

# Developing Medical School Libraries in Guangdong Province, China

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**= Abstract =**

This paper gives a brief introduction to seven medical school libraries in Guangdong Province and points out that with the rapid economic development in this province, these medical libraries are more rapidly developing than those in other provinces in China.

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**Key Words:** Medical Library, Higher education, Guangdong province, China

A most southern province of China mainland is Guangdong Province where medical education and clinical and health work is thought at a top level in China. In this province there are eight medical schools, of which seven are independent excepting one is affiliated to a university. These schools' general information is listed in table 1.

Each school has a library except Jinan University Medical school, but it has a small-size library where donated medical books and current Chinese and foreign medical journals are kept for use for a few years, and then are sent to be bound and become a part collection of the general library of Jinan University. Each library has the same year long history as the school does. Table 2 tells the basic figures about each library.

Of them, only two libraries, Guangdong Med College and Guangzhou Med College, which

have mostly been computerized, are open all stacks to all teachers, doctors and students, the others are open to all but undergraduates, for they haven't finished the computing work. Open part is social science books.

A director and one to three vice directors are appointed by school president. All directors are usually hold a high-rank title of librarianship and the tenure of office is three-year long, their positions are the same as the deans at school or administrative departments under a college or university. A few are part-time directors whose main jobs are teaching or clinics, in this case, vice director is mainly in charge.

Under a library there are several departments: administrative office, acquiring & cataloging, serial control, circulation, modern technical applying, information service and user education. Chosen by directors, department heads are mainly senior librarians.

**Table 1.** Guangdong medical schools' general information

Name	Addr	Year of setting up	Kinds of students	Supervisor authority
Sun Yat-Sen Univ of Med Sci	Guangzhou	1953	Undergraduates & graduates for MA and Ph. D	Ministry of public Health in Beijing
Guangzhou College of Tradit Chinese Med	ibid	1956	ibid	ibid
Guangdong College of Pharmacy	ibid	1978	Undergraduates	Provincial Higher Education Bureau
Guangdong Med College	Zhanjiang	1958	Undergraduates & graduates for MA	ibid
Shantou Med College	Shantou	1946	ibid	ibid
First Army Med Univ	Guangzhou	1951	Undergraduates & graduates for MA & Ph.D	PLA
Guangzhou Med College	ibid	1958	Undergraduates & graduates for MA	Municipal Education Bureau
Jinan Univ Med College	ibid	1958	Undergraduates & graduates for MA & Ph.D	Oveaseas Chinese Affairs Committee in Beijing

**Table 2.** Basic figures about each Library (based on 1993')

Name	Floor Space(m <sup>2</sup> )	Expenditure on		Collection (10,000 volumns)	Current journals		Open hrs/ week
		books & journals (10,000 Yuan RMB)	Staff		Chinese	foreign	
Sun Yat-Sen Univ of Med Sci	7,400(old buildings)	114	52	37.8	1100	945	70
Guangzhou College of Tradit Chinese Med	4,500(new building)	26	25	42.0	1023	250	70
Guangdong College of Pharmacy	2,000(old building)	30	25	17.0	1009	480	56
Guangdong Med College	4,300(ibid)	35	29	18.0	810	457	72
Shantou Med College	2,800(old buildings)	20	19	19.0	854	422	60
First Army Med Univ	5,600(old building)	110	30	43.0	1109	867	60
Guangzhou Med College	5,000(new building)	55	33	25.0	1100	540	70
Jinan Univ Med College				15.7	450	425	72

A vice president is assigned to be responsible for the library, and a library committee composed of biomedical professors, and the vice president as the chairman, gives its guidance to the library.

Library staff is quota according to number of

the students and collection of the library, but in fact, its current status is a most important factor to decide how many staff should be employed. Among staff, females are the most. More than 90% of them are librarians, 10% are workers who do shelving or cleaning. More than

80% of librarians had at least a 2-year long higher education, majoring in social and basic library sciences, but the most lack knowledge of biomedicine and their foreign language is poor, they are usually assigned to do circulation. In each library, there are 15% to 20% librarians who had 4~6 years medical or 4~5 years medical library and information science education. In China, there are four medical schools: China Med Univ (Shenyang), Dr Norman Bethune Med Univ (Changchun), Tongji Med Univ (Wuhan)

and Hunan Med Univ (Changsha) where medical library and information science students are trained, three years for preclinic science, two years for library and information science. After graduation, they are mostly employed at medical libraries including hospital libraries. In Guangdong Province it is more open and its economics is more flourishing, more and more such graduates have been attracted to go working there and with medical librarians together, they are playing a good role in reference, information services or user education. The number of them in each library is statistic in table 3.

