

# **Comparison and Reasons of Different Medical Conditions between Developed and Underdeveloped Areas in Guangdong Province**

Guangdong Experimental High School

Luo Yitao

Wang Deqi

Guo Ruiwen

Su Qisheng

Yang Yuhao

Shi Minghao

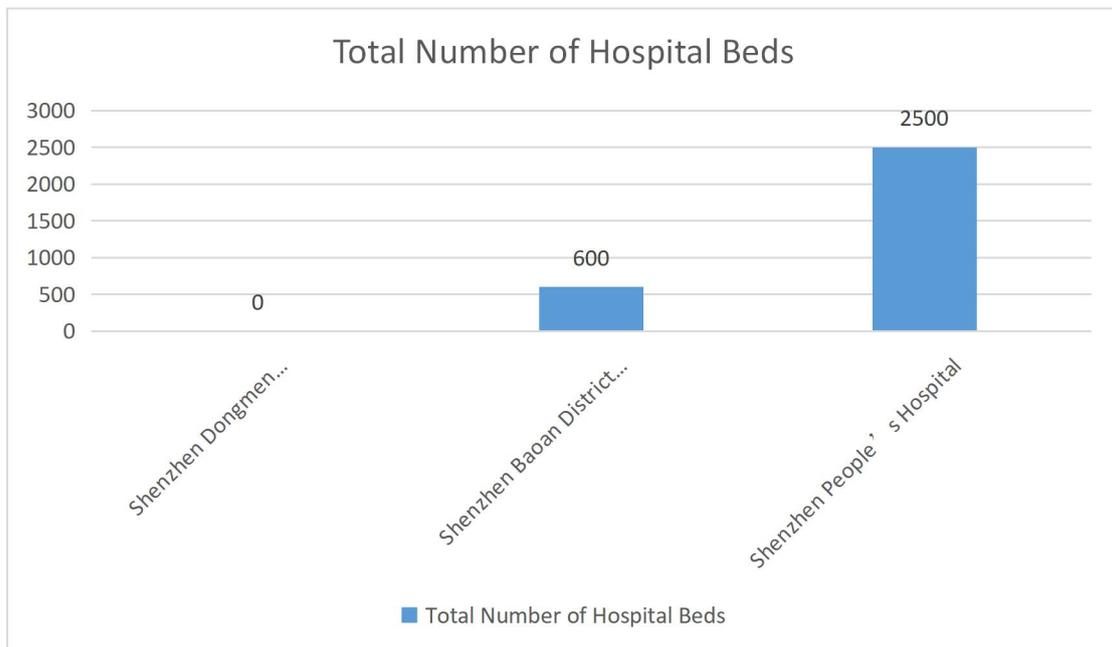
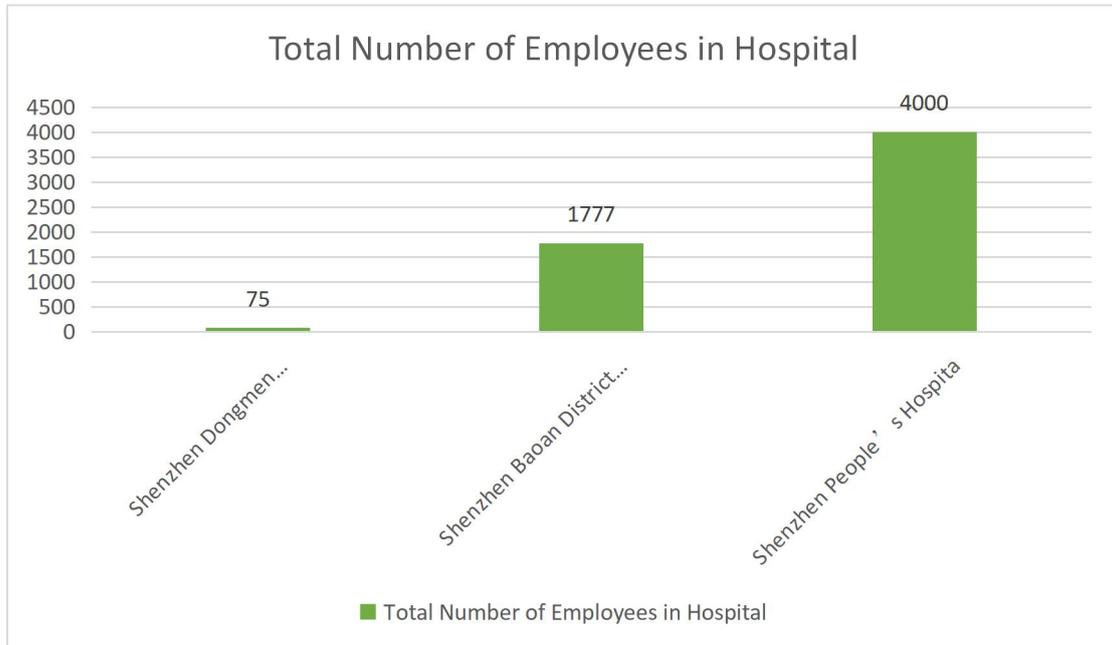
## **Introduction**

