Effect of public hospital managers' risk and gain perception on their attitude towards physician dual practice: a cross-national study in 31 provinces of China

CURRENT STATUS: UNDER REVIEW

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DOI: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-17863/v1

SUBJECT AREAS
Health Policy Health Economics & Outcomes Research

KEYWORDS
Physician dual practice, Determinants, Public Hospital, China
Abstract

Background

This study aims to explore the effect of public hospital managers' risk and gain perception on their attitude towards physician dual practice (PDP).

Methods

A cross-sectional study enrolling 1513 managers from East, Middle and West of China in public hospitals was conducted. Generalized linear mixed models (GLMM) were used to find the determinants of managers' support for PDP.

Results

The rate of managers support for allowing PDP or implementing PDP with restriction was 94.3% (95%CI: 0.93, 0.95). The mean score of managers' risk perception was 67.7±14.46 and the mean score of managers' gain perception was 24.0±5.56. After controlling for individual and institutional characteristics, GLMM presented the score of risk perception increased 1 point, the rate of managers' support for PDP decreased 5% (OR=0.95, 95%CI: 0.93, 0.97); the score of gain perception increased 1 points, the rate of managers' support increased 18% (OR=1.18, 95%CI: 1.12, 1.24).

Conclusions

The majority of Chinese public hospital managers are in favor of allowing or implementing PDP with restrictions. While managers in public hospitals have stronger risk consciousness. Although gain perception is comparatively weaker than risk perception, but they are much influential in determining public hospital managers’ support for PDP.

Background

Governments all over the world are struggling to attract and retain health workers in underserved regions. In contrast to the population health care needs, the supply of health care services always in shortage, which is a common characteristic for both developed and developing countries[1, 2]. The shortage of health care workers, especially physicians, reduces the access to health care services and further limits health care provision. Indeed, density of health care workers has been shown to be negatively associated with maternal mortality, infant mortality and under-five mortality[3]. Hence, the
medical human resources are of vital important to “universal health coverage”. According to 15 of the world 's top medical experts' common opinions of health policy makers from 24 countries and, World Health Organization (WHO) pointed out that Physician dual practice (PDP) ranks the second in global healthcare human resources research events [4]. PDP is referred to as a combination of public and private clinical practice by physicians. In most of the economic literature, PDP is understood as a situation where a physician combines clinical practice in the public sector with a clinical practice in the private sector [5–7]. PDP certainly allows physicians to increase their income and professional satisfaction [8], provides more access to health care services for the patients [9–11], and is believed beneficial in reducing the financial burden on governments to retain high quality physicians in the public sector[10, 12]. However, further exploration and confirmation are needed as the context may change from country to country[7].

China initiated New Health Care Reform with aims of achieving accessible and affordable health care service for the population in full coverage, that mainly consists of “Enhancing Public Hospital Reform” and “Encouraging Private Hospital Establishment”. Since PDP is essential to bridge the gap between Public Hospitals and Private Hospitals. it's gradually taken into consideration by China government as an effective measurement [13]. Policies and regulations on PDP are undergoing changes in China (Fig. 1). At the early stage, the government merely allowed “Out for Consultation”. In 2009, PDP was first tried in capital cities of several pilot provinces, with requirement on practice sites number no more than 3. Then, in 2011 PDP was expanded to the whole nation, but physicians involved need documentary approval from their employer, normally the public hospital. It was not until 2014, when five central ministries and commissions, including National Health Commission, co-released a “dividing crest” policy, finally entitled physicians with greater autonomy by canceling restrictions on practice sites number and replacing “documentary approval” with “recording”. Since 2016, the government upheld a series of policies that encouraged physicians to work for underserved areas, with the aim to promote rational mobility of medical human resource vertically and laterally. In 2017, PDP On-line Registration System was developed, achieving “One-place registration, valid for the whole region”. In 2018, physicians practicing within “Medical Association” were exempt from PDP
registration. In 2019, the government streamlined application procedures for clinic to provide more access for PDP. In such a favorable policy background, however, the phenomenon of PDP didn't enter into a booming stage as expected[14]. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of the public hospital for PDP left much to be desired, with extremely-low PDP registrations from the public hospital.

