

Eulogy for Prof. Mami Yamasaki

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Dear all the members of ISPN and AASPN,

It is with great sadness to inform you all that our well-known Japanese Pediatric Neurosurgeon, Professor Mami Yamasaki, passed away at the age of 67 years, on the 13th of June, at her home town in Osaka.

She was one of the most important members of the Japanese Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery (JSPN) and her active contributions in the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery (ISPN) and the Asian-Australasian Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery (AASPN) have been well recognized. She was the Congress President of the 44th Annual Meeting of ISPN that was held in Kobe last October and her contributions and warm hospitality in making the congress a huge success is very well remembered by all of us. Sadly, just a month after the Congress, she was diagnosed with leukemia. After that, she decided to inform the ISPN and AASPN members of her disease. She had received warm support from all the members of ISPN and AASPN and her family members to fight against her illness. Despite all intensive treatment, she succumbed to the illness. Her death has caused an irreparable loss to all the pediatric neurosurgeons in the world.

Professor Mami Yamasaki was born in Awaji Island, which can be seen across the narrow channel of Akasi from Kobe.

After graduation from Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, she became a pediatrician. When she happened to examine a child with X-linked hydrocephalus as a pediatrician, she became so interested in wide varieties of phenotype of this disease that she decided to become a neurosurgeon. She got the training on general neurosurgery at the Graduate School of Medicine, Osaka University. In 1992, she presented a paper entitled “X-linked hydrocephalus in Japan” at the ISPN annual meeting (Congress President, Vladimir Benes) held in Prague, Czechoslovakia. From 1996 to 1997, she studied L1CAM mutations with Professor Vance Lemmon in the Department of Neurosciences, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. While she was in Japan, she was quite busy not only with clinical works as a neurosurgeon but also with the care of her children as a mother. During her stay in Cleveland, she enjoyed precious time with her family. From 2000 through 2006, she was the Chief Investigator of National Research Committee of “Intractable Hydrocephalus” supported by The Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare of Japan. She published numerous papers concerning congenital hydrocephalus and anomalies of the central nervous system while she was working at Osaka National Hospital, Osaka, Japan. After she became the Assistant Director of this hospital, she also started to work on child abuse. In 2012, she moved to Takatsuki General Hospital, Takatsuki City, Japan. After that, her work expanded to the pre and postnatal total care of babies with anomalies of the central nervous system, because this hospital has a huge capacity of NICU. She published “Guidelines of fetal hydrocephalus in Japan” as a representative in 2005 and its English new version was delivered at the 44th Annual Meeting of ISPN held in Kobe last year. Her husband, Mr. Ichiro Yamasaki, was devoted to translate the Japanese version to the English one.

She was a lady neurosurgeon with a strong personality and her friendly and charming smile always warmed the hearts of all she met. We would like to express sincere heartfelt condolences to the grieving family and hope they can have the strength to overcome this huge loss.

In deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,
Hiroaki Sakamoto
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