

# A Brief History and International Perspective of the Japanese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine: The 50th Anniversary in 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Japanese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine (JARM; <http://www.jarm.or.jp/english/>) celebrated its 50th anniversary.

The concept of rehabilitation medicine in Japan dates back to the 1920s, in an era when rehabilitation primarily focused on disabled children. In 1963, JARM was inaugurated. A brief history of the Association is outlined in [Table 1](#), and its successive leaders are listed in [Table 2](#).

JARM is accredited as one of the 122 member societies of the Japanese Association of Medical Sciences and is one of 19 societies that possess a specialty board. In 2012, JARM was approved as a public interest incorporated association by the Japanese government. In addition to gaining social credibility, public interest incorporated associations are exempted from taxation for activities related to the public interest.

Japan has a population of 128 million, with more than 22% aged 65 years or older. The density of physicians is 225 per 100,000 population. As of April 2014, JARM has a membership of 9998, including 2002 board-certified physiatrists and 3445 board-certified rehabilitation physicians. The requirements for board-certified physiatrists are 5 years of training after graduation from medical school, including a 3-year residency in rehabilitation medicine, and successful completion of written and oral examinations. Certification must be renewed every 5 years. The requirements for board-certified rehabilitation physicians are 5 years of training after graduation from medical school, including a 1-year residency in rehabilitation medicine, and successful completion of a written examination. Certification for board-certified rehabilitation physicians also must be renewed every 5 years.

An accredited institute of rehabilitation medicine is defined as a hospital where training curricula are in place under the guidance of at least one certified physiatrist. The previously described 3-year or 1-year residency training requirements should be fulfilled in these accredited institutes for a medical graduate to become board-certified physiatrist or rehabilitation physician, respectively. In 2014, the total number of accredited institutes is 574.

## POSTGRADUATE TRAINING IN REHABILITATION MEDICINE IN JAPAN

The board certification system for rehabilitation medicine in Japan was initiated in 1980. In 1987, JARM started another certification system to comply with the national system for certifying medical specialties in Japan. The two groups of specialists certified by these 2 systems were called board-certified physiatrists and board-certified rehabilitation physicians, respectively. In 2003, the 2 boards were unified into a new board to fulfill the criteria for specialty approval by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Members certified by this system are “board-certified physiatrists”; “board-certified rehabilitation physician” has been preserved as a certification system for physicians who have been practicing rehabilitation medicine in certain medical fields such as orthopedics, neurology, neurosurgery, and pediatrics [1]. [Table 3](#) shows the numbers of board-certified physiatrists, board-certified rehabilitation physicians, and accredited institutes from 1981 through 2014. The majority of board-certified rehabilitation physicians are orthopedic surgeons.

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**Table 1.** History of the Japanese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine

| Year | Event  |
|------|--|
| 1963 | Establishment of JARM  |
| 1964 | Publication of <i>Japanese Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine</i> , Vol. 1   |
| 1968 | The 1st Annual Meeting of JARM is held<br>JARM becomes a member of the Society of the Japanese Association of Medical Sciences |
| 1980 | The Japanese Board of Rehabilitation Medicine is established   |
| 1987 | International Rehabilitation Medicine Association VIII is held in Kyoto  |
| 1989 | JARM becomes an incorporated association   |
| 2001 | New Millennium Asian Symposium is held in Tokyo  |
| 2003 | A new certification/education system of JARM is initiated  |
| 2012 | JARM becomes a public interest incorporated association  |

JARM = Japanese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine.

The number of board-certified rehabilitation physicians has shown an apparent decrease since 2000. This decrease has probably occurred because physicians who were board certified at the beginning of the qualification system gradually retired, although an average of 73 physicians a year have taken the examination for board-certified rehabilitation physicians for the past 7 years. Thus far there is no statutory difference between board-certified physiatrists and board-certified rehabilitation physicians in terms of job specification in health care systems, except that board-certified physiatrists can proclaim their specialty as approved by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and full-time employment of a board-certified physiatrist is a condition for certification of accredited institutes. In the near future, a new national certification system will be launched, which might result in a substantial difference in health care jobs between the 2 categories.