There have been hot debates on how PDP would affect performance of the public sector [8]. Involvement in PDP implies physicians could practice concurrently in both the public and private sectors[4], and greatly challenges the traditional running system of public hospital, including human resource management, medical risk management, salary administration, invention and innovation ownership management. According to a survey co-launched by Mckinsey and DXY on 35,500 China physicians in 2018, 50% non dual practitioners said the reason lay in public hospitals’ reluctant attitudes towards PDP[15]. This result was in accordance with another previous nationwide survey, revealing 71.6% investigated physicians replied the extreme resistance was from public hospitals[16]. China’s PDP policy was designed in a top-down approach with emphasis on government’s role and administrative intervention. Therefore, it is essential to explore PDP practices in an Eastern culture such as in China, and necessary to carry out contextualized studies in the Chinese mixed health care market context. Concerns about quality control and legal responsibilities for physicians are found widespread in China[4] [17]. This paper draws from survey data collected in the East, Middle and West of China, aims to explore determinants of public hospital managers' support for PDP from the risk and gain perspectives, and tries to share China's experience with other countries confronting with the common predicament of inadequate health care provision and imbalance medical resources allocation.

Methods
Data source
From January to October in 2019, we conducted a hospital-based survey with coverage of 31 provinces in East, Middle and West of China. Managers of public hospitals who signed the informed consents were included. This study used the convenient sampling method, and selected series of meetings, conferences, training sessions organized by the National Health Commission for public
hospital managers as the main participants for the field survey, including: China Modern Hospital Management Seminars, National Tertiary Public Hospital Performance Evaluation Training Courses, Conference of Experience Exchange on China’s Medical Reform, Conference of Experience Exchange on Hospital Discipline Development in China and so on. Presidents, vice-presidents in charge of clinical and medical affairs, and directors of medical affairs department in China public hospitals were enrolled in this investigation, and totally 1513 effective questionnaires were collected.

Study variables and outcome variables
The risk and gain perception of managers was assessed based on the information provided by questionnaire that was showed in supply 1. The Cronbach α for the questionnaire was more than 0.8 and regarded as satisfactory of internal consistency of instruments [18], confirmatory factor analysis validated the questionnaire (P < 0.05)[19]. Managers were asked to self-evaluate their risk perception by answering 20 questions (Section B) and gain perception by answering 8 questions (Section C) using a 5-step Likert scale. The answers were reported as: totally disagree (1 score), less agree (2 score), ordinary (3 score), more agree (4 score) or totally agree (5 score). The outcome variables was managers' support for physician dual practice (the first question in Section E). It's a category variable and grouped as completely prohibited, allowing with restrictions and completely allowing. In this study, we divided it into binary variables (0 = completely prohibited; 1 = permission) for the convenience of explaining the managers' support for PDP.

Quality control
In order to ensure the results of the survey to be accurate and reliable, we select investigators with major in statistics and experience of field research. The final investigation team members mainly consist of postgraduates from the Wenzhou Medical University. Prior to the formal survey, investigators were trained in accordance with a unified training plan and teaching materials. The training content includes: the main purpose, content, related terminology of this article, and the required research time; the questionnaire filling method and unified guidance for each item; questions, answers and explanations that may be received at the scene. Ensure that all investigators were familiar with the purpose and significance of this survey, the meaning of the indicators and the
main content of the questionnaire before the field survey. Each investigator undergone a rigorous
simulate training process before participating in the formal survey. Regular double check-up was
established and conducted during the whole investigation.
Statistical analysis
In this study, all records had been checked for missing data and outliers and cleaned prior to data
analysis. The score of risk perception and gain perception were described with means and standard
deviations with categorical variables including: sex, age, education, major, length of service, level of
managers' position, institutional category, institutional level, institutional territory and location, which
were ultimately summarized as percentages. The rates of managers' support for PDP were compared
by Chi-squared test for selected determinants. Generalized linear mixed models (GLMM) including
fixed and random effects were used in this study to find the determinants of managers' support for
PDP when controlling for other confounding factors. The scores of risk and gain perception were
specified as fixed effects, managers' work place as a random effect; managers' sex, age, education,
major, length of service, level of managers' position, institutional category, institutional level,
institutional territory and location included as covariates. There would be three models in the results
to explore the determinants: Three GLMMs were established and odds ratio (OR) together with 95%
confidence intervals (CIs) was estimated for each determinant on managers' support. Model 1
included the demographical determinants of managers' sex, age, education. Model 2 included
determinants in model 1 plus managers' major, length of service, level of managers' position. Model 3
included determinants in model 1 and model 2 plus work environment determinants including
managers' institutional category, institutional level, institutional territory and location. All analyses
were used STATA statistical software version 12.0 (StataCorp LP, College station 77845, USA). A two-
tailed P value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.
Results
Basic characteristics of managers in the public hospital
The basic characteristics of managers participated from public hospitals were presented in Table 2.
There were 893 male managers and 623 female managers. About 57.44% of them majored in clinical
medicine, including Surgery, Internal Medicine, Paedics, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology,
Otorhinolaryngology, Dermatology, Orthopaedics, Psychiatry, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and General Practice. Approximately 77% of them were less than 50 years old and 51.51% of them works more than 6 years. Most of the managers position were less than county level (77.86%) with education higher than bachelor (95.77%). Among the participated managers, 37.91% from the East of China, 29.69% from the Middle of China, and 32.41% from the West of China. 94.74% of them worked in public tertiary hospital, which was the largest potential source and supplier for PDP.

