

# History, Local Community Contributions, and Recent Activities of the Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association

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Koichi KONO,\*<sup>1</sup> Hiroshi YONEDA,\*<sup>2</sup> Hidetaka TANAKA,\*<sup>3</sup> Kan USUDA\*<sup>4</sup>

## Introduction

The Tohoku Pacific Earthquake and Tsunami hit the northeast region of Japan on March 11, 2011. We express our deepest regret for the loss of life and offer our condolences to those affected by this tragedy. We are most grateful to all who have kindly expressed their sympathy for the victims of this disaster.

Akinosuke Iwata, Professor of Internal Medicine, along with 59 other Osaka Medical College (OMC) medical doctors, founded the Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association (OMCDA) in 1948 (Fig. 1). For over 60 years, under the direction of each present and past chairperson and in close cooperation with other local doctors associations in Osaka Prefecture, the members of the OMCDA have greatly contributed to the development of community medicine and welfare programs. As of May 2011, the OMCDA has 490 active members.

## History

Since the 1970s, with deep commitment and a pioneering spirit, the OMCDA actively participated along with other colleagues in the Mishima area (which includes Takatsuki, Ibaraki, and Settsu Cities) in the establishment of an emergency medical system (EMS) requested by the local inhabitants.

The contributions from the councils for EMSs in the Takatsuki Shimamoto area are the main

driving force in establishing in the North Osaka region a medical system of the highest possible level in Japan. As such, in 1978, the Takatsuki Shimamoto Emergency Clinic was established, followed by the Osaka Mishima Emergency Medical Center, which opened in 1985.

At that time, most of the temporary doctors of these medical institutions were OMCDA members and dispatched from OMC. Nowadays, the primary, secondary, and tertiary emergency medical systems in the north Osaka areas, including the Mishima area, are almost completely maintained and proudly run by local citizens. Takatsuki's EMS, introduced in 2006 and managed under the leadership of the OMCDA, has obtained national recognition.<sup>1</sup>

In 2008, Takatsuki City Medical Association was entrusted with specific health examinations and guidance in Takatsuki City. Many OMCDA members cooperated in this accomplishment and to date, consultation for specific health conditions in Takatsuki City is highly rated among local governments.

## Activities

### Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association

The current general scientific purpose of the OMCDA is to organize collaborations between the Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association with other neighboring medical associations in the Mishima area and to facili-

\*1 President, Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association, Takatsuki, Osaka, Japan (omcda@art.osaka-med.ac.jp).

\*2 Vice-President, Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association, Takatsuki, Osaka, Japan.

\*3 Editor-in-chief of the Annals of Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association, Takatsuki, Osaka, Japan.

\*4 Treasurer, Osaka Medical College Doctors' Association, Takatsuki, Osaka, Japan.



Fig. 1 Panoramic view of Osaka Medical College (OMC)



Fig. 2 Recent volumes of the Annals of the OMCDA



Fig. 3 Recent volumes of the Proceedings of the Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association

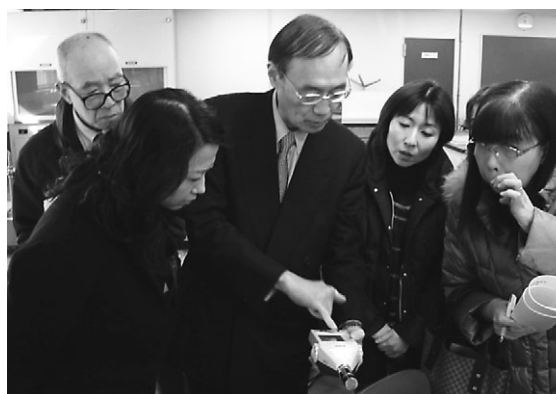


Fig. 4 Explanation of the digital sound level meter operation method by K. Kono at the 2011 seminar

tate communication and exchange of scientific information between members. The annual general meeting of the Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association is held every year in June, where 17 subcommittees present their achievements by organizing high-level scientific meetings and medical seminars open to the public on the topics of diabetes, lifestyle-related diseases, dementia, psychiatry, image diagnosis, respiratory disease, and endocrine imbalances, among others. The results of these activities are published in the Annals of the OMCDA (Fig. 2)<sup>2</sup> or in the Proceedings of the Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association (Fig. 3),<sup>3</sup> which are widely available on the homepage of the OMCDA <<http://www.osaka-med.ac.jp/deps/omcda/>> and the homepage of the Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association

<<http://www.4ishikai.jp/>>.

