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Medical education in Japan: how the past inform the future

The history of medical education in Japan has experienced drastic changes twice in the last 150 years. The first one was when the Edo era changed to the Meiji era in 1868. During the Edo period, traditional Kampo medicine which originated from traditional Chinese medicine was the standard. However, new Meiji era leaders decided to adopt the German way of education and practice of medicine. The second change was in 1945 when Japan was defeated in World War II. That is when the German system was replaced by the American system in most of the part, but not completely. Since then most of the Japanese medical schools have been following this style of education to train physicians with gradual incremental change next 50 years.

However, over the last 20 years under the leadership of Japan Society of Medical Education (JSME)¹⁾, the speed and variety of changes of medical education has been accelerated with introducing PBL curricula, OSCEs, Simulated patients, mandatory immediate postgraduate basic clinical training for 2 years, the nationwide Common Achievement Test (CAT) and so on. In this presentation, I will touch on major changes we have experienced in medical education last 20 years in Japan and project into the next 20 years.

Reference

- 1) Nobutaro Ban: JAPAN SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION (JSME): ITS HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE LAST 45 YEARS. URL: <http://mj.mefanet.cz/res/file/vol1-iss2/mj-02131206.pdf>

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Dr. Ban graduated from Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine in 1979. He did his internship at Kyoto Prefectural University Hospital for one year and residency in Family Medicine at the Creighton University, Omaha, NE, USA from 1980 to 1983. He had been Board certified in Family Medicine from 1983 to 2010.

He served as Assistant and Associate Professor at the Kawasaki Medical School, Okayama, Japan from 1989 and had taken current position in 1998. He has been serving as the president of the Japan Society for Medical Education since 2009. His interests are in medical education, general medical practice and international collaboration.