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JIHS Convenes Scientific Advisory Board to Shape Global Health Strategy

On June 3, the Japan Institute for Health Security (JIHS) convened its Scientific Advisory Board (SADB), a high-level panel designed to provide global scientific insight into the institute's evolving role in public health.

The board comprises 11 distinguished members, including experts from health crisis management agencies, academia, and legal fields across Europe, US, Asia, and Japan. Sir Peter Piot, renowned for his leadership at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, was appointed Chair. Dr. Nakatani, Director of the JIHS Human Resources Strategy Center for Global Health, assumed the role of Vice Chair.



The meeting focused on three strategic themes:

- Bridging basic research and clinical application in drug development, including partnerships with private industry and clinical trial infrastructure.
- Leveraging data and digital technologies—such as artificial intelligence and digital transformation—to enhance intelligence capabilities.
- Building public trust through effective communication, especially in times of health emergencies.

Board members offered a wide range of perspectives, drawing on international case studies and emphasizing the importance of cross-institutional data sharing and the recruitment of specialists in fields like mathematical modeling and AI.

Discussions also explored the potential for synergy through organizational integration—what one member described as “one plus one becoming more than two.” The board underscored the need for proactive public engagement during peacetime and strategies to counter misinformation.



U.S. Delegation Tours Japan's Infectious Disease Hub Amid Global Collaboration Push

On May 2, a delegation of American infectious disease experts arrived at JIHS, marking a significant moment in the deepening of international cooperation in pandemic preparedness.

The visiting team, composed of 12 specialists from the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC), included representatives from the University of Colorado, Emory University, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Their mission: to observe Japan's latest advancements in infectious disease containment and management.

Guided by Drs. Shinichiro Morioka, Hidetoshi Nomoto, and Yutaro Akiyama of the Disease Control and Prevention Center, the delegation toured JIHS's newly constructed infectious disease ward. The facility, designed with dual safety in mind—for both patients and healthcare workers—features cutting-edge infection control systems. A Q&A session followed, delving into operational protocols and architectural safeguards.

Beyond infrastructure, the visit served as a platform for knowledge exchange. Discussions ranged from infection control management and workforce development to the creation of research and development networks. Despite the limited time, both sides engaged in meaningful dialogue, underscoring a shared commitment to global health security.

As emerging and re-emerging infectious threats continue to challenge national borders, JIHS's Global Outbreak Intelligence, Capacity Building and Deployment Coordination Center (GIC) is positioning itself as a bridge between nations. The center plans to expand its role in hosting international delegations and facilitating cross-border information sharing.

The message was clear: in the fight against pandemics, collaboration is not optional—it's essential.



JIHS Sends Experts to ASEAN as Region Builds Infectious Disease Defense Hub

In a move signaling Japan's deepening commitment to regional health security, two senior experts from JIHS have been dispatched to Thailand to support the establishment of a new infectious disease center serving Southeast Asia.

The ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), a joint initiative by ASEAN member states, is being built to strengthen the region's capacity to respond to public health crises. Backed by a ¥5.5 billion (\$36 million) grant from the Japanese government in 2020, the center is now entering a critical phase—staffing and coordination.

Dr. Ikuma Nozaki, a physician specializing in global health from JIHS's Bureau of Global Health Cooperation, and Ms. Karin Fukaya, a veteran nurse from the National Center for Global Health and Medicine, have begun their long-term assignments in Bangkok. Their mission: to serve as technical advisors and liaisons between ACPHEED and counterparts in Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

The deployment is part of Japan's broader strategy to bolster regional resilience against emerging infectious threats. In August 2024, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare released its Global Health Vision, explicitly naming ACPHEED as a strategic partner for JIHS.

As Southeast Asia continues to grapple with the twin challenges of emerging pathogens and limited health infrastructure, ACPHEED is poised to become a cornerstone of regional preparedness. Japan's investment—both financial and human—is a bet on shared security in an increasingly interconnected world.



