

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. WENJIE GONG (SENIOR LECTURER, CENTRAL SOUTH UNIVERSITY)

龚雯洁博士（中南大学高级讲师）访谈

By Rui Li, Ph.D.

李蕊

Dr. Wenjie Gong is a senior lecturer in the School of Public Health at Central South University. As a clinician-turned public health researcher with reproductive medicine and gynecology background, Dr. Gong's research interests focus on women's health, especially in reproductive health and mental health.

龚雯洁，中南大学公共卫生学院讲师。龚博士有医学与妇产科临床背景，主要研究方向为妇女健康与精神健康。

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李蕊博士是美国疾病控制与预防中心高级研究员。

Rui: Could you please introduce yourself, your team, and your proposed project?

李蕊：能否介绍一下您和您的团队，以及您此次申请的研究项目？

Dr. Gong: I have a very diverse background. After I received my Bachelor of Medicine degree in clinical medicine, I went to work in the rural area for one year. For my Master's degree, I studied genetics with a focus on women's reproductive health. Afterwards, I worked as an obstetrician at a tertiary hospital for 2 years. In 2008 I became a Ph.D. student in social medicine and started to teach in the School of Public Health. Currently I am a lecturer in the Department of Adolescents and Women's Health. The diverse working experience and the broad educational background helped me to be open-minded and interdisciplinary. At the same time, I had to learn many new things. Fortunately I work in a great academic team and they have helped me substantially with professional development. In two years, our team, led by Professor Shuiyuan Xiao, has received a CMB CP grant and three CMB OC grants. These achievements are attributed not only to the team members' hard work, but also to the team members' experience and scientific training accumulated over time.

My OC project is based in Liuyang, with which our team has a long-term collaborative relationship. My research design has also benefited tremendously from the deep knowledge of the operations of local mental health centers. The main purpose of our study is to explore an effective model for the rural area to address mental health problems. We aim to train the village doctors as a supplement to the "686" project, an ongoing government sponsored program focusing on managing severe mental disease, to effectively manage the bi-polar patients in the rural areas.

龚雯洁：我的经历比较复杂，临床医学本科毕业后曾在农村支教一年，硕士专业是遗传学，研究方向为女性生殖卫生，之后做了两年的三甲医院妇产科临床医生，2008 年成为社会医学博士研究生，同时调动至公共卫生学院任教，目前是儿少与妇幼保健学系的讲师。这么多角色和专业的转换，尤其从临床到公卫，给了我相对开阔的视野思路和交叉综合的学术背景，但同时也让我总要重新学习和积累。很幸运的是，我身处非常优秀和团结的学术团队，我的迅速成长与他们的支持和培训密不可分。两年间，我们这个以肖水源教授为首的团队得到了 CMB 的 CP 一项及 OC 三项资助，除了成员的个人努力之外，整个团队长久以来的工作积累和科学训练也起到重要作用。我这次的 OC 项目现场便是团队合作多年的基地：浏阳，研究思路也脱胎于与当地精神卫生部门运作过程和工作模式的长期了解，主要目的是探索一种农村地区的有效模式，通过培训村医，对当地目前正实行的政府项目（重性精神疾病管理治疗项目，也叫“686”项目）起到积极补充作用，更有效地对精神分裂症患者进行病案管理。

Rui: Have you applied for any internationally funded projects before? How do you assess the selection process? What you have learned in this application process that might be useful for your grant-writing?

李蕊：您之前是否申请过其他国际研究项目经费？您如何评价此次选拔的过程？您认为在申请过程中的哪些收获对您今后撰写标书有所帮助？

Dr. Gong: Before applying for the 2012 OC grant, I did not have any experience applying for international grant as a PI. However, I have participated in the application and setting-up of several past CMB projects. Compared with the National Natural Science Foundation grant application, the OC grant application process is more focused on the significance and the feasibility of the project, instead of applicants' background and experience. However the process was very rigorous and it was an extended process. In addition to the content of the project, it is a test of the perseverance and faith of the applicants. It is important to be confident while recognizing the weakness in my application and working hard to address them. Especially in responding to the review comments, it is critical to realize that no PI could ever be the expert in everything from research design to data analysis and to economic evaluation. In order to succeed in the grant application one needs to find support from other experts that addresses precisely the problem at hand.

龚雯洁：在参与 2012 年的 OC 之前，我没有作为 PI 申请过国际项目，但是不同程度地参与了团队成员以往 CMB 项目的申请以及前期开展。相对于国家自然科学基金的申报要求，我觉得 CMB 的 OC 项目筛选更多地把关注点从申报者的资历和学术积累转移到课题本身的现实意义和可行性，但是整个竞争过程非常严格和漫长，除了对研究本身的打磨之外，同时也在考验申请者的毅力和信念。在这个过程中，除了必要的自我肯定之外，承认自己的不足，然后努力弥补这个不足非常重要。尤其在对审稿人的评价做回复的阶段，要认识到没有一个 PI 可以做到每个相关方面的专家，从科研设计到数据统计，包括经济学评估等环节全部完美周全，那么需要寻找相应的支持，而且是真正有针对性的支持，对于申报的成功有至关重要的作用。

Rui: How did you choose the topic?

李蕊：您是如何选择研究课题的？

Dr. Gong: My experience of working in countryside got me interested in rural health. The long-term collaboration between our team and the Liuyang mental health centers helped me understand the role of village doctors in mental health. I also came to understand the issues and needs in implementing the 686 Project. Before the application, I was in charge of the baseline survey for the mental health patients in Liuyang district. The data showed that the proportion of schizophrenic patients who received comprehensive mental health treatment was quite low. So I chose this topic based on the above reasons.

