

## **Oral health promotion for disabled people in Kingdom of Tonga since 1998**

Mami Endoh<sup>1-3</sup>, Reiri Takeuchi<sup>3,4</sup>, Sayuri Kawamura<sup>3,5</sup>, Kohji Kawamura<sup>3,5</sup>, Nobuko Nihei<sup>2,3</sup>, Kyoko Matsumoto<sup>6</sup>, Yukiko Hara<sup>3</sup>, Chieko Taguchi<sup>3,7</sup>, Seigo Kobayashi<sup>3,7</sup>, Yasuaki Kakinoki<sup>1</sup>

1st author's e-mail: r09endo@fa.kyu-dent.ac.jp

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Special Needs and Geriatric Dentistry, Kyushu dental university, Kitakyushu, Japan*

<sup>2</sup>*Departments of Special Needs Dentistry, Nihon University School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

<sup>3</sup>*South Pacific Medical Team, Kawaguchi, Japan*

<sup>4</sup>*Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Nihon University School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

<sup>5</sup>*Kawamura Dental Office, Kawaguchi, Japan*

<sup>6</sup>*Nihon University Hospital School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

<sup>7</sup>*Preventive and Public Oral Health, Nihon University School of Dentistry at Matsudo, Matsudo, Japan*

The South Pacific Medical Team, a voluntary group organised by Japanese dentists and dental hygienists, has worked to improve oral health in Kingdom of Tonga since 1998. The Kingdom of Tonga (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. One of the objects is to support for the special need people in two institutions for the special needs people or the special class at a primary school in Tongatapu Island. The program for the special needs people has been promoted by the Tongan dental team from dental section of Vaiola Hospital, Ministry of Health since 2005.

We have performed the dental check up, worked for the dental education and the rehabilitations of eating, and donated toothbrushes, etc. From 2005 to 2007, almost all the mission had been performed by Japanese staffs only, and Tongan staffs just looked on our action. Since 2008, we changed our previous ideas and spent to discuss with the staffs of the institutions and the dental team in the institutions all the day. At 2012, we could go to dependent people at home.

We made an effort to find out for things what they need. Now we have the relationship of mutual trust. We hope this program is performed by self-reliance among Tongan people.