Thai Delegation Visits JIHS, Deepening Regional Ties in Infectious Disease Control

On June 12, a delegation from Thailand's Chulalongkorn University Hospital arrived at JIHS, seeking to strengthen regional cooperation in pediatric infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

The seven-member team—comprising pediatricians, nurses, educators, and HIV counselors—was in Tokyo for the 10th Asia Pacific AIDS Co-Infections Conference. Their visit to JIHS offered a rare glimpse into Japan's clinical infrastructure and public health strategy.

Dr. Yukimasa Matsuzawa, Deputy Director, Global Outbreak Intelligence, Capacity Building and Deployment Coordination Center (GIC), opened the session with an overview of Japan's international health initiatives. He was followed by Dr. Nobuaki Matsunaga, Deputy Director of the AMR Clinical Reference Center, who detailed Japan's nationwide antimicrobial resistance surveillance system and the center's role in coordinating clinical responses.

The delegation toured JIHS's travel clinic, where Dr. Kei Yamamoto explained vaccine protocols and traveler health support. A spirited exchange followed, comparing pneumococcal vaccine implementation strategies between Japan and Thailand.

At the AIDS Clinical Center (ACC), Dr. Katsuji Teruya guided the visitors through the outpatient workflow, highlighting systems for managing patient data, counseling, medication guidance, and infection control. Thai delegates praised the center's approach to patient privacy and communication, noting its relevance to their own clinical settings.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to future collaboration, particularly in the field of antimicrobial resistance. As global health threats grow increasingly complex, JIHS continues to position itself as a regional bridge—linking institutions, sharing expertise, and advancing health security across borders.



Training Tomorrow's Leaders for Infectious Disease Crisis Management



Since April, JIHS has been conducting an intensive leadership training program aimed at equipping professionals with the cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills needed to respond to future infectious disease crises. Commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the program targets

seasoned experts in public health administration, clinical medicine, and epidemiology—individuals already embedded in Japan's healthcare infrastructure.

The April–May sessions focused on in-person training designed to deepen participants' understanding of leadership in times of crisis. Lecturers emphasized the importance of continuous preparation, even during peacetime, and the need to cultivate a mindset attuned to emergency response. One session invited participants to reflect on the traits of leaders they admired—and those they didn't—sparking candid discussions on what effective leadership looks like when a crisis strikes.

A tabletop exercise followed, simulating a respiratory outbreak in Asia. Participants assumed the role of a local public health official tasked with managing the response. With limited time, data, and resources, they were challenged to prioritize actions, coordinate with agencies, and communicate with the public—decisions that mirrored the real-world pressures of outbreak management.



The program also featured guest lectures and group discussions, bringing together government officials and healthcare workers to explore the tensions between transparency and operational control. In one lecture, Dr. Nobuhiko Okabe, a veteran of Japan's public health system, offered insights

drawn from decades of experience, including surveillance strategies and the ethical dimensions of infectious disease control.

His message was clear: "Don't just look at the tree—see the leaves, the branches, and the forest." It was a call to balance detail-oriented work with a

broader strategic vision. He also reminded participants of the enduring importance of human rights, citing past discrimination against patients with Hansen's disease and HIV/AIDS as cautionary tales.



From April to July, trainees were stationed at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, where they engaged in hands-on learning, including a lecture on avian influenza surveillance by Dr. Natsuho Shinozaki. The session sparked lively exchanges between trainees and experts, underscoring the urgency and complexity of managing high-pathogenicity viruses.

The program's second phase, spanning June and July, immersed participants in real-world scenarios. Each day was packed with seminars, literature reviews, and risk assessments. On June 10, trainees presented findings on surveillance systems in Indonesia, while June 12 featured a rehearsal for evaluating bird flu risks. The schedule culminated in a final presentation on June 30, where participants shared their assessments of emerging threats like mpox and dengue fever.