| Variables                  | Description                                                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demographic characteristics|                                                                             |
| Sex                        | 0: male; 1: female                                                          |
| Age (years)                | 1: aged less than 40 years old; 2: aged between 41 years old and 50 years old; 3: more than 51 years old |
| Education                  | 1: PhD; 2: Master; 3: Bachelor; 4: Others                                   |
| Work characteristics       |                                                                             |
| Major                      | 0: other majors (including administration, technology, economics, management, et al); 1: medicine |
| Length of service (years)  | 1: works less than 5 years; 2: works between 6 years and 10 years; 3: more than 11 years |
| Level of manager’s position| 0: manager’s position is less than deputy division; 1: manager’s position is more than county level (including province level, city level, county level) |
| Working environment characteristics |                                                   |
| Institutional category     | 0: means special hospital, Chinese medicine hospital and others; 1:means general hospital |
| Institutional level         | 0: means primary level and second level; 1:means tertiary level             |
| Institutional territory     | 1: east of China; 2:middle of China; 3: west of China                       |
| Location                   | 0: means manager coming from provincial capital city; 1:means manager coming from non-provincial capital city |
Table 2
Basic characteristics of managers (n = 1513)

| Variables                          | n  | %       |
|-----------------------------------|----|---------|
| **Demographic characteristics**   |    |         |
| Sex                               |    |         |
| Male                              | 893| 59.02   |
| Female                            | 620| 40.98   |
| Age (years)                       |    |         |
| ≤ 40                              | 452| 29.87   |
| 41–50                             | 713| 47.13   |
| ≥ 51                              | 348| 23.00   |
| **Education**                     |    |         |
| PhD                               | 72 | 4.76    |
| Master                            | 398| 26.31   |
| Bachelor                          | 979| 64.71   |
| Others                            | 64 | 4.23    |
| **Work characteristics**          |    |         |
| Major                             | 644| 42.56   |
| Others                            | 869| 57.44   |
| **Length of service (years)**     |    |         |
| ≤ 5                               | 628| 48.49   |
| 6–10                              | 338| 26.10   |
| ≥ 11                              | 329| 25.41   |
| **Level of manager’s position**   |    |         |
| ≤ Deputy division                 | 1178| 77.86  |
| ≥ Country level                   | 335| 22.14   |
| **Working environment characteristics** |  |         |
| **Institutional category**        |    |         |
| Others                            | 537| 34.49   |
| General hospital                  | 976| 64.51   |
| **Institutional level**           |    |         |
| < tertiary level                  | 72 | 5.26    |
| tertiary level                    | 1,298| 94.74  |
| **Institutional territory**       |    |         |
| East                              | 572| 37.91   |
| Middle                            | 448| 29.69   |
| West                              | 489| 32.41   |
| **Location**                      |    |         |
| Provincial capital city           | 525| 34.70   |
| Non-provincial capital city       | 988| 65.30   |

Distribution of different perception of managers' support for physician dual practice

The mean score of managers' risk perception was 67.7 ± 14.46 and showed different among managers' sex, age, major, length of service, institutions category, institutional level and location of managers' hospital (P < 0.05). The mean score of risk perception for female managers was 68.8 ± 13.49, which was higher than male managers (66.9 ± 15.05). With the increasing of age, the mean score of risk perception increased, managers aged 51 years old owed the highest score of risk perception (68.7 ± 15.30). Managers from major other than clinical (69.6 ± 13.46) and those with longer length of service (6-10 years: 67.4 ± 15.18; ≥ 11 years: 67.8 ± 15.50) held higher risk perception.