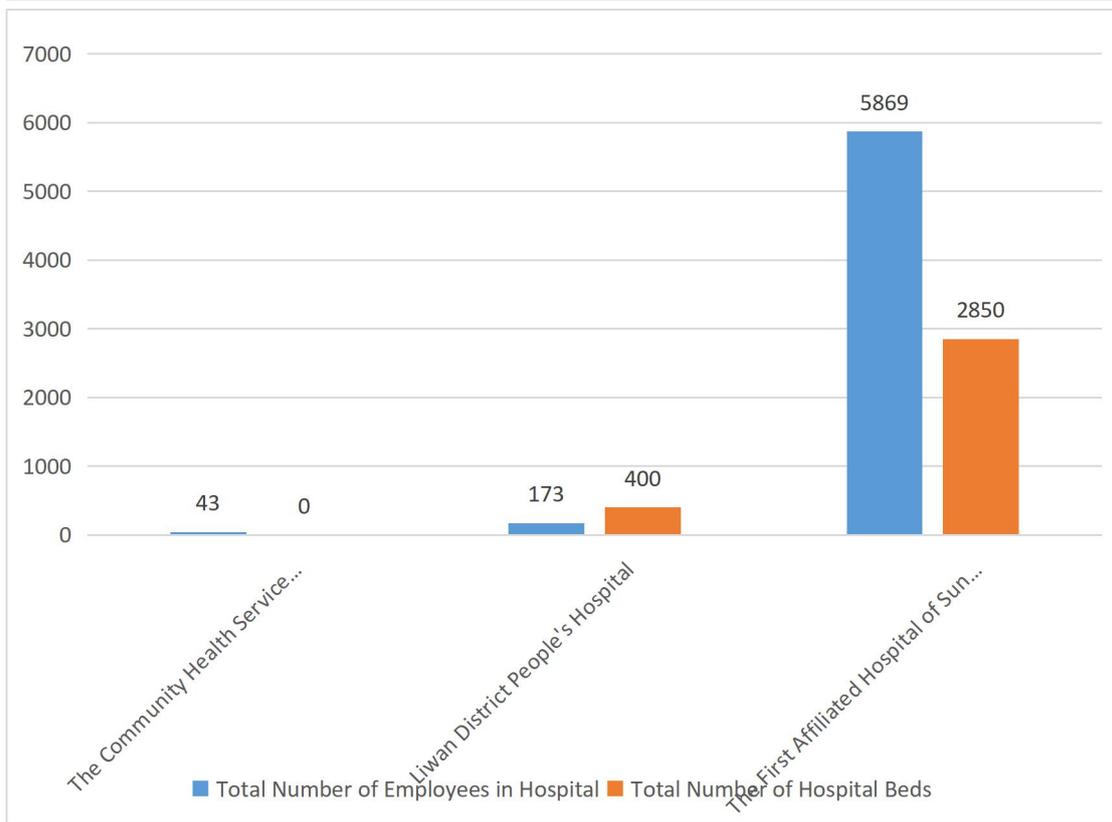
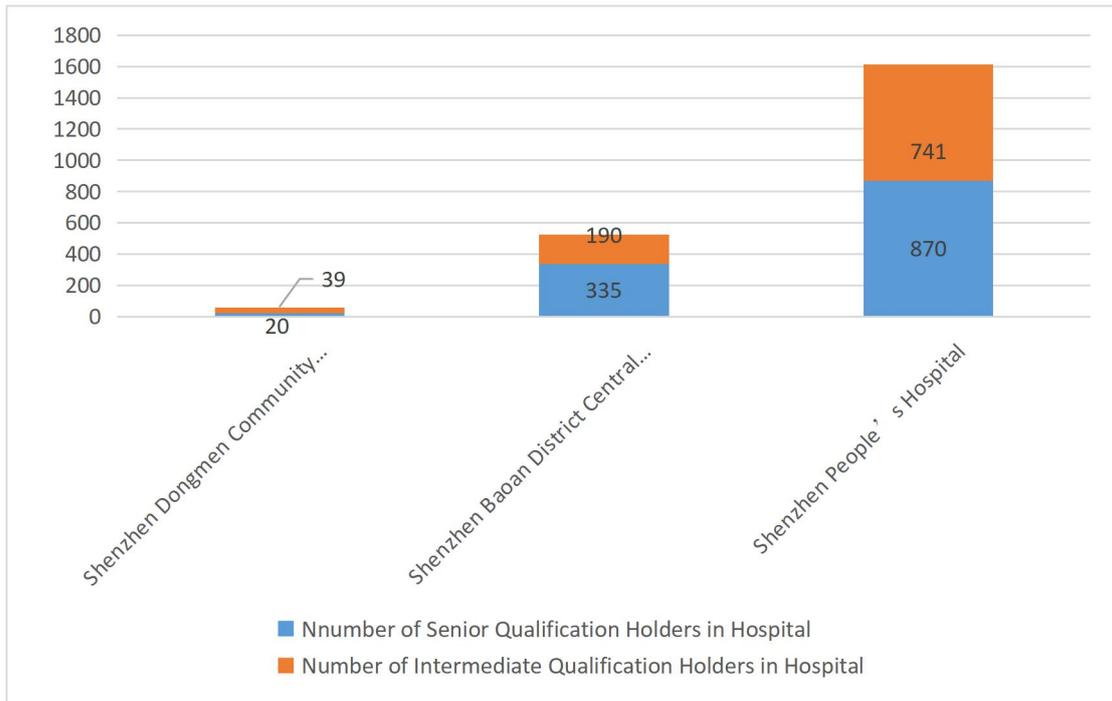
It was hard for us from a metropolis to adapt to the damp air in the small clinic where a lonely, all-round physician was busy with his local patients. After we arrived, the doctor had a brief conversation with us, serving each of us a cup of tea while receiving a patient at the same time. He was then like “Nezha”, a Chinese mythological figure with three heads and six arms famous for his versatility.

