

Jefferson and Japan: Working Together to Advance Best Practices in Healthcare Education and Research

Thomas Jefferson University has had a history of medical exchange with Japanese institutions for more than 25 years. Under the direction and support of Joseph Gonnella, MD, Dean Emeritus of Jefferson Medical College, and other key administrative leaders, the University has accepted more than 300 Japanese medical students, physicians and nurses for short-term and long-term training. The initial Japanese supporter of the program has been the Noguchi Medical Research Institute (NMRI). Recently the Japanese Association for Development of Community Medicine, the largest hospital network in Japan (JADECOM), joined the NMRI in sending faculty and staff to Jefferson for short-term training. Because this involved a significant expansion in the number of health professional exchange visitors, a more organized system was required to coordinate their training needs on campus. As a result JADECOM and NMRI have collaborated with Jefferson to create the Japan Center for Health Professions Education and Research at Jefferson (Japan Center). The purpose of the Center is to coordinate the exchange of health personnel between Jefferson and JADECOM-NMRI. The initial approach is to conduct a two-year pilot project in 2012 and 2013 to test the mutual satisfaction of all parties with this new arrangement.

The goals of the Japan Center are to:

- Supplement the development of health professionals from participating Japanese institutions with educational experiences at Jefferson
- Promote the exchange between participating institutions and Jefferson of research ideas and personnel based on the availability of funds; and
- Conduct research on these exchanges.

During 2012, 63 health professionals participated in the program; in 2013, 58 health professionals attended. The program attendees consisted of physicians, residents, medical students, nurses, dietitians, medical clerks, administrative staff and a clinical engineer. The visitors come from a number of different hospitals and universities across Japan, and are sponsored by JADECOM and NMRI, along with Chiba and Osaka Universities and Kariya Toyota hospital. They spend anywhere from one week to a month visiting clinical sites and academic offices in the hospital and university. They have presentations from Jefferson faculty and administration about US health care including such topics as interprofessional education and practice, risk management, patient safety, nutrition and health information management. They also have opportunities to visit Methodist and Magee hospitals, various clinical sites and cultural attractions off campus.

Participants in this program have consistently reported a high level of satisfaction with the various activities in which they participated. Evaluation responses on rating scales revealed good to excellent rating on each of the presentations in the program. The evaluations also revealed that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they had improved their clinical skills and the training was useful. They expressed that they would encourage others to attend this program at Jefferson and some of the participants' comments suggested that they had a better understanding of the US health system and a desire to share the Japanese approaches to care.

The evaluations and comments made by the participants make it clear that the

Japan Center program attendee evaluation comments

"I was very impressed to see TJUH advanced facilities. Especially, simulation center in TJUH has a lot of productive equipment for nurses, doctors, co-medical staffs, and medical students. In addition, I was interested in simulation programs which are elaborately customized for each classification."

"I would like to say thank you for TJUH staff that they kindly supported us for one week. It would be good if TJUH nurses come to Japan, know the Japanese medical situation, and receive training in JADECOM hospitals in return."

"I was very impressed with the educational attitude of the residents."

"I have visited three facilities, TJU, Rehabilitation Center and Methodist Hospital and learned a lot about nutritional management in each hospital. Also, one dietician gave us samples of nutrient and supplement, and then we exchanged the information of each country's situation of dietitians. Staff in the Rehabilitation Center were interested in nutrient or supplement in Japan, so I will send it to him/her. Through this training, new relationships have been made between JADECOM and TJU dietitian. It was very good for each other I think."

Center has carried on and expanded upon the 25-year successful and productive

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partnership between Jefferson and its partner Japanese health systems. This cooperative arrangement provides a unique sharing of ideas between the two health systems and paves the way for using the best practices from each to improve patient care and effective health services delivery. ■

Yumiko Radi

*Director of Operations
Jefferson Japan Center for Health
Professions Education and Research
Yumiko.Radi@jefferson.edu*

The Center is under the direction of James Erdmann, PhD with Charles Pohl, MD as Associate Director. Ms. Janice Bogen serves as Administrative Officer and Ms. Yumiko Radi is the Director of Operations. They are supported by an advisory committee consisting of Joseph Gonnella, MD, Clara Callahan, MD, Takami Sato, MD, PhD and Michiyasu Yoshiara, MD, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Japan Association for Development of Community Medicine and Yoshihisa Asano, PhD, DPH, Founder, Chairman Emeritus, Noguchi Medical Research Institute.

RESOURCES:

Noguchi Medical Research Institute
www.noguchi-net.com.

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<http://www.jadecom.or.jp/en/>