In contrast, the mean score of managers' gain perception was barely 24.0 ± 5.56, correlated with
managers’ age, length of service and institutional level (P < 0.05). Score of managers’ gain perception showed highest in managers aged less than 40 years old (24.5 ± 4.96). Managers with length of service of 6-10 years held higher score of gain perception than those less than 5 years and more than 11 years. What’s worthy pointing out was that, managers in tertiary hospitals had a higher risk perception (68.6 ± 14.24, P < 0.001) but lower gain perception (23.8 ± 5.51, P = 0.003) than managers from the other public hospitals. (Showed in Table 3)
Table 3

Descriptive of total score of different perception of managers’ support for physician dual practice

| Variables                          | Risk perception |          |          | Gain perception |          |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|
|                                   | Mean            | Std.Dev  | P        | Mean            | Std.Dev  |
| Demographic characteristics       |                 |          |          |                 |          |
| Sex                               |                 |          |          |                 |          |
| Male                              | 66.9            | 15.05    | 0.006    | 24.1            | 5.66     |
| Female                            | 68.8            | 13.49    |          | 23.9            | 5.42     |
| Age (years)                       |                 |          |          |                 |          |
| ≤ 40                              | 33.8            | 13.13    |          | 24.5            | 4.96     |
| 41-50                             | 67.8            | 14.83    |          | 23.9            | 5.68     |
| ≥ 51                              | 68.7            | 15.30    |          | 23.6            | 6.03     |
| Education                         |                 |          |          |                 |          |
| PhD                               | 66.2            | 15.40    |          | 24.7            | 5.75     |
| Master                            | 66.7            | 13.40    |          | 24.0            | 5.27     |
| Bachelor                          | 68.0            | 14.80    |          | 24.0            | 5.68     |
| Others                            | 71.3            | 13.50    |          | 23.5            | 5.30     |
| Work characteristics              |                 |          |          |                 |          |
| Major                             |                 |          | < 0.001  |                 | 0.058    |
| Others                            | 69.6            | 13.46    |          | 23.7            | 5.32     |
| Medicine                          | 66.3            | 15.01    |          | 24.2            | 5.73     |
| Length of service (years)         |                 |          | 0.032    |                 | 0.029    |
| ≤ 5                               | 67.3            | 13.85    |          | 23.9            | 5.34     |
| 6-10                              | 67.4            | 15.18    |          | 24.3            | 5.57     |
| ≥ 11                              | 67.8            | 15.50    |          | 23.7            | 6.06     |
| Level of manager’s position       |                 |          | 0.433    |                 | 0.362    |
| ≤ Deputy division                 | 67.7            | 14.36    |          | 24.0            | 5.42     |
| ≥ County level                    | 67.8            | 14.80    |          | 23.9            | 6.05     |
| Working environment characteristics|                 |          |          |                 |          |
| Institutional category            |                 |          | 0.007    |                 | 0.157    |
| Others                            | 68.9            | 13.53    |          | 23.8            | 5.63     |
| General hospital                  | 67.0            | 14.90    |          | 24.1            | 5.52     |
| Institutional level               |                 |          | < 0.001  |                 | 0.003    |
| < tertiary level                  | 59.4            | 15.66    |          | 25.7            | 6.39     |
| tertiary level                    | 68.6            | 14.24    |          | 23.8            | 5.51     |
| Institutional territory           |                 |          | 0.322    |                 | 0.896    |
| East                              | 66.3            | 14.10    |          | 24.0            | 5.55     |
| Middle                            | 70.0            | 14.10    |          | 23.5            | 5.48     |
| West                              | 67.3            | 14.9     |          | 24.4            | 5.60     |
| Location                          |                 |          | 0.004    |                 | 0.076    |
| Provincial capital city           | 66.4            | 14.78    |          | 24.3            | 5.69     |
| Non-provincial capital city       | 68.4            | 14.24    |          | 23.8            | 5.49     |

