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A changing of the guard as China's science rises

PRESS RELEASE FROM NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP

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Contact: Grace Baynes

Head of Corporate Communications, Nature Publishing Group

T: +44 (0)20 7014 4063

E: g.baynes@nature.com

Japan continues to lead the Asia-Pacific in research output. But it could be overtaken by China in the coming years. The top institution in the region in 2012 was The University of Tokyo, but it will almost certainly lose its crown to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in 2013. Indeed on a rolling 12-month window to mid-March, the CAS has a substantial lead.

These are the lead conclusions of the 2012 Nature Publishing Index (NPI) 2012 Asia-Pacific, published today in *Nature*.

The NPI 2012 Asia-Pacific supplement also reports:

- The region's scientists are publishing more high quality basic science than ever before: more than 28% of articles published in the high quality Nature research journals have an author from the Asia-Pacific region, compared with 19% in 2008.
- **Japan's** publication output increased despite the diversion of resources into rebuilding infrastructure after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.
- **China** is still in second place, but it is growing faster than Japan and may take first place within a couple of years. Most Chinese institutions in the Asia-Pacific top 200 improved their ranking in the past year.
- **Australia** is in third place, and leads the region in earth and environmental science publications. Its top institution, the University of Melbourne, rose to sixth in the Asia-Pacific region. James Cook University in Townsville continues to be the fast improver, up at 30th in 2012 from 351st in the region in 2008.
- **South Korea** sits firmly in fourth place with almost double the output of fifth-ranked Singapore. Its publication output dropped slightly in 2012, but new president, Park Geun-hye, plans to increase investment in R&D as a proportion of GDP to 5% by 2017.
- **Singapore** had the greatest proportional increase of any of the top eight countries over the year. The National University of Singapore is the highest ranking institution in Singapore.
- This year, **Taiwan** consolidated the sixth spot, ahead of **India** and **New Zealand** both of whose output dropped slightly.

The NPI Asia-Pacific 2012 has been released as a supplement to *Nature* today. It measures the output of research articles from nations and institutes published in the 18 Nature-branded primary research journals over the calendar year. The supplement provides a snapshot of research in the Asia-Pacific in 2012.

To see the latest results for the region, and the Nature Publishing Index Global Top 100, visit the Index website at www.natureasia.com/en/publishing-index/. The data posted on the website is updated every week with a moving window of 12 months of data.

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Notes on the Nature Publishing Index:

The Nature Publishing Index (NPI) results should be used with some caveats. It is based only on the publication output in Nature and the 17 Nature research journals. So while it offers a broad coverage of basic research in the life sciences, physical and chemical sciences, the attention to applied sciences, engineering and clinical medicine is relatively limited. The NPI should be used primarily as an indicator of strength in high quality basic research. It does not weight multiple factors in the way that other rankings do, such as the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities or the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The output of an institution or country obviously depends on its size. Some institutions have very large numbers of researchers that help drive up their rankings. So it is important to take into account the numbers of researchers in an institution or country when interpreting the results.

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