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population was infected.³ The sudden COVID-19 wave put great pressure on the Chinese health-care system. The relevant departments (pneumology department, intensive care unit, etc) predictably became overloaded. In response to this challenge, Chinese physicians in various specialties took it upon themselves to review what they had learned about respiratory diseases and assisted in the admission of COVID-19 patients, creating a one hospital bed, one hospital department mode to urgently cope with the sudden increase in disease burden. Article 32 of China's Physicians Law also addresses the concerns of non-emergency and non-critical care physicians regarding the potential legal risks of working beyond their scope of practice. In this fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese medical warriors have shown an astounding dedication to preventing horrific humanitarian disaster.

Despite the Chinese Government negotiating health-care coverage for COVID-19 drugs that prevent critical illness, such as paxlovid and azvudine, it is still difficult to satisfy the huge demand of Chinese patients. Hence, the China National Medical Products Administration should accelerate the introduction or approval of drugs with proven efficacy in randomised controlled trials and effectiveness in real-world studies (such as molnupiravir⁴ and VV116),⁵ accelerate vaccination, introduce mRNA vaccines, and promote the sequential vaccination model of clinically validated heterogeneous vaccines to reduce the occurrence of severe cases. In addition to these tools, restarting the dynamic surveillance of COVID-19 to understand the patterns of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and mutation is also important to prepare more comprehensively for the next potential round of infections.

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- 1 Chinese Government. Notice on further optimizing the implementation of COVID-19 prevention and control measures [in Chinese]. Dec 7, 2022. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-12/07/content_5730443.htm (accessed Jan 14, 2023).
- 2 Liu Y, Rocklöv J. The effective reproductive number of the omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 is several times relative to delta. *J Travel Med* 2022; **29**: taac037.
- 3 Henan Provincial People's Government. Henan has passed the epidemic peak [in Chinese]. Jan 9, 2023. <https://www.henan.gov.cn/2023/01-09/2669240.html> (accessed Jan 14, 2023).
- 4 Wong CKH, Au ICH, Lau KTK, Lau EHY, Cowling BJ, Leung GM. Real-world effectiveness of molnupiravir and nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir against mortality, hospitalisation, and in-hospital outcomes among community-dwelling, ambulatory patients with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection during the omicron wave in Hong Kong: an observational study. *Lancet* 2022; **400**: 1213–22.
- 5 Cao Z, Gao W, Bao H, et al. VV116 versus nirmatrelvir-ritonavir for oral treatment of COVID-19. *N Engl J Med* 2022; published online Dec 28. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmoa2208822>.

Celebration of 200 years

The Lancet's extensive coverage of its achievements is a timely reminder of the great contribution this journal has made to advance medical care. Although the timeline highlights many substantial scientific contributions, the extraordinary role *The Lancet* played in the reform of the medical profession, hospitals, and increasing the public accountability for health care deserves more attention.

As highlighted, first and foremost, Thomas Wakley's intention in establishing the journal was to challenge the nepotism and corruption that pervaded the medical profession, the inadequacies of medical education, and to expose the incompetence of much clinical practice. This challenging

of norms is best illustrated by the extraordinary, game-changing court case Wakley and one of his reporters, James Lambert, instigated in 1828.

Never before, anywhere in the world, had a doctor's competence been subjected to public scrutiny. The case attracted so much public interest that newspapers held their presses until midnight to enable the verdict to go out on the night stagecoaches, something they had only done once before when they awaited news of George III's death.

Society has Wakley and *The Lancet* to thank for this courageous act that contributed to what can be discerned as the start of modern health care. The story of the case and the early years of the journal are told in my novel¹ published in the past few months, based on extensive documentary evidence from the time.

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- 1 Black N. The honourable doctor. London: Grosvenor House Press, 2022.

To see *The Lancet's* 200 year timeline see <https://www.thelancet.com/lancet-200/timeline-infographic>

Department of Error

Feikin DR, Melissa MH, Abu-Raddad LJ, et al. Duration of effectiveness of vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 disease: results of a systematic review and meta-regression. *Lancet* 2022; **399**: 924–44—The methods for the meta-regression section in the appendix of this Article have been corrected as Feb 23, 2023.