# Honorary doctorate awarded to China's SARS hero

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Professor Zhong Nanshan and Vice-Chancellor Professor David Eastwood

Professor Zhong Nanshan, a leading figure in the combat of the 2003 SARS epidemic in China, has been awarded an honorary degree by the University of Birmingham at a special graduation ceremony in Guangzhou.

Head of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases and probably the most high profile public face in the war against SARS, Professor Zhong is a recipient of numerous honours and has received wide recognition for his work, including election to the Chinese Academy of Engineering in 1996 and the Presidency of the Chinese Medical Association between 2005 and 2010. In 2009, Professor Zhong was honoured as one of China's top 100 most influential citizens during the 60 years since the founding of the People's Republic.

Officiated by the Vice-Chancellor Professor David Eastwood, Professor Zhong's graduation ceremony was part of a University of Birmingham biomedical research forum on Tuesday 6 September. During the forum, senior academics from the College of Medical and Dental Sciences and College of Life and Environmental Sciences presented research highlights in areas such as human disease modelling, clinical trials, translational medicine and cognitive neuroscience.

During the 2003 outbreak of SARS, as the leading respiratory clinician in Guangzhou, Professor Zhong, together with his team, proposed to admit all the critical SARS cases in Guangdong province into his institute. Through unravelling the nature of the virus, Professor Zhong helped bring calm to the nation and enabled a greater disaster to be averted.

Professor Zhong has conducted groundbreaking research in asthma and, most notably, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a major cause of death in China. One of Professor Zhong's recent papers, published in the *Lancet* and selected as Paper of the Year 2008, reported an important clinical trial on patients with this condition. Under his leadership, the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases became the first of its kind in China to be designated Key State Laboratory of Respiratory Diseases.

Outside medicine, Professor Zhong is a keen sportsman and broke the country's record for 400m hurdles in the Chinese All Nation Games in 1959.

The forum and graduation ceremony were part of a series of events to mark the opening of the University of Birmingham Guangzhou Centre, a landmark partnership between the Guangzhou municipal government and the University.

## Notes to Editors

A member of the Russell Group of 20 leading UK research-intensive universities, the University of Birmingham is a vibrant, global community and an internationally-renowned institution, in the top 100 globally. With approximately 28,000 students and 6,000 members of staff, its work brings people from more than 150 countries to Birmingham. For further information, visit: **www.birmingham.ac.uk (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/)**

Professor Zhong Nanshan was born in October 1936 in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. He is now a professor and doctorate tutor, and an academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering. In 1960, he graduated from Beijing University Medical School and subsequently worked at the School until 1966. During 1979 to 1981, he studied at the Edinburgh University and London University as a fellow researching the effects of hyperoxia and hypoxia on pulmonary blood circulation.

Currently, Professor Zhong Nanshan is: Head of Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases, Chief Committee Member of the Society of Respirology to the Chinese Medicine Association, Medical Tutor at the World Health Organisation, Vice-Director of the Department of Medicine and Healthcare, Chinese Academy of Engineering, Vice-Chairman of Guangdong Society of Scientific Technology, Chairman of Guangzhou Society of Scientific Technology, Committee Member of the 8th and 9th Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (CPPCC), and Representative of the 15th CPPCC.

For further information about the University of Guangzhou Centre, please visit: **www.birmingham.ac.uk/guangzhou (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/guangzhou)**

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