



COVID-19

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I took part in a hands-on EUS (endoscopic ultrasonography) workshop at Hua Shan Hospital in Shanghai and a lecture meeting on January 9 and 10 this year. The atmosphere in Shanghai at the time was talk of some odd pneumonia that seemed to be going around in Wuhan in Hubei Province, as if it was a distant problem of little concern to Shanghai. On the contrary, it has become a major concern for everyone. I am talking about the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The death toll from COVID-19 has already exceeded that from severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which spread like wildfire around the world for 9 months beginning in 2002. Reports from across Japan have begun to come in of COVID-19 infections in people with no clear history of contact with infected individuals, and WHO states that the world is facing a pandemic crisis.

On February 14, it was reported that World Health Organization (WHO) senior adviser Nikki Shindo spoke at an emergency seminar held on February 14 in Yokohama by the Japanese Society for Infection Prevention and Control to discuss the problem of the spread of COVID-19, during which she stated that although the number of new cases has begun to decrease in China, the biggest concern around the world right now is for Japan, and that she hoped that every effort would be made to stop the spread of infection now. It is March 5, as I write this, there are now serious concerns in South Korea, Italy, Iran, and other places, not just Japan. The whole world is worried about Japan. I think that now is the time for the entire nation to step up. At my university, symptomatic infected individuals are being housed at Okazaki Medical Center, which is scheduled to open on April 1, at the direct request of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. I would like to express my respect for the entire medical staff who is working hard day and night at Okazaki

Medical Center before it has even opened. Meanwhile, at Fujita Health University Hospital, where I work, we are busy every day preparing to deal with patients suspected of having COVID-19 and symptomatic patients. I imagine the same types of efforts are being made all over Japan, not just at my hospital. This issue of the *Journal of Medical Ultrasonics* (JMU) is scheduled to be published on April 15. By the time this message reaches you, I sincerely hope that we are seeing headlines in the news declaring that the spread of COVID-19 has been halted in Japan.

I have talked a lot about COVID-19 up to this point, but now I would like to mention a little about this issue of JMU. This issue contains 17 intriguing articles. There are five original articles in the area of basic research, seven original articles in the area of clinical research, and one article in the new genre Image. In addition, there are four very educational and interesting review articles in a feature called “Differential diagnosis and treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma: the role of ultrasound,” which was planned by Dr. Kazushi Numata, our Deputy Editor-in-Chief. We are confident that ultrasound topics related to hepatocellular carcinoma are all covered by these four review articles. They contain information that will surely be useful to our readers who write hepatocellular carcinoma-related papers, and we hope that many papers citing these review articles will be published. Three review articles in a feature titled “Echocardiographic management of valvular heart disease,” which was planned by Professor Yutaka Otsuji, were previously published in Vol. 47 No. 1. In the months ahead, we plan to publish “Ultrasonographic diagnosis of pancreatic diseases-This is all you need,” “Everything you need to know about ultrasound for diagnosis of gallbladder diseases,” and other features. The quality of these features, as well, will be very high, so we are confident that they will meet the expectations of our readers.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere best wishes for the health of all of our readers.

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