## **Main Body**

This interesting scene above happened in a health center of a small village when we traveled to Meizhou, a less-developed city in Guangdong. Attempting to understand the relationship between levels of economic development and medical conditions, our team went to investigate in a number of hospitals respectively in two economically developed cities—Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and two relatively underdeveloped cities—Qingyuan and Meizhou of Guangdong Province.

Then, we compared the medical conditions of these economically developed and underdeveloped cities. The data is shown in the chart below.





During our observation of hospitals in the underdeveloped areas, we also noticed that the different medical condition is caused by two crucial factors.

First, the environment and equipment in rural hospitals are much worse than those in city's hospital. Although the government help these hospitals making purchase of advanced medical equipment, the hospital need to pay the installation and maintenance cost on their own. However, the lower revenue makes the hospital can not afford these cost.

When we talk to an old doctor of Fengliang County Central Health Center in Meizhou, he said, "I always brings an umbrella during rainy days because of the ceiling leakage, and I usually prepares a fan made of local tree's leave when summer is coming because there are no AC available in this hospital."

In Xiatai Town Central Health Center in Qingyuan, the dean told us "Local government subsidized some advanced medical equipment like X-ray and B mode ultrasound to us, but we doesn't have enough money to install and maintain them."

Second, the hospital in underdeveloped area can not keep excellent doctors stay. And this is caused by the following reasons.

1. The salary doctors in rural hospitals get is much lower than that of doctors in city hospital. In underdeveloped area, such as Meizhou and Qingyuan, governments have limited financial resources and lack the support from national government. The limited financial resources limit their investment on local hospitals. And the low investment makes hospital can not give doctors high salary.

