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# Take Health Index as a Baseline to Promote the Prevention and Control of Gastrointestinal Diseases

*Takeda*

## Abstract

In recent years, a high incidence of cancers and other diseases related to the digestive system has been observed in China, greatly impacting population health and quality of life, and caused great mortality and economic burdens. Compared with other major therapeutic areas, such as cardiovascular diseases, the foundation of prevention and control of digestive system diseases in China is relatively weak, with low rate of early detection and diagnosis, poor public awareness of prevention and control, and insufficient capacity in primary care. In addition, the lack of a scientific and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system has further inhibited the ability to fully capture and assess both digestive health status and disease prevention and control level of the population at regional and national levels.

As a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tool, index has been gradually applied to monitor and evaluate health outcomes and disease prevention and control strategies in recent years. By selecting and assigning weights to various relevant indicators, the health index can generate a value that describes a whole set of indicators. This index serves as a direct and comprehensive reflection of the health and disease situation, and can more accurately address the concerns of the government, medical and public health institutions, and other relevant parties. In the meantime, the health index creates possibilities of making cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons in the geographical and temporal dimensions for monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, an evidence-based health index is able to support the government to provide stratified and classified guidance, long-term tracing and continuous improvement in the prevention and treatment of digestive diseases.

Based on the experience of developing and applying health indices at home and abroad, and taking into account the foundation of prevention and control of digestive system diseases in China, this report suggests establishing a digestive health index for common digestive system diseases in China, under the guidance of relevant government departments. The report also suggests using the evaluation results of the index to promote its top-down application along with administrative support, to better guide the disease prevention and control, at both national and regional levels. Specific suggestions include:

1. **Digestive health index development based on comprehensively selected multi-dimensional indicators.** Draw on the experience of health indices in other therapeutic areas and select indicators of different dimensions in a comprehensive manner to form a measurable and traceable digestive health index.
2. **Scientific assessment of the prevention and control outcomes through leveraging health index.** Promote the index top-down through joint efforts from the National Health Commission of the PRC, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Healthcare Security Administration. Use the index to monitor and evaluate the digestive health status at the national and regional levels, and improve the data support mechanism to continuously optimize the index.
3. **Reasonable allocation of disease prevention and control resources with specific diseases as the focus.** Select several digestive system diseases with significant impact based on the index evaluation results as the core areas of prevention and control, and improve the efficiency of resource utilization in disease prevention and control.

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- 4. Pilots projects of disease prevention and control in take key selected regions.** With the establishment of integrated prevention and control regions for chronic diseases, select regions with high incidence of digestive system diseases or areas with relatively insufficient prevention and control measures to carry out pilot projects, and accumulate practical experience for progressive rollouts.