**Table 3.** Number of medical librarians in each library

Name	Biomedicine	Majored in Medical library and information
Sun Yat-Sen Univ of Med Sci	6	5
Guangzhou College of Tradit Chinese Med	7	1
Guangdong College of Pharmacy	1	1
Guangdong Med College	4	2
Shantou Med College	1	2
First Army Med Univ	3	6
Guangzhou Med College	4	4
Jinan Univ Med College	1	0

In recent years, each library has met a budget problem because the school budget is limited, the library budget (for books and journals purchases) is much limited too, while prices of books and journals are rising year by year. Every year, each library can mainly offer to subscribe certain foreign core journals, Chinese biomedical books and journals, a small part of the budget left is used to buy foreign medical textbooks or monographies. Under such a budget circumstance, titles of foreign journals and books are reduced yearly, library patrons often complain about this for references are short in each library. To solve this matter, Chinese librarians follow American and western partners

**Table 4.** Each library's achievements on computing work and other fields

Name	Microcomputer	CD ROM production	Database	A/V seat	Computing work
Sun yat-sen Univ of Med Sci	31	2	3	100	not finished yet
Guangzhou College of Tradit Chinese Med	6	0	1	0	not begin yet
Guangdong College of Pharmacy	3	1	1	0	not begin yet
Guangdong Med College	12	1	1	50	finished
Shantou Med College	9	1	1	10	be in progress
First Army Med Univ	14	1	1	50	ibid
Guangzhou Med College	17	1	1	50	mostly finished

to set up a national-wide cooperative network sharing literature with each other. Now, interlibrary loan is paid attention to and coordinative subscription of foreign journals is carried on, a reader card in common use has been issued by the provincial library cooperative committee.

In order to build a modern library, science graduates, specially computer science graduates are recruited to meet the need of computing work, audio/video media service or microform or slide media manufacturing. In Guangdong Province there are 45 colleges and universities, of which, 25 have finished computing work there. Acquisiting and circulation have been computerized, microcomputers are in common, but some big and old libraries lag behind in this field. They are urged to speed up this work and give some budget aid to support them by the Provincial Higher Education Bureau. The next step in one-two future years is to set up networking among colleges and universities in the provinces. Medical school libraries have paid attention to computing work in the last years and have got a good achievement. Table 4 shows each library's achievements on computing work and other fields.

User education is paid great attention to, a lecture or a videotape shown on "how to use a library" is given to freshmen. Since 1980s', each library has offered a selected course "Retrieval and utilization of medical literature" for undergraduates and graduates mainly introducing Chinese and foreign indices or abstract journals and searching CD-ROM or database on computer. As a part-time job the teachers are medical librarians. The librarians' teaching is welcome and has got a good appreciation by graduates

and school authority.

A library goal is to do acquisiting, cataloging and circulation as well as reference and information services that have been emphasized in recent years. Each library tries with every way to provide patrons on-campus and out-campus with useful information such as reference bibliographies indices to help researchers with their research projects. Sun Yat-sen University of Med Sci Library has been given a right of novel retrieval for scientific research achievements by the Ministry of Public Health. In order to do this new service well, this library is planning to set up an international online retrieval terminal.

All librarians can be promoted every year as long as to meet the following requirements: hold an education degree, pass a foreign language (English, Japanese or Russian) test, hand in some academic papers or compiled bibliographies. The system of librarians' titles is assistant, assistant librarian, librarian, associate researcher and researcher of librarianship. Librarians' salaries are the same as those of teachers'.

Guangdong government has more invested on education giving special-purpose fund to every library for books and computers purchasing and tries to improve school staff's housing and increase their income, all librarians are also benefit from it and most of them including those young medical librarians are willing to do their jobs well. It's sure that accompanying the further open policy is carried on, the flourishing economic situation is better and better, all medical school libraries in Guangdong province is bound to develop more rapidly.