

Wenliang Li

Subjects: Others

Contributor: Yang I. Pachankis

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Basic Information



Name: Wenliang Li
(Oct 1985–Feb 2020)

Birth Location:	Beizhen, Jinzhou, Liaoning Province, PRC
Title:	Unknown
Affiliations:	Wuhan University Wuhan Central Hospital
Honor:	Whistle-blower on COVID-19

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1. Introduction

Wenliang Li, Manchu ethnic Chinese, was an ophthalmologist in Wuhan Central University. He reported the notice on the SARS-structured virus found in patients in the hospital and his advice for caution was soon spread on Chinese social media ^[1]. Although a member of the Communist Party of China, Wenliang Li was soon called on by the local police for admonition for "spreading rumors harmful to the society" ^[2]. Although in the following months after his death on February 7, 2020, the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, and National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine issued him the title of "National Public Health System COVID-19 Epidemic Work Pioneering Individual", Hubei Provincial People's Government entitled him martyr, and he was awarded the May Fourth Medal, systematic violence and attacks on his whistle-blowing still continued ^{[3][4][5][6]}.

2. Family

Wenliang Li was married to Xuejie Fu, who gave birth to a son four months after his death ^[7].

3. Occupation

After seven years of clinical medicine education in Wuhan University in 2011, Wenliang Li worked in Xiamen for three years before taking position in Wuhan Central Hospital.

4. Influence

The whistle-blowing activities of Wenliang Li became phenomenal in PRC were not only because of the significance of the event itself, but also because of how the activities intensely reflect the systemic violence against righteous and good deeds from individuals in PRC. The Chinese government initially wanted suppress the COVID-19 information just as it always does with information that can impact on the dictatorial groups' perceived interests, and it was the public voices stirred by the admonition of Wenliang Li that pushed the PRC government to take the initial investigations ^{[2][8]}.

The incidences revealed the centralized and corrupted digitized public health system in PRC hospitals. Wenliang Li was the first and only person who reported to the public on the statistics from the public health administrations in PRC, which has always been a black box and could have been what triggered the nerves for his admonition ^{[9][10]}. Wenliang Li's whistle-blowing incentivized the initial real bottom-up responses to COVID-19 in PRC, albeit the top-down pressures persisted over the years of the pandemic ^[2].

The major public events in PRC between 2021 and 2023 are out of the lingering influences from the initial bottom-up responses. The bottom-up responses from military affiliated medical schools in Chongqing, from the start, shook the dictatorial confidences in its initial systematic obstructions on the World Health Organization's issuance of Public Health Emergency of Global Concern ^[2]. In order to regain dictatorial control over the military and society, military and mandatory lock downs were mandated in PRC with pandemic control as pretense and excuse ^[11]. "A healthy society mustn't have only one voice" was Wenliang Li's words when interviewed by Caixin media, and many individuals in PRC have felt being empowered by his words and deeds ^[12].

The bureaucratic power's top-down suppressions on the whistle-blower's memories in the public, contrary to their intentions in fading out Wenliang Li's empowerment in the public, further incentivized autonomous reactions from the public ^[13]. In contrast with the state media controlled through bureaucratic power, the Chinese military media warned on "the weigh of the people" one day after Wenliang Li's death ^[14]. There was a significant difference between the 2-year-death memorial in 2022 and the 3-year-death memorial in 2023, autonomously assembled by individual strangers. Between them was the Urumqi disaster that angered the Chinese public and directly led to the lift of lock down in PRC, and the annual memorials for Dr. Wenliang Li became a silent protest march at night on the roads in Wuhan city.

Further Reading

Jeopardies in human security and politicization of COVID-19

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