

Prevention of disaster

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According to a recent newspaper, the seismological society of Japan has disclosed the results of the questionnaire to their members about the relationship between seismological research and prevention of the disaster of the East Japan earthquake and tsunami. Over six hundred members answered this questionnaire and 82% of them responded that past and current seismological knowledge were effective in diminishing the damage of that disaster, but only 60% of them answered that this knowledge was not valuable in prevention of that disaster. Now, turning to the same situation in our diabetic field, research and academic activity have effectively elucidated the nature of diabetes and contributed to solving its mysteries in human beings. However, prevention of advanced complications in diabetic patients has not yet been realized, similar to prevention of disaster from the earthquake. Academic society must create a closer relationship with the government in policy making if they want to prevent the adversity of diabetic complications. The end-stage diabetic nephropathy issue is especially serious, because the total number of patients who have started dialysis in Japan is almost 37,000 and 44% of these are elderly diabetic patients. The functional status of elderly diabetic patients who have initiated dialysis is poor

and resources to support them are enormous. So, prevention of diabetic nephropathy is important and preventive intensive treatments have already been developed. However, there are many difficulties in the real world. For example, delay of initiation of diabetic treatment, high rate of discontinuation of treatment, low rate of achievement of objectives instead of development of new hypoglycemic agents, and shortage of human resources and data. But, we are able to access and talk with the patient more directly and to obtain data more easily than seismologists.

The superiority of the Japanese health care system is recognized globally [1]. We must, therefore, improve our approaches to prevention of the disaster of diabetic complications and demonstrate reduction of the misery of complications before real failure occurs.

Reference

1. Reich MR, Ikegami N, Shibuya K, Takemi K. 50 years of pursuing a healthy society in Japan. *Lancet*. 2011;378:1051–4.

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