One trainee reflected on the challenge of translating lessons learned into local government settings, noting that while institutional structures differ, meaningful dialogue and collaboration can begin at the grassroots level. "We may not be able to implement everything immediately," the trainee wrote, "but we can start by sharing what we've learned."



The program also emphasized strategic thinking. In a lecture titled



"Organizational Management in Emergencies," Dr. Hideaki Anan recounted his experience leading medical support during the Diamond Princess COVID-19 outbreak. He spoke of building the "Kanagawa Model" for emergency care, negotiating hospital bed allocations, and crafting admission criteria based on scoring systems.

His message resonated: "Don't aim to solve everything—aim for optimal outcomes." He stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement, reminding trainees that logic persuades, but emotion moves people. "Consensus," he said, "is built through relentless communication."

JIHS Hepatologist Honored for Groundbreaking Research on Liver Disease and Immunity

In a moment of recognition for decades of clinical inquiry, Dr. Tatsuya Kanto, Director of the Research Center for Hepatitis and Immunology Research at JIHS, has been awarded the prestigious Oda Prize by the Japan Society of Hepatology.

The prize, now in its 29th year, commemorates Dr. Toshiji Oda, a founding figure in Japanese hepatology, and is given annually to researchers who have made exceptional contributions to the field. Dr. Kanto's award-winning work centers on the immunological mechanisms underlying liver disease, with a focus on translating clinical findings into diagnostic and therapeutic innovations.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award," Dr. Kanto said. "My research has always been driven by a desire to understand the immune system's role in liver pathology, and to bring that understanding into the clinic."

Since its inception in 1997, the Oda Prize has recognized 25 individuals and one research group. Dr. Kanto's selection places him among an elite cohort of scientists whose work has shaped the landscape of liver medicine in Japan.

His research has consistently relied on clinical specimens to unravel the immune dynamics of liver disease. The goal: to develop tools that not only diagnose but also treat conditions more effectively. The award affirms the impact of his work and signals continued expectations for leadership in the field.

The ceremony took place at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Japan Society of Hepatology, where Dr. Kanto delivered a commemorative lecture. Surrounded by current and former colleagues, he stood as a symbol of the bridge between bench and bedside.



JIHS Doctor Honored for Pioneering Research Linking Bacteria to Gastric Cancer

Dr. Naomi Uemura, Honorary Hospital Director of Kohnodai Medical Center, has been selected as the recipient of the 23rd Takamine Memorial Daiichi Sankyo Award, one of Japan's most prestigious honors in life sciences.



Dr. Uemura served as Director of the center from 2010 to 2018. The award, established in 2003 by the Daiichi Sankyo Foundation of Life Science, recognizes researchers who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of life sciences—particularly in the prevention and treatment of disease—through both basic and applied clinical research. It is also awarded to those who continue to pursue active research with promise for future impact.

His groundbreaking studies revealed a direct link between *Helicobacter pylori* infection and the development of gastric cancer. In a landmark 2001 paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Uemura was the first to demonstrate that *H. pylori* is a causative agent of stomach cancer. Earlier studies, published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* (1997) and *The Lancet* (2008), showed that eradication therapy could significantly reduce cancer risk.

Today, it is widely accepted that *H. pylori* infection is a major cause of gastric cancer—a shift in understanding that has transformed clinical practice worldwide. Dr. Uemura's work continues to influence both research and treatment strategies, and his recognition marks a milestone in the integration of clinical insight into the broader scientific canon.

Who Was Jokichi Takamine?

Born in Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture in 1854, Jokichi Takamine was a Japanese chemist who moved to the United States at age 36. He is credited with inventing the world's first digestive enzyme medication, Takadiastase, and isolating adrenaline—the first hormone ever discovered. His legacy continues to inspire generations of scientists in Japan and beyond.

