



What is an ultrasound specialist?

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I hope that this message finds our members in good health, as we enjoy a string of delightful autumn days at this time of year.

In this issue, we have two original articles in the category of physics & engineering, one review article and one original article in the category of cardiology, four original articles in the category of gastroenterology, three original articles in the category of obstetrics & gynecology, two original articles in the category of orthopedics, as well as one original article each in the categories of vessels and breast & thyroid, and one review article in the category of pediatrics. In addition, we have one article in the image category, which replaces the case report category for the first time. We have included the best papers in a wide range of fields from the many that were submitted. The goal of our English-language journal, *Journal of Medical Ultrasonics*, is to publish high-quality articles related to ultrasound in basic and clinical medicine in a wide array of fields. I am glad that the contents of this issue are in alignment with the goal of this journal. In addition, as you have probably noticed, we decided to display the category of each article at the upper left of the title, so that you will know immediately whether it is a review article or an original article and what the field is. We made this change, so that our readers can save precious time by immediately being able to find articles in their own fields.

What it means to be a “specialist” as defined by the Japanese Medical Specialty Board (JMSB) is currently being discussed at the Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine (JSUM). The discussion is centered around the fact that the current JSUM definition of a specialist, i.e., a physician who has in-depth knowledge in a specific area, does not appear to match the definition of a “specialist” espoused by JMSB. The question is this: does expertise mean the ability

to perform medical ultrasound in a wide range of areas, and is not a person who has that ability a specialist as defined by JMSB? The problem then becomes how much specialized medical ultrasound ability should a person have in each area? In terms of this issue of the journal, I think that the level of the articles in the gastroenterology category, which is my area of expertise, is quite high. As for the articles that are outside my field, I feel like that they are all sufficiently technical. The range of medical care that should be covered by medical ultrasound is very broad. I think that it would be very difficult to investigate what level of knowledge of a broad range of areas would be adequate to call someone a specialist. If JMSB defines a “specialist” as someone who has the ability equivalent to that of specialists in all areas, I can only conclude that it is impossible to become a specialist (at least for me).

A “specialist” is defined as follows on the JMSB website: “A “specialist” certified by the Japanese Medical Specialty Board is defined as a doctor who has received an appropriate education in each clinical area, has sufficient knowledge and experience, can provide a standard level of medical care that is trusted by patients, and understands and can provide information about leading-edge medical care.” The definition is a bit abstract, but my impression was that we will need to have a sufficient discussion and devise a strategy if we are going to try and apply the JMSB definition of “specialist” at JSUM (This is my personal opinion based on what I thought as I read all of the articles published in this issue of the journal).

As long as JMSB is in control of certifying “specialists,” I feel like that we have no choice but to formulate a definition that is in accordance with the intentions of JMSB. However, if we define a “specialist” as someone with relatively shallow knowledge distributed evenly across all areas, I think that we run into the difficult question of whether or not the profession really needs such specialists. If we define an ultrasound specialist as someone with exceptional skill in medical ultrasound in a specific area, I think that it will inevitably differ from the ultrasound “specialist” stipulated by JMSB. I think that it will be necessary to create an ultrasound “specialist” certification as defined by JMSB in order

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for JSUM to survive as an organization, but I also think that we must continue to have ultrasound specialists in specific areas in order for medical ultrasound to continue as an attractive profession.

As an aside, I received the latest impact factor report from Springer Nature on June 21. We were just short of one with an impact factor of 0.966, but it was our best result to date. I will strive to improve the quality of our content and further increase our impact factor going forward. I look forward to

receiving many excellent submissions. Thank you for your attention.

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