

# Introduction to and Activities of the Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association

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Dokkyo Medical University is located in Tochigi Prefecture, in the Northern Kanto region on Honshu island, Japan. It takes 1.5 hours from Tokyo to our university by car using the expressway. Tochigi Prefecture has a population of approximately two million people, and there are 4,033 doctors, of whom 2,080 are members of the Tochigi Medical Association (December, 2008). The Tochigi Medical Association is divided into 12 sub-associations. Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association is one of them, and we are members of the Hospital Doctors Division of the Tochigi Medical Association that was established in 2006.<sup>1</sup> At present, I am serving as the president of the Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association. Here I will introduce our association and its activities.

## History of Dokkyo Medical University

Dokkyo Medical University was established in 1973 to train students to become medical professionals with superior medical knowledge and skills and deeply caring hearts. Altogether 3,276 bachelors of medicine have graduated from Dokkyo Medical University, and 3,255 of them passed the national examination to become medical doctors. Most of them play an active part in the medical field in Japan.

The university hospital was opened on July 17, 1974 to provide clinical practice training for students and trainee doctors, and to offer better medical services as the central core of medical care in the Northern Kanto region. The Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association was established on April 1, 1989. In 1994, the hospital

was certified by then Minister of Health, and Welfare as a technologically advanced hospital that offers highly advanced medical treatment, research, and training. The Center for Perinatal Medicine was opened in 1996. The Center consistently provides advanced medical care for high-risk pregnancies and premature babies beyond the conventional boundary of obstetrics and pediatrics. The hospital also has an obstetrical intensive care unit (OICU) and a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). In 2002, the Department of Trauma and Critical Care Center was opened. It is in charge of tertiary emergency care, and is always ready to provide prompt and smooth medical treatment to patients brought in by emergency crews. Tochigi Children's Medical Center was opened in 2004. The Center can treat a variety of pediatric diseases with advanced medical care. An air ambulance was introduced on January 20, 2010. One or two doctors and a nurse can be dispatched to an emergency spot in Tochigi Prefecture within 20 minutes by helicopter.

## Vision of Dokkyo Medical University Hospital

The basic vision of the hospital is to provide patients with safe, kind and careful medical care.

1. To provide advanced and high-quality medical care.
2. To ensure thorough medical ethics.
3. To contribute to the progress of medical care.
4. To train medical trainees to become excellent medical professionals.
5. To establish cooperative medical care.

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## Present Condition of Dokkyo University Hospital

The total number of beds in the hospital is 1,167, and the hospital is the seventh largest university hospital in Japan. The hospital has 12 internal medical departments and 13 surgical departments. It also has 25 central facility departments including a Center for Senile Dementia, Center for Perinatal Medicine, Children's Medical Center, P.E.T (positron emission tomography) Center, Clinical Laboratory, Radiology, Anesthesiology, Histopathology, Hemodialysis, etc. The number of staff is 2,657, including 599 medical doctors, 15 dentists, 995 nurses and 59 pharmacists. The total number of outpatients and inpatients were 633,315 and 383,534, respectively, in 2009. Emergency crews brought 4,373 patients to the Department of Trauma and the Critical Care Center by ambulance in 2009. A total of 8,501 operations, including liver, kidney and lung transplantations, have been performed in 2009. Last year, 20,182 patients were referred to our hospital by doctors in other Tochigi associations.

Besides providing advanced medical services, the hospital is in charge of the clinical education of the students of Dokkyo Medical University. They experience clinical practice according to the model core curriculum for medical education issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Students develop the ability to understand the physical, psychological and social aspects of patients, and to solve problems through clinical training by excellent supporting staff. We also provide a training program for trainee doctors to acquire basic clinical abilities because the clinical training system issued by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare has been compulsory since 2004. The staff of the Clinical Training Center manages them. Nowadays, we expect that our students will not only become excellent medical doctors, but also researchers who will contribute to progress in medical science.

## Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association

The Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association was established with the purpose of enhancing the level of medical ethics, contributing to the development of medicine, advancing

health care in the community, and promoting medical education and research. At present, Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association has a membership of 113, including the president, three vice presidents, three trustees, and two auditors. Most of the members are professors, associate professors, and assistant professors. We make great efforts to offer highly advanced medical treatment to patients who suffer from serious diseases. Liver, kidney, lung, bone marrow, and cornea transplants are performed in the hospital. Our hospital is designated as a tertiary emergency hospital in Tochigi Prefecture. The Department of Trauma and Critical Care Center offers high-quality medical treatment to emergency patients in cooperation with all the other clinical departments. The number of patients who were brought to our hospital by ambulance was 4,373 in 2009. Emergency medical treatment using the air ambulance started in January, 2010. There were approximately 120 flights in the first six months this year.

Training conferences have been held for medical practitioners in our hospital under the auspices of the Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association to promote healthcare and welfare, industrial medicine, sports medicine, and so on. Last year, we had six conferences on healthcare management of employees in industries in our university under the sponsorship of the Tochigi Medical Association.

There have been some problems in the medical field in Japan. We sent many doctors based on agreements with cooperative local hospitals to contribute to the advancement of medical care in the community. However, the situation surrounding medical practice in university hospitals has changed recently.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult for us to send them to such hospitals because of the shortage of doctors after the introduction of the new compulsory postgraduate clinical training system. Many students are recently doing clinical training in other hospitals in big cities such as Tokyo after they graduate from the university. Trainee doctors also tend not to specialize in departments that entail particularly hard work such as cardiovascular surgery, neurosurgery, and obstetrics. To avoid this situation, we expect that many high school students who live in Tochigi Prefecture will enter our university and do their clinical training in our hospital after they graduate from the university.

The Dokkyo Medical University Medical Association intends to make further efforts to provide more reliable and safe medical care to

patients in cooperation with other associations as the central core of hospitals in Tochigi Prefecture.

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#### References

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2. Mizusawa H. National council of the university medical associations in Japan: a new leader of medical school reform. *JMAJ*. 2010;53:188–190.