The Guideline for Postgraduate Training of Rehabilitation Medicine was published in 1982 and revised in 1993 (Table 4). Then, in 2003 the Fundamental Principles for Education of Rehabilitation Medicine (Table 5) were determined, with a curriculum containing specific objectives. Residency training programs in accredited institutes and education courses sponsored by JARM are organized according to the Guidelines (1982, 1993) and the Fundamental Principles for Education of Rehabilitation Medicine (2003), including diagnosis and treatment of disability, interdisciplinary interventions, and legislative issues. Training in the first and second postgraduate years (PGYs) includes reading authorized textbooks and practice in various medical disciplines, including emergency medicine, internal medicine, orthopedics, and urology. In the third and fourth PGY, residents practice rehabilitation medicine for specific disorders

**Table 2.** Leaders of the Japanese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine

| No. | Name (last, first)  | Year         | Remarks  |
|-----|---------------------|--------------|--|
| 1   | Mizuno, Shotaro     | 1963-1964    |  |
| 2   | Ooshima, Yoshio     | 1964-1965    |  |
| 3   | Amako, Tamikazu     | 1965-1966    |  |
| 4   | Sunahara, Moichi    | 1966-1967    |  |
| 5   | Koike, Fumihide     | 1967-1968    |  |
| 6   | Aizawa, Toyozo      | 1968-1969    |  |
| 7   | Kawamura, Bunichiro | 1969-1970    |  |
| 8   | Kobayashi, Tachio   | 1970-1971    |  |
| 9   | Tuchiya, Kokichi    | 1971-1972    |  |
| 10  | Sugiyama, Takashi   | 1972-1973    |  |
| 11  | Yamada, Kengo       | 1973-1974    |  |
| 12  | Kashiwagi, Daiji    | 1974-1975    |  |
| 13  | Yokoyama, Iwao      | 1975-1976    |  |
| 14  | Kodama, Toshio      | 1976-1977    |  |
| 15  | Kimura, Noboru      | 1977-1978    |  |
| 16  | Sato, Kozo          | 1978-1979    |  |
| 17  | Sasaki, Satoshi     | 1979-1980    |  |
| 18  | Akashi, Ken         | 1980-1981    |  |
| 19  | Tsuyama, Naoichi    | 1981-1982    |  |
| 20  | Sobue, Itsuro       | 1982-1983    |  |
| 21  | Nojima, Motoo       | 1983-1984    |  |
| 22  | Takahashi, Isamu    | 1984-1985    |  |
| 23  | Suzuki, Ryohei      | 1985-1986    |  |
| 24  | Ueda, Satoshi       | 1986-1987    | The Sidney Licht Lectureship Award (2001)            |
| 25  | Ookawa, Tsuguo      | 1987-1988    |  |
| 26  | Imada, Hiraku       | 1988-1989    |  |
| 27  | Ogata, Hajime       | 1989-1990    |  |
| 28  | Tsuyama, Naoichi    | 1990-1994    |  |
| 29  | Yonemoto, Kyoza     | 1994-1998    |  |
| 30  | Chino, Naoichi      | 1998-2004    | The Herman J. Flax Lifetime Achievement Award (2009) |
| 31  | Eto, Fumio          | 2004-2008    |  |
| 32  | Liu, Meigen         | 2008-2012    |  |
| 33  | Mizuma, Masazumi    | 2012-present |  |

such as stroke, amputation, cerebral palsy, dysphagia, and spasticity.

Electrodiagnosis is an essential skill for Japanese physiatrists. In the fifth PGY, research and management of interdisciplinary intervention are encouraged. Many physiatrists also apply for international fellowships.

## ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND OFFICIAL JOURNAL

JARM holds 2 nationwide annual meetings: the annual meeting of JARM (3 days in spring) and the annual meeting of the Board-Certified Physiatrist Association (2 days in autumn). The numbers of attendees based on registration fee payment for the past 10 annual meetings of JARM from 2004 to 2013 were 2603, 2323, 2828, 3270, 2937, 2484, 2310, 2496, 3111, and 3438. The numbers of attendees for the annual meetings of the Board-Certified Physiatrist

**Table 3.** Number of board-certified physiatrists, board-certified rehabilitation physicians, and accredited institutes