龚雯洁：我在农村支教的经历让我关注到这个有特征性的地域。我们团队与浏阳精神卫生部门多年的合作使得我了解村医这个群体，并熟悉 686 项目执行中的盲点和需求，申报前不久的我负责了一次浏阳地区精神障碍患者的摸底调查，数据体现精神分裂症患者的系统治疗率较低，由此综合考虑，便选择了这个题目。

Rui: What kind of training/guidance/support do you hope the CMB can provide for the applicants in the future?

李蕊：您希望 CMB 今后能够为申请者提供怎样的培训，指导或支持？

Dr. Gong: It might not be realistic to expect CMB to provide centralized training for all applicants on how to prepare for the application as 991 projects did. However, if CMB can provide the full abstracts of funded projects in the past or even 1 to 2 sample grant applications, that will be very helpful for the applicants in terms of understanding the requirements of the OC project and minimizing the confusion in the application process.

龚雯洁：对所有申请者进行 991 项目式的集中培训也许并不现实，但若能为其提供往年成功的完整摘要乃至 1-2 份完整标书，让其更直观地了解到 OC 项目的要求和方向，也许能使其在申报过程中不会过于茫然。

Rui: What is your most memorable experience in applying for this OC grant?

李蕊：您认为在此次申请 OC 项目中最难忘的经历是什么？

Dr. Gong: Although not sure if I am the least experienced among all awardees of the OC history, I am certainly the only lecturer among all PIs who have received OC funding at Central South University. This is just to make the point that all junior faculties should feel encouraged to participate in such competitions. Since I am still a junior faculty, I did not have much pressure when I applied for the OC grant. However, even failure appeared likely in the eyes of others, I had to do my best when preparing my application. Because the OC grant application was quite an extended process, it was very stressful for the applicants. The further along you are in the process, the more hope you have, but at the same time, the more stressed you become. It was very important to balance the expectation and the stress.

In the last round, CMB selected 13 applications, but did not provide the ranking of the applications nor the number of the applications that would be awarded the grant. The project officers e-mailed several applicants who were "on the margin". I was one of them. To many applicants, it was perhaps crueler to fail during the last stage than at the beginning. However for me, I focused more on the process rather than the outcome. Although being prepared for the failure, I decided to take the slim odds seriously and spent whole week preparing my responses. At the same time I received full support from my team. We had a group discussion on the review comments. Professor Xiao Shuiyuan and Prof. Zhou Liang provided me with many constructive comments. I prepare very detailed responses to each review comments. For example, when the feasibility of the intervention was challenged, I provided a number of references on the success of similar interventions in the similar population targeted at similar diseases, instead of just putting down "we can try it" or "it should work". One particular experience I want to emphasize is the response to the comment of adding a health economist to the team. As a medical doctor without any health economics training, I am not equipped to respond to the economic evaluation questions in a short period of time. However I could look for a health economist to join the team. I searched in the literature, asked for reference, sent e-mails to experts, and explained my project on the phone. On the last day before the deadline I secured the support from a U.S. based health economist. Although I was not sure how much of the improvement in my project scoring can be attributed to these efforts, I would like to share my experience with everyone. I hope you would benefit from my experience and succeed in your future career.

龚雯洁：我不知道自己是不是 CMB 历史上拿到 OC 的申报者中职称和资历最低浅的，但起码在中南大学历年拿到项目的 PI 中是唯一的讲师。强调这一点只是为了鼓励更多如我一般的青年教师参与到这个领域，也正因为这一点，我在整个申报过程中没有太大的心理压力。但即使失败在旁人看来是理所当然，自己也必须付出全力。尤其 OC 的申报过程非常漫长，从学校限额的竞争到递交摘要争取写完整标书机会，得出初步人选后要求其根据审稿人意见写回复并修改标书……这种逐步地筛选对于申报者绝对是一种煎熬，越到后面付出越多也会寄予更多的希望，这个时候如何平衡自己的期望和压力非常重要。

在最后回复环节，CMB 筛选出 13 位候选人，但并没有公布评委第一轮的打分排名，也没有告知最后的幸运者会有多少位，负责人通过邮件向排名靠后的几位发出了“在边缘地段，希望渺茫”的提示，而我也在其

中。也许对于大多数申请者来说，倒在终点前是比一开始就出局还残忍的结果，但是我觉得起码看到了这一路的风景，所以尽管怀有失败的准备，我依然决定认真站好最后一班岗，专门拿出一周的时间来写回复。同时我们团队也在尽全力地给予我支持，专门召开了针对回复的讨论会，肖水源教授和周亮教授都给予我许多针对性的建议。以这种学习的心态，我针对每一条意见详细解释和回复，尤其当干预方式的可行性被质疑时，我查找了一系列相关文献，用类似的地点、类似的人群、类似的疾病、成功的干预研究报导来说话，而不是简单地回答“应该可以”或者“试试看”。最后要提的是关于卫生经济学家的找寻，作为一个没有受过严格经济学训练的医学研究者，我没有办法靠短时间的自学来回答这个研究中相关的经济学评价问题，但是我认为可以找一个这个领域的专家来帮助我弥补这个缺陷，因此我查找了相关内容的文献，请人推荐作者，写邮件联系，电话解释自己的项目……在截止期的最后一天终于得到了这位美国卫生经济学家的支持。尽管我并不了解自己排名的上升与这些努力之间明确的相关系数，但是我认为，与大家真诚地分享这个过程，也是这次 OC 的终点风景之一，希望更多的人因此走得更远。