

Japanese Symposium of Performing Art Medicine, Kawasaki, July 19, 2004

It has been more than 20 years since the first symposium on performing arts medicine was held in Aspen, and last year, the European Congress of Musician's Medicine had their 10th meeting in Turku, Finland. However, there has never been a conference or symposium on performing arts medicine held in Japan, despite the large numbers of professional musicians and dancers in that country.

This past July, Dr. Naotaka Sakai and four other physicians who have been treating the medical problems of musicians, as well as a manager who has been taking care of musicians' medical and life insurance, organized the first Japanese Symposium of Performing Art Medicine. The symposium was held on July 19, 2004, at the music hall of Senzoku Music College, Kawasaki, Japan, and the program was composed of six invited lectures and a panel discussion with the audience. Approximately 100 people attended the symposium, including physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, orchestra players, soloists, music teachers, piano tuners, and an engineer from a music recording company.

The lectures were on the following topics:

1. Hand pain of musicians, focused on pianists and string players: by Naotaka Sakai, orthopedic surgeon, Yokohama City University and Utsunomiya University
2. Hand pain of musicians, focused on wind instrumentalists: by Koichi Nemoto, orthopedic surgeon, National Defense Medical College
3. Dental problem of wind instrumentalists: by Toshio Nemoto, dentist, Nemoto Dental Clinic
4. Nerve palsy of singers: by Takeo Kobayashi, otorhinolaryngologist, Teikyo University Ichihara Hospital
5. Vocal problem of singers: by Humiaki Yoneyama, otorhinolaryngologist, Yoneyama Otorhinolaryngology Clinic
6. Medical insurance and life insurance for musicians: by Isao Seki, manager, Information Center for Performing Arts and Entertainment

A discussion between the audience and lecturers, chaired by Dr. Naotaka Sakai, followed the lectures. There were active discussions on some medical problems of musicians, including the cause of overuse injuries and the treatment of focal dystonia. Most overuse problems are thought to be

caused by "irrational" (poor) performance technique, but nevertheless, it is difficult to show the differences between "rational" and "irrational" techniques. Music teachers could benefit from use of an audiovisual computerized motion analysis system to be provided by engineers, although a piano tuner pointed out that pianists, for example, could distinguish poor performance technique by the piano tone.

Regarding focal dystonias, various types of symptoms and the difficulty in treatment were discussed. In addition, the audience showed great interest in life and disability insurance for musicians who could no longer perform due to a serious medical problem. Although the Japanese government provides a good medical insurance program, musicians worry about their physical condition, which has a great influence on their ability to earn a living.

The Japanese Symposium of Performing Art Medicine is expected to become a regularly occurring symposium or conference on musician's medicine, similar to the Aspen Symposium and the European Congress.

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Panel discussion following the lectures at the Japanese Symposium on Performing Arts Medicine.