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1. Preface

This fiscal year was significant in that we had many new collaborations with congresses and associations. First, live demonstrations from eight international and five domestic hospitals were held in May at the 87th Congress of the Japan Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Society, at which a new system with easier preparation and lower cost was proposed. The 55th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society of Neurology and the 45th Japan Pancreas Society Meeting represented the first international teleconferences in the histories of these organizations. Among other topics, clear transmission of electroencephalogram and involuntary movement were well evaluated. The Japan Society for Endoscopic Surgery organized a special session entitled “Recent Trends of Remote Education” where a variety of active surgical programs were introduced. The 4th Asian Perioperative Nurses Association focused on the theme of international collaboration and hosted a live connection to an operating theater in Korea. Under careful preparation and cooperation with local staff, we succeeded in transmitting the first live endoscopy from Japan to Cancun for the Mexican Association of Gastroenterology.

The 8th Asia Telemedicine Symposium was another big success, held in Fukuoka and co-organized with the National University Hospital Council of Japan. With 200 participants from 18 countries, medical staff and engineers met face-to-face to discuss common problems and future plans, beyond their academic and geographical boundaries. A teleconference featuring directors and deans of top hospitals from six Asian countries was the first program, during which common issues were discussed, such as international collaboration, remote education, and foreign patient care.

New technologies, such as high-definition H.323 and Vidyo, have been used increasingly in the last few years and have contributed to geographic expansion and emergence of new programs. Good examples include a “fetus” teleconference connecting small clinics all over Japan, monthly teleconferences connecting key local hospitals involved in the Kyushu-Okinawa Pediatric Cancer Project, and teleconferencing among affiliated hospitals with recorded video and an annotation system.

We accepted many young doctors from abroad again this year. We also traveled to four preeminent hospitals in Singapore for the first time, with 10 of our staff members including doctors, nurses, engineers, and an infection team. Personnel exchange programs are important not only for their cultural education value, but also to facilitate working synergistically via remote education.

Our center is to be reorganized into a new international office after April of this year. We sincerely hope that we will continue forward toward uniting medical communities worldwide.

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