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1. Preface

TEMDEC had another prosperous year in 2017. The number of the programs offered has grown and geographic expansion has continued for years; in 2017, we organized 134 programs with 65 new members in 23 countries. The accumulated number of programs have reached 856 with 574 institutions in 62 countries. Of note is that a domestic telemedicine workshop was successfully organized in Chile, which was our first in Latin America. Future target regions include Myanmar and Mongolia in Asia, to be followed by Africa, Russia, and Central Asia. In addition, it was a great honor to receive the “Master of the WGO” award from the World Gastroenterology Organization for our decade-long achievements in the field of remote medical education. We expect to expand our activities even further around the globe.

There were more than 50 trainees from abroad this year. A variety of departments accepted them, such as gynecology, dermatology, urology, rehabilitation, and nursing. Regular telemedicine programs were also hosted by departments of pediatrics, neurology, and cardiology. It is nice to know that more and more people are contributing to the globalization of hospitals.

Fifteen years have passed since we started telemedicine. During this time, there have been huge developments both in technology and in medicine. I believe we must make major changes in two aspects. The first is “From technology to contents.” In the initial stage, it was quite difficult to preserve the quality of transmitted images/movies at a reasonable cost. This is why we collaborated with many hospitals to realize the technology. However, today, new technology is readily available for everyone to do it easily. This is why the creation of attractive programs based on the needs of medical providers should be emphasized much more than before. The second aspect is “From education to medical practice.” Most of our achievement has been focused on education. However, now it is the time to apply our experience and knowhow to remote practice for patients. This is just as important as doctors’ education.

We are happy to announce that the 12th Asia Telemedicine Symposium together with the 22nd Congress of Japanese Telemedicine and Telecare Association will be held in November in Fukuoka. We are looking forward to welcoming you all at the age of a new start in telemedicine.

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