Distribution of basic characteristics of managers among the rate of support for physician dual practice

The rate of managers' support for allowing PDP and implementing PDP with restrictions in this study was 94.3% (95%CI: 0.93, 0.95). As displayed in Table 4, the rate of managers' support for PDP showed different among age, stage and institutional territory (P < 0.05), while managers' sex, education,
major, length of service, level of managers' position, institutional category, level and location
distributed the same among different rate of the managers' support for PDP (P > 0.05). Managers
aged 41–50 years old had the highest rate of support for PDP, it was 46.60% ($\chi^2 = 11.27$, $P = 0.004$). Managers in the East of China had the highest support for PDP, it was 38.39%, compared to that in
the Middle of China (28.98%) and in the West of China (32.63%) ($\chi^2 = 6.26$, $P = 0.044$).
Table 4
Distribution of basic characteristic of managers among the rate of support for physician dual practice

| Variables                        | No n | %   | Yes n | %   | \( \chi^2 \) | \( P \) |
|----------------------------------|------|-----|-------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Demographic characteristics      |      |     |       |     |              |       |
| Sex                              |      |     |       |     |              |       |
| Male                             | 54   | 62.79 | 839   | 58.79 | 0.54         | 0.464 |
| Female                           | 32   | 37.21 | 588   | 41.21 |              |       |
| Age (years)                      |      |     |       |     |              |       |
| \( \leq 40 \)                    | 12   | 13.95 | 440   | 30.83 | 11.27        | 0.004 |
| 41-50                            | 48   | 55.81 | 665   | 46.60 |              |       |
| \( \geq 51 \)                    | 26   | 30.23 | 322   | 22.56 |              |       |
| Education                        |      |     |       |     | 1.26         | 0.738 |
| PhD                              | 4    | 4.65  | 68    | 4.77  |              |       |
| Master                           | 19   | 22.09 | 379   | 26.56 |              |       |
| Bachelor                         | 58   | 67.44 | 921   | 64.51 |              |       |
| Others                           | 5    | 5.81  | 59    | 4.13  |              |       |
| Work characteristics             |      |     |       |     |              |       |
| Major                            |      |     |       |     | 1.58         | 0.208 |
| Others                           | 31   | 36.05 | 613   | 42.96 |              |       |
| Medicine                         | 55   | 63.95 | 814   | 57.04 |              |       |
| Length of service (years)        |      |     |       |     | 1.42         | 0.492 |
| \( \leq 5 \)                     | 31   | 44.29 | 597   | 48.73 |              |       |
| 6-10                             | 17   | 24.29 | 321   | 26.20 |              |       |
| \( \geq 11 \)                    | 22   | 31.43 | 307   | 25.06 |              |       |
| Level of manager’s position      |      |     |       |     | 0.626        | 0.429 |
| \( \leq \) Deputy division       | 64   | 74.42 | 1114  | 78.07 |              |       |
| \( \geq \) Country level         | 22   | 25.58 | 313   | 21.93 |              |       |
| Working environment characteristics |    |     |       |     | 0.669        | 0.414 |
| Institutional category           |      |     |       |     |              |       |
| Others                           | 27   | 31.40 | 510   | 35.74 |              |       |
| General hospital                 | 59   | 68.60 | 917   | 64.26 |              |       |
| Institutional level              |      |     |       |     | 0.02         | 0.895 |
| < tertiary level                 | 4    | 4.94  | 68    | 5.28  |              |       |
| tertiary level                   | 77   | 95.06 | 1221  | 94.72 |              |       |
| Institutional territory          |      |     |       |     | 6.26         | 0.044 |
| East                             | 25   | 29.76 | 547   | 38.39 |              |       |
| Middle                           | 35   | 41.67 | 413   | 28.98 |              |       |
| West                             | 24   | 28.57 | 465   | 32.63 |              |       |
| Location                         |      |     |       |     | 0.18         | 0.668 |
| Provincial capital city          | 28   | 32.56 | 497   | 34.83 |              |       |
| Non-provincial capital city      | 58   | 67.44 | 930   | 65.17 |              |       |

