GRIP Report (January 2021)

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*This report does not include content covered in the previous report.*

Goal 1: To identify Chinese EC researchers’ barriers and expectations of career development with regard to support from INSAR;

1 April 2020 - 3-month: Prelim survey results (See July 2020 Report)

1 Dec 2020 - 12-month: Follow-up interview and focus group report

A focus group meeting was held at the Autism Research Center of South China Normal University in Jan 2020. The meeting attendees included 7 EC researchers and two senior ones from my home institution. I chose to gather these EC attendees because they have indicated strong interest in autism research or have conducted prelim work related to autism in their respective fields. The SCNUARC Autism Research Collaborative Group Initiative was founded as a result of this meeting. Other outreaches included meetings with EC researchers from Foshan, Jiangsu, and Shanghai, etc.

First meeting of the SCNUARC Autism Research Collaborative Group Initiative

These networking activities revealed several trends among EC researchers in China. First, autism research is becoming a hot topic among these EC researchers, which is consistent with the earlier survey results. The EC researchers all expressed their intention to help improve the lives of autistic people in China. With autism prevalence
and the need for professionals increased over the years, there will likely be an increasing trend of EC researchers entering the field of autism. Second, knowledge gaps about autism exist among Chinese researchers in comparison with the international community of autism researchers. For example, “patients with autism” was commonly used by the Chinese researchers to refer to autistic individuals, which appeared to reflect stereotypical understanding of autism as a pure medical condition. That said, INSAR could play a critical role of promoting international scopes regarding autism awareness in regions such as China. Third, integrated research network is lacking. The EC researchers indicated the need for collaborators from different fields with compensatory resources (e.g., participants, clinical support, research methodology). Integrated research ideas such as the LEAP project in EU, Autism Center for Excellence in the US should be promoted.

Two senior mentors were recommended to the ECC for the Mentoring Program 2021-2022.

Goal 2: To increase awareness of INSAR resources among early career researchers in China.

In addition to distributing INSAR news to Wechat chat groups of autism researchers, the official social media page of SCNUARC has been utilized as a platform to share INSAR related information to the public since Sep 2020. As of Jan 2021, SCNUARC has 1200+ subscribers and 10k+ overall reads. INSAR news including calls for award applications and abstracts were disseminated to subscribers and beyond.