### Seminar for JMA-certified Occupational Physicians

The Hokusetsu Medical Society of Four Doctors' Association holds a seminar for JMA-certified occupational physicians every year in February at OMC (Fig. 4). The topic of the 2010 seminar was "Work Environment and Crisis Control, Knowledge of the Work Environment Measurement and First Aid." Past seminars were highly successful, in which its more than 150 participants get one credit for update training and seven credits for practical training.

### 2008 OMA Health Culture Prize Awarded to the OMCDA Chairperson

Under the leadership of the Osaka Medical Asso-

ciation, the OMCDA collaborates with other sectional associations such as colleges, universities, area blocks, clinical departments, or hospital doctors' associations in Osaka in the setup of a council that coordinates the management of scientific information, hospital doctors, school hygiene, occupational health, emergency medicine, ethics, maternal care, clinical laboratory management, vaccination, graduate clinical training, gender equality, and communicable diseases. In recognition of these significant contributions made to community medicine development, the chairperson of the OMCDA was awarded the Health Culture Prize.

### 60th Anniversary Commemorative Project

Also in 2008, the OMCDA provided the Osaka Medical College Library with a life studies room equipped with liquid crystal display televisions and DVD players as a 60th anniversary commemorative project. As a result of this project, seating at the library increased from 231 to 250 for the benefit of 10% of the total number of undergraduate and graduate students in Osaka and of 20% of students in national universities.

Since 2008, the OMCDA provides a grant of ¥100,000 (US\$1,299)<sup>\*5</sup> to the OMCDA member who serves as chairperson of international meetings. The 2010 grant was given for three conferences: the 22nd Spring Meeting of the Japanese Society of Allergology, the 28th Annual Meeting of the Japan Society of Brain Tumor Pathology, and the 21st Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Retinoid Research were selected for the 2010 grant.

### Nakayama International Center for Medical Cooperation (NICMC)

Since the Nakayama International Center for Medical Cooperation (NICMC) was established in 1998, OMCDA members actively participate in NICMC-sponsored academic exchanges by faculty students, graduate school students, instructors of colleges, universities, research institutions, and hospitals from other countries. The NICMC has signed contracts or agreements with various foreign institutions, including the Amur State Medical Academy in Russia, the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the Show-Chwan Memorial Hospital

in Taiwan, the Catholic University of Korea, the China Medical University, the Faculty of Medicine of Siriraj Hospital, and Mahidol University in Thailand among others, promoting the exchange of students, knowledge, skills, and laboratory research and the hosting of international symposiums. The NICMC has established a support system for foreign researchers and students, through which many of them have received financial aid to partially cover their travel expenses. Additionally, the Center strives to provide opportunities for international exchange of students and researchers by capitalizing on the various kinds of support provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Noguchi Medical Research Institute, the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, and the Japan-Russia Medical Exchange Foundation.<sup>4</sup>

### Japan Medical Association Team (JMAT) of OMC

The March 11, 2011 Tohoku-Pacific Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami is the largest ever to occur in Japan. Help from the Japan Medical Association Team (JMAT) of OMC was requested by the government along with other medical organizations in the prefecture. Twelve days following the earthquake, the emergency response team of OMC was dispatched and began to provide emergency medical assistance in Iwate Prefecture on March 24. As of June 2011, the JMAT continues to provide emergency medicine, neurologists, orthopedists, psychiatrists, and forensic scientists in the Iwate region.

### Remarks Concerning the Future Development of the OMCDA

Recently, in the Annals of the OMCDA, crucial problems such as rehabilitation, nurse education, H1N1 influenza, doctors' career support, and gender equality have been addressed. The OMCDA also has been wrestling with particularly the difficult current problem of medical crisis or collapse due to the uneven distribution of medical practitioners (especially pediatricians and obstetricians) and overworking of healthcare personnel. We greatly appreciate your future cooperation and encouragement.

\*5 Yen/US dollar exchange rate: 1 US\$=77 yen.

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