

PREFACE

In 1962, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which was subsequently reorganized as the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2001, established the National Cancer Center as the sole government-supported cancer center in Japan. The center consisted of a hospital, a research institute and an administration department. In 1993, a new hospital, the National Cancer Center Hospital East, was opened in Kashiwa City, Chiba, 37 km east of the present National Cancer Center Hospital in Tsukiji, Tokyo. The two hospitals work cooperatively, with some patients treated solely at Kashiwa or at Tsukiji and others referred between them.

The hospital in Tsukiji was rebuilt during 1998 and successfully recommenced its activities in January 1999. As of January 1, 2004, the hospital employs 118 staff doctors, 20 pharmacists, 75 technicians, 432 nurses, and 106 residents and chief residents. The mission statement of the hospital is as follows: "While serving as the primary facility for cancer treatment, to provide the very best in clinical medicine, based on outstanding science and trust between our patients and health care team."

The basic policies of the hospital are: to give the best patient care and treatment possible; to contribute to the development of new cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment strategies; to educate physicians and healthcare providers throughout Japan on the latest cancer therapies; and to serve as a resource center for the most current and complete information on cancer treatments for our patients and the public.

The hospital accepts approximately 60 foreign and 200-250 Japanese trainees every year. In 2003, a total of 201,114 individuals were treated as inpatients and 259,810 as outpatients. Clinical decisions are made according to the organ(s) that are affected by cancer, and teams of specialists, including both surgical and medical staff, collaborate to ensure that patients receive the most appropriate treatment and the highest quality of care.

As of February 1, 2004, the Research Center for Cancer Prevention and Screening has operated at the Tsukiji campus. This center comprises four divisions - cancer screening, diagnosis, prevention and information - and is expected to play a leading role in cancer prevention and the reduction of cancer incidence and deaths.

The National Cancer Center is facing a major change in direction from April 2004; whilst other national hospitals are being transferred to the status of agency, the Japanese Government has decided that the center will remain national. As the sole national cancer center in Japan, it will continue to devote its efforts towards outstanding fundamental research, and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Communication between the center and other major cancer hospitals remains high. A computer network was introduced at the National Cancer Center in 1994 and is now routinely used for videoconferencing between the main cancer hospitals in Japan, including those specializing in cancer therapy in Sapporo, Kure, Matsuyama and Fukuoka, as well as the National Cancer Center East in Kashiwa. In 2003, the network was further expanded to include 10 prefectural cancer center hospitals; a total of 16 institutions are now connected.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the support that we have received from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, other governmental organizations, private organizations and individuals, and the Foundation for the Promotion of Cancer Research. I am also very grateful for the efforts of my colleagues at the hospital, who devoted themselves to providing complete and accurate information for this report. The 9th Annual Report is dedicated to the patients who have continuously supported and stimulated us.

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