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Nature Index: A new global indicator for high quality science shows growing strength of China

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The growing contribution to science of Chinese institutions such as Chinese Academy of Sciences is one striking pattern revealed in the Nature Index, launched today. High quality science outputs of 20,000 institutions worldwide can now be easily analysed with the new [Nature Index](#). A freely accessible website is available at natureindex.com and to celebrate this beta release, the Nature Index 2014 Global is published as a supplement to *Nature* today.

The Nature Index database tracks the author affiliations of nearly 60,000 high quality scientific articles published per year, disambiguating over 20,000 research institutions worldwide. The database is compiled by Nature Publishing Group in collaboration with Digital Science.

Articles included in the Nature Index are drawn from 68 natural science journals, identified by researchers as where they would choose to publish their best work. The journals were selected by two independent panels of active scientists, chaired by Professor John Morton (University College London) and Dr Yin-Biao Sun (Kings College, London). More than 2,800 responses to a large-scale survey were used to validate the selections. Nature Publishing Group estimate that these 68 journals account for about 30% of total citations to natural science journals.

A rolling 12-month snapshot of data from the Nature Index is openly available under a Creative Commons license at natureindex.com, so that users can analyse scientific research outputs themselves. On the index website, an institution's output of articles can be viewed across the 12-month data window and by broad subject area. International and domestic collaborations are also shown for each institution. A fractional count indicates an institution's contribution to an article, taking into account the percentage of authors from an institution (or country) and the number of affiliated institutions per article.

Nature Publishing Group CEO Steven Inchcoombe, said: "Research is a global enterprise, and science has the power to help solve the societal challenges of our day. At Nature Publishing Group, we want to understand research outputs, collaborations between institutions and the state of global research, and to enable an evidence-based approach to policy and funding. We hope the Nature Index, and its freely accessible website, will be helpful to the research community as another perspective to the metrics and evaluation tools available. We are releasing this in beta to encourage feedback, and to emphasise that the Nature Index is a work in progress and will continue to evolve."

As part of the launch, the first Nature Index Global 2014 supplement provides a snapshot of results from the index, analysing and interpreting the data from the previous year. It turns a spotlight on the countries and institutions around the world that contributed to some of the highest quality research over the previous calendar year. Analysis also includes layers of information from other data sources, such as demographics, national spend on research and development, changes to science policy and funding, which help put the Nature Index data into perspective.

Nick Campbell, Executive Editor, *Nature* said: "The Nature Index provides a new way to look at the scientific literature – and to those research organizations that contribute to it. By looking at only a small group of journals, selected by researchers, we hope to provide a new level of analysis that is more targeted and hence more malleable. We want users to be able to tease out patterns of research, look at trends, analyse individual strengths and investigate how institutions and countries collaborate."

More information about the Nature Index is available at natureindex.com and in an editorial published in *Nature* today.

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