Determinants of managers’ support for physician dual practice

Table 5 showed the multivariate analysis of the determinants of managers’ support for PDP by
generalized linear mixed model. According to model 1, there were significant strong correlations
between the total score of risk perception, gain perception, age and the rate of managers' support for
PDP. By controlling demographic characteristics in the model 1, when the score of risk perception increased 1 point, the rate of managers' support for PDP would decrease 6% (OR = 0.94, 95%CI: 0.92, 0.96). By controlling work characteristics and working environment characteristics, the results in model 2 and model 3 were still statistically significant (P < 0.001). Based on results in model 1, when the score of gain perception increased 1 points, the rate of managers' support for PDP would increase 17% (OR = 1.17, 95%CI: 1.12, 1.23), the results in model 3 were still statistically significant (P < 0.001) after controlling work characteristics and working environment characteristics. Therefore, we could come to a conclusion that risk perception was correlated negatively with managers' support for PDP, but gain perception was positively correlated with managers' support for PDP.

Table 5
Multivariate analysis of determinants of managers’ support for physician dual practice by generalised linear mixed model (n = 1513)

| Variable                          | Model 1          |            |            | Model 2          |            |            | Model 3          |            |            |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------|
|                                  | OR   | 95%CI Lower | P   | OR   | 95%CI Lower | P   | OR   | 95%CI Lower | P   |
| Risk perception                  | 0.94 | 0.92        | 0.96 | < 0.001 | 0.94 | 0.92        | 0.96 | < 0.001 | 0.95 | 0.93        | 0.97 | < 0.001 |
| Gain perception                  | 1.17 | 1.12        | 1.23 | < 0.001 | 1.18 | 1.12        | 1.23 | < 0.001 | 1.18 | 1.12        | 1.24 | < 0.001 |
| Demographic characteristics      |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Sex                              |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Male                             | 1.00 |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Female                           | 1.40 | 0.85        | 2.32 | 0.187   | 1.59 | 0.88        | 2.86 | 0.122   | 1.69 | 0.91        | 3.15 | 0.098   |
| Age (years)                      |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| ≤ 40                             | 1.00 |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| 41–50                            | 0.48 | 0.24        | 0.96 | 0.038   | 0.41 | 0.17        | 0.97 | 0.042   | 0.44 | 0.18        | 1.09 | 0.076   |
| ≥ 51                             | 0.47 | 0.22        | 1.01 | 0.052   | 0.42 | 0.16        | 1.11 | 0.081   | 0.42 | 0.15        | 1.17 | 0.098   |
| Education                        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| PhD                              | 1.00 |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Master                           | 0.83 | 0.24        | 2.86 | 0.769   | 1.26 | 0.34        | 4.64 | 0.726   | 1.70 | 0.44        | 6.56 | 0.444   |
| Bachelor                        | 0.83 | 0.26        | 2.65 | 0.757   | 1.17 | 0.35        | 3.95 | 0.801   | 1.33 | 0.37        | 4.78 | 0.659   |
| Others                           | 0.78 | 0.17        | 3.53 | 0.748   | 1.39 | 0.23        | 8.33 | 0.721   | 1.65 | 0.25        | 10.83 | 0.602  |
| Work characteristics            |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Major                            |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Others                           | 1.00 |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Medicine                        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Length of service (years)        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| ≤ 5                              |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| 6–10                             |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| ≥ 11                             |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |
| Level of manager’s position      |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |      |            |      |        |


|                  | 1.00 | 0.88 | 3.39 | 0.115 | 1.58 | 0.78 | 3.21 | 0.207 |
|------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
| Deputy division  |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |       |
| County level     | 1.72 | 0.88 | 3.39 | 0.115 | 1.58 | 0.78 | 3.21 | 0.207 |

**Working environment characteristics**
- Institutional category
  - Others: 1.00
  - General hospital: 0.87, 0.47, 1.59, 0.647
  - Institutional level
    - < tertiary level: 1.00
    - tertiary level: 1.32, 0.31, 5.67, 0.705
- Institutional territory
  - East: 1.00
  - Middle: 0.65, 0.26, 1.63, 0.357
  - West: 0.69, 0.26, 1.79, 0.440
- Location
  - Provincial capital city: 1.00
  - Non-provincial capital city: 1.12, 0.57, 2.20, 0.733

Model 1 included the demographical determinants of managers' sex, age, education. Model 2 included determinants in model 1 plus managers' major, length of service, level of managers' position. Model 3 included determinants in model 1 and model 2 plus work environment determinants including managers' institutional category, institutional level, institutional territory and location.

