Chinese average life expectancy increases by 8.6 years

The average life expectancy of the Chinese rose to 76.5 years in 2016 from 67.9 years in 1981, said a white paper released by the State Council Information Office Friday.

“The development in the field of health services has brought concrete benefits to the Chinese people,” said the document titled “Development of China’s Public Health as an Essential Element of Human Rights.”

Maternal mortality dropped from 88.9 per 100,000 persons in 1990 to 19.9 per 100,000 persons in 2016; and infant mortality declined from 34.7 per 1,000 in 1981 to 7.5 per 1,000 in 2016, figures from the document showed.

“The main health indicators of the Chinese are generally better than the average level of middle- and high-income countries, and China has achieved the UN’s Millennium Goals in this regard ahead of schedule,” it said.

Furthermore, China has established a complete medical and health system that is guided by the Constitution, based on civil laws and regulations, laws and administrative regulations on health, and local regulations, and directed by the outlines, programs, and plans of the health sector.

The system has proved effective in maintaining sound doctor-patient relations, addressing medical disputes with impartiality, and ensuring citizens’ right to health, according to the white paper.

The reform of the medical sector has produced noticeable results, it said.

Within a short period of time, China was able to achieve the following: developing the world’s largest basic medical insurance network that covers all citizens, providing insurance for patients of serious diseases, enabling patients to receive emergency medical services, and improving medical assistance.

A basic medical services network covering both urban and rural areas has been put in place, with 980,000 medical and health institutions at all levels, 11 million health workers, and seven million beds at medical institutions, according to the white paper.

CPC members among us: Helpful veteran

Zhang Xizhong

On the morning of Sept. 20, Zhang Xizhong received a call from the community director of the No. 2 community on Fushi Road in Tiancun Subdistrict of Beijing and was told that the drainpipe was locked up in Mr. Wang's apartment. In just half an hour, Zhang and two other helpers, all of them in army camouflages, arrived at Wang's apartment. After a while, they were able to dredge the drainpipe. " The veterans did an excellent job," said the staff at the subdistrict office in praise of Zhang and his team. [Photo by Dong Ning/China.org.cn]

China's Long-March 2C rocket success

China's Long-March 2C rocket has blasted off from the Xichang satellite launch center in Sichuan Province, successfully sending three remote sensing satellites into the orbit.

China's Long-March 2C rocket blasted off from Xichang satellite launch center in Sichuan Province, on September 29, 2017. [Photo/People's Daily]

This is the 251st launch of the Long-March series rockets.

The launch comes 89 days after the failure of the launch of the Long-March 5 Y-2.

Ceremonies held to pay tribute to birth of Confucius

A grand ceremony was held to mark the 2,568th anniversary of the birth of Confucius in Quzhou, Zhejiang Province, on Sept.28.

Quzhou, a city in Zhejiang Province in southeastern China, holds a grand memorial ceremony to mark the 2,568th anniversary of the birth of Confucius on Sept. 28, 2017. The ceremony includes tributes and recitals. Born in 551 B.C., the great philosopher and educator provided concepts that are considered a principle philosophy in China for more than 2,000 years, and are also admired internationally. [Photo/China.org.cn]

Under the theme of “Happiness in the Family, Harmony with the Neighbors,” the ceremony received visitors from home and abroad at the Southern Confucius Ancestral Temple, one of the two temples in China belonging to direct decendents of Confucius.

The annual memorial ceremony held in Quzhou has been selected as a China Intangible Cultural Heriatage since 2011, and it calls on people to commemorate Confucius in the contemporary China.

“The Chinese people have since ancient times attached great importance to family. For over 800 years, Quzhou has carried on this traditon from age to age,” Kong Xingkai, director of the management committee of Quzhou Southern Confucius Ancestral Temple and the 75th generation in the lineal descent of Confucius, said in his speech.

Kong also spoke about the expanded influence of Confucianism. “The thoughts and values created by Confucius still carry a profound impact on Chinese people’s way of life today and are closely related to the contemporary development. Therefore we should call on more people to participate in these cultural activities.”

Since 2012, Quzhou has put in a couple years of dedicated efforts to build its cultural industry park in a bid to carry on Confucinism teachings and lead the local economic transformation and advancement.

As the only state-level cultural industry trial park in Zhejiang Province, Quzhou has built many cultural establishments aimed at carrying forward Chinese traditional culture by teaching visitors about Confucianism and allowing them to experience the cultures of Ming and Qing dynasties.

Chinese scientists reveal mystery of Zika virus

[File Photo: sohu.com]

Chinese researchers said Thursday they might have solved the mystery of why the Zika virus causes microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies.

In a study published in the U.S. journal Science, a team led by Cheng-Feng Qin of the Beijing Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology reported that one single genetic change, likely acquired in 2013, gave the mosquito-borne virus the ability to cause severe fetal microcephaly.

“Our findings offer a reasonable explanation for the unexpected causal link of Zika to microcephaly, and will help understand how Zika evolved from an innocuous mosquito-borne virus into a congenital pathogen with global impact,” Qin said.

Zika was first identified in 1947 in Uganda, and until its recent emergence in the Americas, was a little known one that sporadically causes mild infections.

Then, it rapidly swept through South and Central America in 2015, and due to its link to congenital brain abnormalities, especially microcephaly during pregnancy, the World Health Organization declared in early 2016 the current epidemics a public health emergency of international concern.

However, scientists remain unable to determine why the virus evolved into a pathogen triggering severe neurological syndromes.

By comparing contemporary Zika virus strains from the 2015 and 2016 South American epidemics with an ancestral Cambodian virus that was circulating in 2010, Qin and colleagues found one critical mutation that conferred the ability to cause microcephaly in mouse models of fetal infection.

That one change, S139N, which replaced a serine amino acid with an asparagine at the 139th position of a Zika protein called prM, also made the virus more lethal to human neuron precursor cells in culture compared with the ancestral form.

Zika accumulated numerous changes throughout its genome between 2010 and 2016, of which S139N caused substantially more severe microcephaly and embryonic lethality in mouse models.

Evolutionary analyses revealed that the S139N change likely arose sometime around 2013, which coincided with initial reports of microcephaly.

It was then stably maintained during subsequent spread to the America.

“The discovery should provide guidance for the study of pathogenetic mechanisms of the Zika virus and for the development of vaccines and treatments,” Qin said.