation	James Mountford , Editor-in-Chief, BMJ Leader
08:50	Panel Discussion: What are the main challenges of leading hospital transformation, and what are the corresponding suggestions? Moderator: Yi Tang , Executive Vice President of Xuanwu Hospital, Capital Medical University	Kaizhi Zhang , Vice President of the Third Bethune Hospital of Jilin University Bin Liang , Vice President of Jiangxi Provincial People's Hospital Weidong Li , President of Fuzhou First General Hospital, Fujian Medical University Mingbo Tian , Vice President of People's Hospital of Zhengzhou Guangcheng Yang , Vice President of The

		Fifth People's Hospital of Jinan City James Mountford , Editor-in-Chief, BMJ Leader
	Part III: Moving to lead for research and innovation Moderator: Yu Hou President , Inner Mongolia People's Hospital	
09:20	Research platform and talent system construction	Bin Liu , President of the First Hospital of Jilin University
09:40	Cultural construction promotes the high-quality development of hospitals	Hui Sun , Vice President of Union Hospital, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology
10:00	Forward-looking and innovative leadership strategies in hospital management	Goran Henriks , Chief Executive of Learning and Innovation at Qulturum in Region Jönköping County, Sweden
10:20	Panel discussion: How can the necessary and urgent conditions be created to promote the overall improvement of the hospital's research and innovation capabilities? Moderator: Jingcheng Wang Chairperson of the Hospital Accreditation and Evaluation Working Committee of the Chinese Hospital Association	Hui Wang , Vice President of Hunan Cancer Hospital Jin Yang , Vice President of Chongqing People's Hospital Yong Li , Vice President of the Second Affiliated Hospital of Xiamen Medical College Dongwei Gong , President of Shanghai Yangpu District Shidong Hospital Yingwu Wen , Vice President of Kailuan General Hospital Goran Henriks , Chief Executive of Learning and Innovation at Qulturum in Region Jönköping County, Sweden
10:50	Summary and closure	Yuyan Kong , Managing Director, China, BMJ Group

Annex 2: Forum Participants

Name	Role/Affiliation
Kamran Abbasi	Editor in Chief, The BMJ
Qunan Mao	Executive Vice President, Chinese Hospital Association
Yuyan Kong	Managing Director, China, BMJ Group
Changxiao Jin	Secretary of the Party Committee, Peking University Third Hospital
Helen Bevan	Strategic Advisor, NHS Horizons (UK)
Lidong Zhang	President, The Affiliated Hospital of Inner Mongolia Medical University (Moderator, Part I)
Xiaoping Xu	President, Shenzhen Hospital, The University of Hong Kong (Moderator, Part II)
Yongjun Wang	President, Beijing Tiantan Hospital, Capital Medical University
Guangfeng Jiang	President, The Affiliated Hospital of Qingdao University
James Mountford	Editor-in-Chief, BMJ Leader
Yi Tang	Executive Vice President, Xuanwu Hospital, Capital Medical University (Moderator, Panel Discussion – Part II)
Kaizhi Zhang	Vice President, The Third Bethune Hospital of Jilin University
Bin Liang	Vice President, Jiangxi Provincial People's Hospital
Weidong Li	President, Fuzhou First General Hospital, Fujian Medical University
Mingbo Tian	Vice President, Zhengzhou People's Hospital
Guangcheng Yang	Vice President, The Fifth People's Hospital of Jinan City
Yu Hou	President, Inner Mongolia People's Hospital (Moderator, Part III)
Bin Liu	President, The First Hospital of Jilin University
Hui Sun	Vice President, Union Hospital, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology
Goran Henriks	Chief Executive of Learning and Innovation, Qulturum, Region Jönköping County, Sweden
Jingcheng Wang	Director, Hospital Accreditation and Evaluation Working Committee, Chinese Hospital Association (Moderator, Panel Discussion – Part III)
Hui Wang	Vice President, Hunan Cancer Hospital
Jin Yang	Vice President, Chongqing People's Hospital
Yong Li	Vice President, The Second Affiliated Hospital of Xiamen Medical College
Dongwei Gong	President, Shanghai Yangpu District Shidong Hospital
Yingwu Wen	Vice President, Kailuan General Hospital