

## Poster presentation

### Oral health promotion activities for special needs people in the Kingdom of Tonga for the 2005 ~Let's go to the dental office!!~

Mami Endoh<sup>1,2</sup>, Reiri Takeuchi<sup>2,3</sup>, Sayuri Kawamura<sup>2,4</sup>, Kohji Kawamura<sup>2,4</sup>, Takato Nomoto<sup>1</sup>  
endoh.mami@nihon-u.ac.jp

<sup>1</sup>*Departments of Special Needs Dentistry, Nihon University School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

<sup>2</sup>*South Pacific Medical Team, Kawaguchi, Japan*

<sup>3</sup>*Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Nihon University School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

<sup>4</sup>*Kawamura Dental Office, Kawaguchi, Japan*

#### **【Introduction】**

The South Pacific Medical Team (SPMT), a voluntary group organised by Japanese dentists, dental hygienists and medical doctors, has worked to improve oral health in the Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga) since 1998. Our team has also supported special needs people on the Tongatapu Island including the capital city since 2005. The program for special needs people has been promoted by the SPMT and the Tongan dental team from the Vaiola Hospital in relationship with the Ministry of Health. Up until now we have been performing the dental check-ups, promoting for the dental education and the (re)habilitations of eating, and donating toothbrushes. Therefore, Special needs people have acquired good oral hygiene and oral health behaviour such as brushing their teeth every day. However, until now they have still not gone to dental hospitals or dental offices, so we were in the process of establishing program to experience dental facilities.

#### **【Subject and facility】**

We have invited special needs people and staffs of Ofa Tui Amanaki Centre (OTA) to see and experience the dental office in Vaiola national hospital in Tongatapu. OTA was established in 1968, and continues to have 3 major programs education, home visitation and early intervention program for intellectual disability, Down`s syn., cerebral palsy etc.

#### **【Activities】**

We explained to them the experience schedule of the day in advance by explain and using drawings. SPMT members demonstrated how to treat special needs patients by different techniques such as systematic desensitization or Tell-Show-Do method for Tongan dental staff.

First, we walked with together with special needs people and showed them the whole dental office. Japanese staff demonstrated how to use a dental chair, how to brush their teeth and a professional tooth cleaning on a fearless patient. Other members were watching this situation. After that, Tongan staff carried out the role of the Japanese staff for the next patient. At the beginning, some participants cried or escaped, but eventually all of them ended up with a smile.

#### **【Discussion and Conclusion】**

At the beginning of the special needs dental program, most of the mission had been performed by Japanese staff, and Tongan staff just looked on. In 2015, Tongan staff could do some. We realized that this activity gradually expanded in a good direction. In international corporative dental activities, we sometimes find that treatments by visiting volunteers are given priority, but we are never treated. We were just supporters. We have been guiding and supporting Tongan people so that the Tongan staff can coordinate a dental program in the future. We built a relationship based on mutual trust and good cooperation through long term activities. We hope this program is performed by self-reliance among the Tongan people.