Besides, managers' age was significantly correlated with managers' support for PDP in model 1. Compared with managers aged less than 40 years old, the rate of managers' support decreased 52% for those aged 41–50 years old (OR = 0.48, 95%CI: 0.24, 0.96); by controlling demographic characteristics and work characteristics in model 2, the rate of managers' support decrease to 59% for those aged 41–50 years old (OR = 0.41, 95%CI: 0.17, 0.97). In model 3, controlling for the demographic characteristics, work characteristics and working environment characteristics, there was no significant result between managers’ age and support for PDP.

**Discussion**

In this study, we found the rate of managers' support for PDP in China is 94.3%, including allowing with restrictions and completely allowing, consistent with the policy introduced after 2009[20].

According to previous literature reviews, PDP had direct implications for access, equity, price and quality of the whole nation’s health care service [21], and thus benefit the whole coverage of
universal health. We found most public hospital managers in China agreed with its contribution for improving the health care service access[22], indicating that the “top-down designed” Medical Association works in bringing benefits to underserved areas by PDP, which usually binding profits and responsibilities of one tertiary large hospital with the other type medical institutions within the same region mainly in four types: urban medical group, county medical community, cross-regional specialized alliance, telemedicine collaboration network.

Judging from the results of our study, except for age and region, there were not any basic characteristics that would bring difference to the managers’ support for PDP. Managers aged 41-50 years old (46.60%) had the highest rate of support for PDP, compared to those at other age stages. Actually, in today’s China, managers taking the high-level positions in the public health care system, such as chief party secretary, deputy party secretary, presidents, vice presidents, normally would be those above 50 years old. Therefore, we could expect PDP embracing an easier working environment in the coming next decade, with the glowing of today’s middle-level managers. It's of no surprise that we found managers in the East of China (38.39%) held the highest supportive rate for PDP, followed by that from the West of China (32.63%), while such rate among managers in the Middle of China showed the lowest (28.98%). The reason may be well explained by the economic and social development gap between East and the rest of China. According to China’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (PPP) 2019[23], 8 eastern provinces were list among TOP 10 with PPP recorded at $16728, much higher than the nation’s average PPP of $10365, and above the threshold of $12736 defined by World Bank for high-income countries, where the public employers in general have better tolerance towards staff mobility. Owing to the nation’s West Development Strategy launched in 2000, GDP in the West of China showed the rapidest growth at most time of the past 19 years with growth rate at 7.4% in 2019. And we have the reason to expect the nation’s Yangtze River Economic Belt Strategy, combining major regions in the East, Middle and West of China, also has unique advantages and comprehensive strengths in promoting PDP.

As to the determinants, we found risk perception and gain perception were correlated significantly with managers' support for PDP. Risk perception has been noticed as an intuitive and emotional
construct closely related to human’s cognition and behavior[24-26]. In this study, it has been noticed varied among managers of different sex, age, major, length of service, institutions category, institutional level and location. And female managers possessed higher risk perception than male managers, in accordance with most conclusions of previous related researches [5]. It’s interesting that risk perception would be strengthened by age, and managers aged 51 years old held the most severe risk awareness. Since normally the age of 50 years would be a “breaking point in career life” for managers working in public hospitals. In addition, managers with longer length of service displayed higher risk perception. Probably the reason lay in that, the more accountable and responsible for the public hospital, the harder for managers to accept PDP. And managers majored in non-clinical medicine processed higher risk perception than their counter party. In China, it’s common to notice that public hospital managers, are usually selected from those with background of clinical medicine, who have more opportunities to find advantages of PDP during their career life which probably in turn depress their risk awareness.

The public hospital managers’ gain perception were much lower than their risk perception, especially among those of tertiary hospitals, which was correlated with managers’ age, length of service and institutional level. The finding indicated that managers in public hospitals possessed extremely low gain perception, regardless of the hospital location and institutional territory, since PDP does bring great challenges for the public hospitals’ whole running system and normal daily administration. In addition, we found the managers' support for PDP would increase when gain perception enhanced or risk perception controlled. More importantly, it was proved that gain perception of greater influence on managers' support for PDP than risk perception, which had much implications for the heal care authority in China. Previously, the policy makers in China got used to focusing on Physicians’ acquisition on PDP, neglecting the public hospital managers, another key stakeholder of PDP policy. For the most part, the hesitation of Physicians towards PDP could be explained by the negative attitude of public hospital managers. Actually, it’s of vital importance to enhance the public hospital managers' sense of acquisition. In countries constrained by limited medical resources and inadequate health care financial budget, the top priority should be given to strategies and measures that
effectively increase gain perception of the public hospital managers.

