RUTGERS HEALTH
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Global Health Immersion: Reflecting on Cross-cultural Learning in Medical Education in Fukui, Japan

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Introduction & Background

Fukui prefecture is located on the western coast of Japan in central Honshu and has an estimated population of about 760,000 people as of 2022, and nearly 35% of residents are over the age of 65[1], demonstrating need for healthcare that caters to an aging population. The city of Fukui serves as the town's central hub of businesses and administrative offices, though much of the region is rural[1].



Program Overview

- The University of Fukui and Rutgers have maintained an academic partnership since 1981. Through this collaboration, we completed a 4-week rotation in Emergency and Family Medicine with the department head, Dr. Hiroyuki Hayashi.
- We were also given the **Sukumar and Anne Nagendran International Medical Study Scholarship**, which generously helped fund our exchange program.
- The goals of our rotation were to gain clinical experience in emergency medicine and family medicine, learn about the practice of medicine in rural Japan, and to understand how Japanese culture influences health and well-being.

Aims

- *Develop cultural competence and understand how cultural context can significantly influence patient care.*
- *Challenge ourselves to adapt to a new environment and cultivate empathy beyond language barriers.*
- *Explore differences that exist among global health care systems between the U.S. and Japan.*

Experiences



Figure 1: Japan's EMS helicopter – Doctor-Heli



Figure 2: Dr. Hiroyuki Hayashi and UF's emergency room



Figure 3: ER patient beds

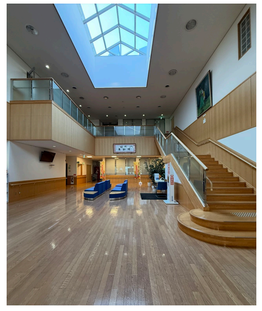


Figure 4: Family Med clinic in Takahama, Fukui



Figure 5: Kampo – Japanese herbal medicine



Figure 6: Dean of Faculty of Medical Sciences



Figure 7: Lectures and rotation in a small rural community hospital in Takahama, Fukui



Figure 8: RWJMS medical students in Kyoto, Japan



Figure 9: Visit to Griffis Museum with Dr. Sada to learn about NB and Fukui's Sister City history

Summary

Hospital Setting:

- Over the course of 4 weeks, we rotated in both Emergency and Family medicine at:
  - University of Fukui Hospital
  - Fukui Prefecture Hospital
  - Wakasa Takahama Hospital
  - University of Fukui Community Medicine Clinic

Clinical Training and Procedures:

- We attended resident grand rounds, formal lectures on topics such as BLS, ED triage, ECG, differential diagnoses for common symptoms, and treatments for patients with bleeding disorders amongst others.
- We participated in patient home visits for elderly who were bed-bound and being taken care of by their families at home.
- Other clinical sites that we visited included Eiheiji Temple and Takahama's community center & hospital. At the Temple, Dr. Hayashi saw monks in intense training and in Takahama, Dr. Ikai saw a majority elderly patient population.
- We strengthened our clinical skills in taking vital signs, H&P, ultrasound, Epley maneuver, nerve blocks, hydrodissections, etc.

Conclusions

- Ultrasound is the primary diagnostic tool used in Fukui, which allows physicians to evaluate patients efficiently at the bedside. Thus, ultrasound is a large focus in Japanese medical education.
- Most clinical encounters practiced a holistic approach where social determinants of health were at the forefront when treating patients and addressing their concerns.
- Our experiences with FM/EM in Fukui enabled us to recognize the value of holistic and cost-effective care in treating an aging rural population.

References

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