Randomised trials relevant to people with schizophrenia: a survey of studies published in Chinese literature

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Background
Chinese evaluative studies are not widely disseminated in bibliographic databases commonly used in the rest of the world. Chinese Academic Journals (CAJ) indexes the contents of 140 Chinese biomedical journals and links to full text of most. It is possible to search this database using simple phrases.

Aim
To identify and survey all controlled trials in CAJ relevant to the care of people with schizophrenia. To compare English and Chinese methodological search phrases.

Search strategy
In May 2004 we searched the full CAJ with the text phrase: "(antipsychotic or antipsychotics or psychosis or psychotic or schizophrenic or schizophrenia or schizophrenics or tardive dyskinesia) in title or abstract".

Results: Part 1
This initial search suggests that, in recent years, there are about 150 RCTs per year relevant to schizophrenia from China. These are, on average larger than their ‘Western’ counterparts and evaluate treatments relevant to care of people with schizophrenia everywhere.

Results: Part 2

Limitations
• We do not know whether the contents of CAJ includes all schizophrenia trials from China.
• CAJ’s search engine is very limited and we probably have failed to identify many relevant studies.
• Because we are only using the title and abstract we may well have made several ‘false positive’ hits.

Conclusions
The number of RCTs relevant to schizophrenia from China is undoubtedly increasing at a considerable rate and these are large studies relevant to clinical practice in the ‘West’. It is important that these studies should be available in widely used bibliographic databases such as the Cochrane Library’s CENTRAL register of trials.