JIHS Official to Chair Japan's Premier Global Health Conference in 2027



Dr. Hitoshi Murakami, Deputy Director General, Department of Human Resource Development, Bureau of Global Health Cooperation, has been appointed as the chair of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Japan Association for Global Health.

The conference, scheduled for November 2027, will be hosted by JIHS and is expected to draw leading voices from across the global health spectrum.

At JIHS, Clinicians and Innovators Meet to Shape the Future of Medical Technology

On June 20, JIHS hosted its 19th Clinical Needs Matching Meeting in collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Tokyo Medical-Engineering Cooperation HUB Organization. The goal: to connect frontline healthcare professionals with companies capable of turning clinical challenges into tangible solutions.

This year's event marked a milestone—it was the first held since JIHS's institutional integration, and the first to include participants from the National Institute of Infectious Diseases. The format is simple but powerful: clinicians describe the problems they face, and engineers listen. From these exchanges, prototypes are born. To date, the program has yielded 12 products, including a "bone-writing pen" proposed by Dr. Yutaka Maruoka—a tool now used in orthopedic procedures.



The meeting reflects a broader shift in Japan's healthcare innovation landscape, where interdisciplinary collaboration is no longer optional but essential. As the country grapples with aging demographics and rising healthcare demands, JIHS is positioning itself as a catalyst for change—bridging the gap between clinical insight and industrial ingenuity.

Therapy Dogs Bring Smiles and Comfort to Kids at Tokyo Hospital

One peaceful morning in June, two golden retrievers—Happy and Mirai—strolled through the pediatric ward of a Tokyo hospital, their tails wagging in sync with the smiles they sparked.



This was their second visit of the year, part of a new dog therapy program at JIHS, run in partnership with the Japan Rescue Association. Thanks to support from the hospital, these visits are now scheduled four times a year.

For many kids, the excitement starts days before. “What should I do when I meet the dog?” they ask nurses, buzzing with anticipation. By the time the dogs arrive, nervous energy turns into pure joy. One boy, who had only watched from his wheelchair last time, walked on his own to take Happy for a walk. Others, shy at first, were soon asking, “Can I try giving a paw command?”

The handlers shared the dogs’ weights, and kids started wondering if they could pick them up. Before heading back to their rooms, each child got a chance to cuddle the dogs, enjoying a quiet moment of connection. Even those just watching seemed comforted by the gentle scene.

As the dogs left, the kids waved goodbye with big smiles and sparkling eyes. In that exchange—between wagging tails and tiny hands—something special happened. You could feel it, even if you couldn’t see it.



These therapy dogs don’t just help the kids—they bring warmth to families and staff too. In a place that’s often busy and stressful, they offer a little peace. The program’s success is thanks to the teamwork of many departments, all believing in one simple idea: healing isn’t just about medicine—it’s about heart.

A Garden in the Middle of a Hospital Offers a Breath of Fresh Air

Tucked away inside the grounds of JIHS, there's a little oasis that's quietly doing something remarkable—it's helping people feel better, one flower at a time.

The "International Garden" isn't just a patch of greenery. It's a place where patients, families, and staff can take a break from the clinical routines and just breathe. Whether you're waiting for an appointment or visiting a loved one, the garden offers a moment of calm in the middle of a busy hospital.

Throughout the year, the garden changes with the seasons. In early summer, hydrangeas bloom in soft blues and purples. Later, sunflowers stretch toward the sky, bringing a burst of sunshine to anyone passing by. It's not just beautiful—it's intentional.

Behind the scenes, a group of volunteers keeps the garden thriving. They plant, weed, and care for the space with quiet dedication. Their work isn't flashy, but it's deeply appreciated by everyone who finds comfort among the flowers.

For some, the garden is a place to reflect. For others, it's simply a nice spot to sit and enjoy the colors. Either way, it's a reminder that healing doesn't only happen in exam rooms—it can happen in nature, too.

So next time you're at JIHS, take a moment. Step into the garden. Let the flowers do their work.