The slowly growing strength of PDP contributed for the booming of private sectors in China, where undervalued salaries in public sector made an attractive opportunity for physicians to seek their unmet economical needs in private sectors\[8, 27\]. In turn, private sectors played a significant role in facilitating the phenomenon of PDP \[28, 29\]. Actually, the Chinese Government utilize the private sector as a useful supplement to the public sector. In the latest 5 years, more than 30 official documents have been released at central level with even more at regional level, to assist the establishment and development of private sectors, including Joint Clinics, Private Hospitals, International Hospitals and other non-public medical institutions\[30\]. Those favoring policies together with the wide application of information technologies, such as 5G, Internet+, Artificial Intelligence and telemedicine, are believed to be constructive to PDP in the long run\[31\]. According to China Internet Hospital Development Research Report 2020, the domestic internet medical market has experienced an exponential growth. The market scale of Internet hospitals exceeded 49 billion RMB in 2018, 67.95 billion RMB in 2019, and is expected to exceed 100 billion RMB in 2020. By 2019, the average daily visits of internet hospitals was 2000–3000\[32\]. It’s worth noticing that private hospitals in China first exceeded public hospitals in 2015, taking account for 60.4% in 2018\[33\]. However, PDP by internet platform accounted for 57% in contrast to merely 28% in private hospitals, indicating that PDP integrating medical activities "on line" with "on site" has the most promising future in China.

Limitations
Firstly, in this cross-sectional study, the determinants of managers' support for PDP were limited by the pre-specified questions in the surveys. There might be some potential unobserved confounding factors we didn’t control in the generalised linear mixed model. A second limitation was that, the investigation and survey was barely conducted for managers of public hospital, not including other PDP stakeholders such as managers of private hospital, health care authorities. Third, it’s has been well a common view that the physicians’ support for PDP, or rather, involvement in PDP was greatly affected by the managers' support for PDP. Probably vice versa. So it’s necessary to figure out the interrelationship between physicians’ support for PDP and that of managers. More evidence based on
quantitative studies and randomized controlled trials shall be needed to throw light on the “black box” on mutual interference of stakeholders’ attitude and behavior towards PDP in the next research steps.

Conclusions
This study found that the majority of public hospital managers in China didn't against PDP, instead, managers' support rate for PDP including allowing with restrictions was high. In other words, although public hospital managers in China disagreed with PDP according to various public reports, there still left much flexibility and feasibility for the government to achieve optimizing the productivity and capacity of medical human resources by implementing PDP with proper restrictions. In addition, gain perception and risk perception were important determinants to the managers' support for PDP.

List Of Abbreviations
List of abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description |
|--------------|-------------|
| PDP          | Physician Dual Practice |
| GLMM         | Generalized Linear Mixed Model |
| WHO          | World Health Organization |
| CI           | Confidence Index |
| OR           | Odds Risk |
| GDP          | Gross Domestic Product |
| PPP          | Gross Domestic Product per capita |

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate
This study was approved by the Ethics Committee in Clinical Research of First Affiliated Hospital of Wenzhou Medical University (No 2020-011).

Consent for publication
Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials
Researchers who want to use these data should contact Yuanyuan Yu (yyyyzju@foxmail.com).

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Funding
This study was funded by the National Social Science Fund of China (No. 18BGL247).

Authors’ contributions
YY, XC, XZ were responsible for the field working including data collection and management. YY, WCC, XZ and QL provided constructive suggestions on data analysis. XF, YY, QL and SX were responsible for the sorting of data. YY, XF and XC were performed the statistical analysis. The manuscript was prepared by YY, XF, XC, XY, YL, WCC and XZ. All authors critically reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Acknowledgements

We express our appreciation to all participants in this study for their participation and co-operation.

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Figures
Figure 1
The flow chart of physicians’ dual practice policies

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