| Year | Board-certified physiatrists | Board-certified rehabilitation physicians | Accredited institutes |
|------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1981 | 18                           |   |                       |
| 1982 | 82                           |   |                       |
| 1983 | 124                          |   |                       |
| 1984 | 151                          |   |                       |
| 1985 | 179                          |   |                       |
| 1986 | 210                          |   |                       |
| 1987 | 258                          |   | 86                    |
| 1988 | 306                          | 575                                       | 139                   |
| 1989 | 354                          | 1188                                      | 165                   |
| 1990 | 382                          | 1822                                      | 187                   |
| 1991 | 423                          | 2301                                      | 211                   |
| 1992 | 453                          | 3456                                      | 238                   |
| 1993 | 484                          | 4466                                      | 217                   |
| 1994 | 523                          | 4694                                      | 232                   |
| 1995 | 578                          | 5226                                      | 242                   |
| 1996 | 615                          | 5254                                      | 247                   |
| 1997 | 645                          | 5104                                      | 262                   |
| 1998 | 668                          | 5079                                      | 285                   |
| 1999 | 709                          | 5081                                      | 304                   |
| 2000 | 749                          | 5075                                      | 324                   |
| 2001 | 780                          | 5061                                      | 345                   |
| 2002 | 813                          | 4971                                      | 341                   |
| 2003 | 792                          | 4690                                      | 359                   |
| 2004 | 831                          | 4232                                      | 345                   |
| 2005 | 1065                         | 4535                                      | 375                   |
| 2006 | 1230                         | 4117                                      | 400                   |
| 2007 | 1354                         | 4127                                      | 430                   |
| 2008 | 1464                         | 4139                                      | 453                   |
| 2009 | 1649                         | 4127                                      | 467                   |
| 2010 | 1732                         | 4025                                      | 497                   |
| 2011 | 1789                         | 3923                                      | 503                   |
| 2012 | 1854                         | 3914                                      | 517                   |
| 2013 | 1942                         | 3429                                      | 539                   |
| 2014 | 2002                         | 3445                                      | 574                   |

**Table 4.** Educational guideline—1993

| Generalities                        |
|-------------------------------------|
| I. General issues                   |
| II. Kinesiology                     |
| III. Disabilities                   |
| IV. Diagnosis/evaluation            |
| V. Therapeutics                     |
| VI. Legislative issues              |
| VII. Community-based rehabilitation |
| VIII. Others                        |
| Specific Disorders                  |
| I. Stroke, etc                      |
| II. Spinal cord injury, etc         |
| III. Cerebral palsy, etc            |
| IV. Neuromuscular diseases          |
| V. Bone and joint diseases          |
| VI. Amputee                         |
| VII. Respiratory diseases           |
| VIII. Circulatory diseases          |
| IX. Geriatrics                      |
| X. Malignancy, burn, etc            |

**Table 5.** Fundamental principles for education of rehabilitation medicine

|  |
|--|
| 1. Structure and function related to human activities  |
| 2. Diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting human activities  |
| 3. Evaluation of structure and function, activities, participation, and personal and environmental factors |
| 4. Physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy  |
| 5. Orthotics and prosthetics   |
| 6. Rehabilitation of specific disorders  |
| 7. Interdisciplinary interventions   |
| 8. Legislative issues  |

Association from 2006 (the year when the Association was formally established as an organization within JARM) to 2013 were 186, 231, 472, 472, 688, 758, 880, and 518.

Since 1964, JARM has published an official monthly peer-reviewed journal titled *Japanese Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*. The journal is in Japanese with English abstracts available at [http://www.jarm.or.jp/english/e\\_publication.html](http://www.jarm.or.jp/english/e_publication.html). Members of JARM can download the full text in PDF form. Other journals in rehabilitation science published independently by other rehabilitation societies include a peer-reviewed open-access English journal named *Japanese Journal of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Science*, published as the official scientific journal of the KAIFUKUKI Rehabilitation Ward Association, and an official journal of the Japanese Society of Dysphagia Rehabilitation, which is in Japanese. The full text of the *Japanese Journal of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Science* can be downloaded at [http://www.rehabili.jp/jjcrs/index\\_e.html](http://www.rehabili.jp/jjcrs/index_e.html).

## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

With 50 years of experience, especially with that gained from the 8th World Congress of the International Rehabilitation Medicine Association (1997) held in Kyoto and the New Millennium Asian Symposium on Rehabilitation Medicine (2001) held in Tokyo, JARM is strongly aware of the importance of international collaboration and is committed to a number of activities organized by the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine. Furthermore, JARM offers a “Traveling Fellowship Program for Foreign Physicians” to promote international exchange and further collaboration with overseas physicians whose specialty is in rehabilitation medicine. In addition, JARM will publish an online, open-access international journal in a couple of years.

One of the most important tools for international collaboration is the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) [2]. JARM aims to promote clinical usage of ICF and incorporate it in medical education.

Finally, because the Paralympic Games will be held in Tokyo in 2020, JARM will play an important role in the development and promotion of disabled sports (adapted sports) through research on physical functioning of the

disabled and advancement of biomedical engineering related to rehabilitation medicine. Members of JARM are committed to disabled sports, which will contribute to international collaboration not only in disabled sports but also in worldwide dissemination of the philosophy of rehabilitation medicine.

## REFERENCES

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