



Academic Society Devoting to Comprehensive Understanding of Man-Environment-Health Communications

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The Japanese Society for Hygiene is one of the oldest academic societies in medicine of Japan. More than one hundred years ago, Drs. Rintarou MORI, Masanori OGATA, Shibasaburo KITASATO, and Kanehiro TAKAKI, together with other academic and political leaders, made their best efforts in establishing the field of hygiene in the early MEIJI ERA, around the time when Professors Pettenkofer and Koch established the departments of hygiene at Munich University and Berlin University, respectively. These were all the triggering movements towards the world-wide development of modern social medicine.

The scope of the Society's activity now covers all the important fields of social medicine including clinical and preventive practice in community medicine. Those main categories are, 1) basic research and risk management against infectious diseases, 2) health research on biological effects and their risk prevention of environmental toxicants, and 3) basic preventive research on lifestyle-related ill-health effects. The developing countries are still suffering from prevailing infectious diseases and severe environmental pollutions whilst the developed countries have serious problems with increasing incidences of and death rates from chronic lifestyle-related diseases such as cancers, circulatory and metabolic diseases.

We have moreover been losing the feeling of fulfillment of our daily living and working places, with growing mental health problems, though Japanese people seem to have been enjoying an apparently high standard of living and remarkable longevity. We must also pay attention to allergic diseases because an increasingly large number of people suffer from atopic symptoms, resulting in a decrease in our quality of life, and because increasing understanding of the mechanism of sensitization to allergens has overturned the existing preventive theory of maximum permissible dose in environmental and occupational health.

Many kinds of endocrine-disruptors and more recently very toxic nano-particles have been proven to exist in the variety of environmental components including our food, air and water. Health effects and long-term impacts on the global ecosystems of these agents are not known at all although we have still kept such risky lifestyles as have been producing those artificial unhealthy environments. It is thus necessary to perform well-designed comprehensive research to know how we have to change our total lifestyles. The theme of the coming Annual Meeting of the Society at Osaka is entitled, "Lifestyle Renaissance: Environments for coexisting man and nature; Health for promoting spiritual quality of life". At the Meeting, we are very eager to make vigorous discussions and to find a fascinating, convincing grand design of research towards such an important subject that all the people have been expecting our Society to pursue jointly with other academic and professional societies related to social medicine.

We know that these intractable social problems can never be resolved by workers in a single or even a few academic and professional fields, but that the comprehensive approaches in environmental/occupational health and social/preventive medicine, will only make a great deal of contribution to developing well-balanced, humane solutions. Among many other academic societies, our Society has a featuring character in its nature, that is, taking

comprehensive transdisciplinary approach as well as basic fundamental approach for environmental health and preventive medicine. The Society has recently started 16 allied research project teams in which we perform some specific research work in cooperation with the members of other related academic and professional societies. Those are, for instance, Allied Research Project Teams on Environmental Health Risk Management, Indoor Air Pollutions, Following Generation Effect Assessment, Food Risk Management, Comprehensive Toxicology, Behavioral Genetics, Epigenetics Medicine, Stress Medicine, Lifestyle Medicine, Health Economics, and so on. In order to get more information on each research team, please visit our website, and participate in the allied project research team that you are interested in with your friends and acquaintances in the related fields, or you are welcome to develop a new joint research team on the subject you are going to pursue.

As the Society President, I had called the Presidents of the other three major societies of social medicine to have small periodical meetings. Last year, we got together on three occasions, and made discussions on some specific and common issues of our societies and on our strategy for short- and long-term research activities. We have also paid attention to the recent changes in the structure and activity of the Science Council of Japan. I strongly hope that we will together be able to get some big national research funds on environmental health and preventive medicine, based on the active performance of the allied project research teams made in the Society and on the strategic leadership of the Presidential Meeting.

Incorporating all those academic and professional subjects stated above into the comprehensive scope of its activity, the Society has been publishing its official English journal, Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine in order to present the results of our research and practice to an international readership. We also invite even graduate students and young scientists to send us the original and review articles, especially from Asian countries. Although the Western and Eastern Worlds have almost completely different conceptual paradigms in understanding of health, environment, mankind and nature, we hope all the academics and professionals in these and related fields may make use of this journal to promote both academic quality in and mutual understanding between Western and Eastern cultures. We believe such communications will lead to true solutions of the serious problems in our modern society.