

Warm messages from CMAAO members

This issue of the JMAJ features the General Assembly of the Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania (CMAAO), which was held in Taipei, Taiwan, in November 2011. This General Assembly was the turning point for the CMAAO to revise the Articles and Bylaws to reflect the increased activities of member countries in these regions. It was decided that the CMAAO General Assembly would be held every year from 2013 instead of biennially with mid-term Council Meetings. This was because many issues that arise, including health systems and related policies, need to be resolved more quickly and with sufficient discussion from the standpoint of CMAAO being a responsible leader for medical professionals and regional partner of the WMA.

The contributions of the JMA to the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster that were reported to the CMAAO General Assembly included emergency responses and the dispatch of Japan Medical Association Team (JMAT), with a nationwide call for physicians' cooperation based on professional autonomy. The JMA also cooperated with the US Air Force to deliver drugs and relief goods for victims in the evacuation centers.

To mark the one-year anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster, on March 11, 2012 the JMA is planning to hold an open symposium for the general public on the main topic of the role of medical associations in different countries during disasters. Guest speakers are to be Professor Jose Luis Gomes do Amaral of the WMA president, Professor James J. James of the American Medical Association, Professor Michael Reich and Dr. Stephanie Kayden from the Harvard Group, and Japanese experts. The JMA also plans to launch a training course for member physicians with the purpose of enabling them to better respond to various disasters in a community healthcare setting. This course will be provided as part of the JMA con-



CMAAO members writing messages on a card for the author

tinuing medical education program.

I was directly affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture, where I live, due to the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which is located 50 km from my hospital. The radiation levels in my city, however, were not high. I was able to work not only for the group of disaster victims in front of me but also for the nationwide management of disaster medicine as the JMA executive board member in charge of emergency and disaster medicine.

I developed cholecystitis just before the CMAAO General Assembly was held, and was unable to attend it. My condition was effectively treated using endoscopic methods at my neighboring hospital by staff with whom I am familiar. I am very much thankful for the warm messages of encouragement that I received from all over the world including the members of CMAAO. The warmth of friendship really impressed me. Being able to recover from both the disaster and my illness boosted my hopes that I would be able to again engage in high-level activities in relation to ongoing tasks.

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