Oral health promotion activities for special needs people in Kingdom of Tonga since 2005

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Introduction

The South Pacific Medical Team, a voluntary group organised by Japanese dentists, has worked to improve oral health in Kingdom of Tonga(Tonga) since 1998. Our team have also supported for disabled people in two institutions for the disabled or the special class at a primary school in Tongatapu Island since 2005. The program for the disabled has been promoted by the Tongan dental team from dental office of the Ministry of Health. Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) have supported us since 2008.

Where is Tonga?

The Kingdom of Tonga is part of Polynesia in the South Pacific Ocean. It consists of 170 islands divided into five main island groups: the Tongatapu Islands, including the capital city; the Ha'apai Islands; the Vava'u Islands; the Niua Islands; and the ‘Eua Islands. These islands are distributed across an area of 600 km north to south and 200 km east to west. In 1998, the population of Tonga was about 100,000.

Subjects and facilities

1. Tonga Red Cross Society: CENTER, Home visiting

[Decentralized care(D), Down’s syn., Cerebral palsy(CP), etc.]

The Ota Tui Amanaki Centre (OTA) was established in 1968, and continues to have 3 major programs such as education, home visitation and early intervention program.

2. PETESAITA DISABLED ALONGA CENTRE

[Physical disorder, CP, ID, Defness, Autism, etc.]

The ALONGA for adult disabled people was established in 1977.

3. The special class at Negele’la primary school

[Aut, ID, Down’s syn.]

The class was established in 2004 for primary school kids with special needs.

4. Care unit in the paediatric ward at the Viola’s hospital

[Premature baby, Baby with cleft lip and palate]

Viola Hospital is the main hospital in Tonga, situated on Taufa’ahau Road on the outskirts of the capital city, Nuku’Alofa.

Conclusion

We have the relationship of mutual trust and good cooperation with them by long term activities. We hope this program is performed by self-reliance among Tongan people.

Activities

1. Oral education

Tongan staffs offered oral education for the participants, their parents and staff of facilities, Japanese were advisers for them.

2. Donations

We held the oral festival in a flea market on weekend.

3. Prevention for oral disease and dysfunction

We made slides of presentation together, Tongan staffs offered a presentation for them by Tongan language.

<2005~2007>

Japanese staffs had decided almost the missions and the schedule of voluntary activities.

<2008>

We changed our previous ideas. We spent day time in the institutions and had much time to discuss with staffs of the institutions and the dental team for finding out their real needs.

<2009~>:

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<2012~>:

Home visiting for dependent people at home have started.

<2015>

OTA’s member had never come to dental hospital, so we have invited them and staff of OTA to see and experience dental office.

1. Orientation of dental treatment for OTA’s member

2. Medical Check up: height and weight, blood sugar and blood pressure

ALONGA’s member had never tested blood sugar etc., so we have done medical checkup with public nurse at ALONGA.

Data sharing

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