2. It is much difficult for doctor in rural hospital to obtain titles. Evaluating titles is associated with research papers. But in rural area, it is difficult to do scientific research. Besides, it is harder to apply for research topic from relevant institution.

The bad environment and the doctors with poor academic background make local residents don't want to get treatment in local hospitals. They go to advanced hospital in county or even go to city hospital though it cost a lot to them. The cost includes travel cost, accommodation cost, and time cost. This is one of the biggest problem in China: high expense and difficulty of getting medical treatment in underdeveloped area.

At Fengliang Town Central health center in Meizhou, we also met a young man holding his injured mother. "An sophisticated orthopedic surgeon who is good at treating the elderly fall injury once worked in this hospital but he has resigned. Because I can't trust the less skillful doctors here, I plan to take my mother to see the doctor at an orthopedic hospital in Guangzhou." he said.

Moreover, when we had an interview with a resident who lives in a small town located in Qingyuan City, he said that the only medical institution in that town was so under-developed that the facility used was outdated, that the nurses who worked there were not responsible, and that the hospital cannot treat serious diseases. He explained that, for instance, if you needed to do the X-ray, the apparatus even could not produce a clear picture; that for the reason that the nurses were irresponsible, few patients lived in the hospital; and that the hospital suggested to the patients who had a serious disease to move to big hospitals to accept treatment because the hospital in that town had no capacity to treat serious diseases. "What's more", he says, "although there were totally more than 10 doctors working in the hospital, only one or two of them

were skillful and the rest of the doctors always had nothing to do because they were not trusted by the patients.”

According to the causes of poor medical conditions in less-developed areas mentioned above, we hereby propose some solutions to high expense and difficulty in getting high-quality medical treatment in economically underdeveloped areas:

First, to solve cases like that of the old doctor in Meizhou, the government’s health departments should spend more money on infrastructure constructions of medical institutes in underdeveloped areas to provide better environment for local medical workers as well as their patients.

This will not only attracts people in towns, but also some credible experts as well, improving the reputation and a good surrounding desirable for many of them.

Second, the government ought to invest in Internet-based medical platforms.

The young man we met at Fengliang Town Central health center also told us: “ It will be much better if we can see an expert doctor here.” By using internet platforms, doctors in underdeveloped areas can consult medical experts in a high-quality hospital easily and their patients can get better prescriptions as soon as possible, thus saving the time cost of patients. If their diseases are serious, doctors can contact the high-quality hospitals and transfer the patients to these hospitals quickly.

Third, the government is supposed to reduce financial burden of rural hospitals.

A doctor in Xiatai Town Central Health Center said: “I hope the government to expand the scope of subsidies and cut the tax of our hospital because our revenue is too low.” If the government does so, rural hospitals will have more money to install

and maintain their medical equipment, and thus their patients can receive better treatment without going to distant, high-quality hospitals.

## **Conclusion**

In 1980s, China implemented the reform and opening-up policy and enriched first-tier cities include Guangzhou and Shenzhen, which means the central government gave strong support to the economic development of these cities.

Nowadays, they have sampled the best medical resources in China, having 10 national top 100 hospitals. They have long supported the development of medical schools and trained a large number of medical talents. Therefore, sufficient medical talents are evenly distributed in hospitals at all levels to meet medical needs of their citizens.

However, in less-developed cities like Meizhou and Qingyuan, governments have limited financial resources and lack support from the central government. Local governments give priority to investing in central hospitals, causing the situation that many rural hospitals don't have budgets to replace their dilapidated facilities, improve the hospital environments, and give their staff fair wages.

In addition, because of low attention paid to hospitals in less-developed regions, it is more difficult for doctors working there to obtain opportunities to secure senior titles. These factors have led to the loss of medical talents. Therefore, doctors who are in less developed hospitals are those with lower academic qualifications. When patients see a doctor with a low academic qualification, they will naturally distrust him/her and go to hospitals in developed cities regardless of high expense and time

cost serious illness. In contrast, patients in developed areas can access to high-quality medical resources just next to their houses.

In conclusion, there is a positive relationship between economic development levels and medical development levels.