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Perspective

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A milestone in China's One Health governance: Shanghai launches Cross-Sector Committee to tackle triple threats

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As China's eastern megacities face intensifying ecological and biological challenges, Shanghai has quietly taken a step toward systemic One Health governance. On July 26 2025, the Shanghai Preventive Medicine Association launched the country's first government-backed One Health Expert Committee (OHEC) [1] — a permanent cross-sector body integrating human health, animal health, and ecosystem health. The initiative responds to triple escalating threats from zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, including emerging, re-emerging, and neglected tropical infections — antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and ecosystem and climate-linked health threats. The establishment of the OHEC is a necessary and timely response to Shanghai's ongoing One Health-related efforts, which include existing but fragmented surveillance systems for zoonotic diseases, AMR monitoring in healthcare settings, and environmental health assessments. Beyond these foundational systems, Shanghai has been cultivating a broader One Health ecosystem. This includes the development of One Health as an interdisciplinary field in leading academic institutions such as Fudan University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, which offer specialized courses and research programs. Additionally, regular academic exchanges like the annual Shanghai One Health Forum have provided a platform for sustained dialogue among scientists and practitioners[2–3]. However, these initiatives have historically operated in isolation, lacking a unified coordination mechanism to address the interconnected nature of these threats effectively.

"The Committee is not just a forum for dialogue. It is tasked with producing operational strategies, coordinating surveillance data, and translating scientific findings into actionable policy," said Xiaogang Feng, Vice President and Secretary-General of the Shanghai Preventive Medicine Association, which oversees the OHEC. The OHEC is embedded within Shanghai's broader preventive health infrastructure, and its remit extends across the Yangtze River Delta — home to more than 120 million people. The region has been identified as a hotspot for zoonotic emergence, environmental degradation, and climate-linked morbidity. Reliable national and regional data illustrate the stakes: Up to 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, highlighting the urgency of collaborative governance at the human-animal-environment interface[4]. Meanwhile, to address the persistently severe challenge of AMR, the Chinese government launched the National Action Plan to Contain Antimicrobial Resistance (2022-2025) in 2022, aiming to establish a comprehensive national governance system and reduce the resistance rates of major pathogens[5].

"The OHEC represents a systemic shift from reactive disease control to proactive risk governance," said Prof. Zhijie Zhang, OHEC Chair and epidemiologist at Fudan University. "By institutionalizing collaboration between historically siloed sectors, we aim to close critical gaps in surveillance and policy response."

1. Governance structure

The OHEC operates under the Shanghai Preventive Medicine Association. Its 23-member council includes representatives from public health institutions such as the Shanghai CDC and Fudan University School of Public Health, animal health organizations including the Shanghai Animal Disease Control Center, and

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environmental science bodies such as East China Normal University Climate Research. This diverse membership ensures a comprehensive approach to One Health challenges.

2. Three pillars of action

The Committee's inaugural work plan focuses on three interlinked domains.

The first pillar, integrated risk surveillance, aims to break traditional disciplinary barriers by building a three-dimensional knowledge structure across human medicine, veterinary science, and environmental health. Centered in Shanghai and extending across the Yangtze River Delta, the Committee is forming an expert intelligence matrix to drive innovative laboratory networks and research centers, with the long-term goal of launching an academic journal and a knowledge-to-practice translation platform.

The second pillar, talent development, leverages both domestic and international resources to host conferences, symposia, and specialized workshops while providing structured training in One Health theory and applied skills. Its Cross-Boundary Scholars Program aims to cultivate professionals with international vision and practical, field-ready capabilities, thereby preparing a new generation of leaders capable of addressing the complex interplay between zoonoses, AMR, and climate change.

The third pillar, policy translation, builds on the expertise of its 23 members to integrate medical, animal disease, and environmental surveillance data for the development of the Shanghai One Health Early Warning Platform. Priority efforts include pathogen spillover risk modeling and eco-evolutionary forecasting, which translate research outputs into sentinel surveillance points and actionable policy tools for real-world public health protection.

3. Governance prototype, regional initiative, and global relevance

The OHEC model reflects an emerging trend in China's health governance: A shift from siloed sectoral management to systemic risk frameworks. Notably, it features explicit institutional anchoring, rather than relying on project-based cooperation, Shanghai is pioneering sustained, rule-based coordination through this approach. The Committee's work aligns with the Healthy China 2030 blueprint and complements national disease prevention reforms advanced in the post-COVID era[6]. While drawing conceptual inspiration from the WHO's Tripartite Zoonoses Guide[7], for the model incorporates adaptations for urbanized, densely populated regions.

"Many international One Health initiatives still struggle with implementation," noted Professor Zhang. "We aim to learn from those experiences, while adapting to local governance dynamics and resource constraints." Though initially focused on eastern China, the OHEC's integrative approach has garnered quiet attention from other municipalities and research centers. Its emphasis on digital surveillance, talent pipelines, and formal coordination offers a potential model for other Asian megacities. With climate-linked health events rising and global concern over AMR intensifying, Shanghai's OHEC may emerge as one of China's most significant post-pandemic policy experiments in public health.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors claim there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contributions

Xiong CL collected the information, conducted interviews, conceptualized the report structure, drafted the initial manuscript, and integrated feedback. Zhang ZJ verified facts and data, provided critical insights on policy interpretation and contextual framing, reviewed the manuscript, and contributed to its finalization. Both authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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