

FERCAP BEYOND 10

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After 10 years of the fruitful adventure of the *Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian & Western Pacific Region* (FERCAP), the only concern for the members of the previously and newly formed Steering Committee is the new Chair because he is the only active member of FERCAP from Japan so far. However, I am very much optimistic because that is our only concern.

As all of us have noticed, the world is getting smaller because of the development of transportation and communication devices. Actually, internet communities like Facebook provoked the democratic movements of several countries to change their governments. I appreciate such modern technologies in making positive ways of change but at the same time I am pretty much confident that virtual is virtual and that we really need more face to face contacts to make real communication. Of course 10 years from now, more fantastic technologies will overtake such virtual situation.

In terms of close communication, FERCAP has been promoting an ideal community in the region. More and more ethics committees (ECs)/institutional review boards (IRBs) are getting involved in our activities and their quality of review improved quite dramatically. Based on such an achievements, I would like to proceed with three major agenda as Chair: continuous quality improvement of EC/IRB review practices, stronger support for the establishment of national accreditation systems, and promotion of ethical product research and development for public health.

Continuous Quality Improvement of EC/IRB Review Practices

We are now entering the second phase of quality management of ECs/IRBs in the region. In this phase, an increase in the number of second generation FERCAP surveyors is necessary to maintain our survey and evaluating system. The FERCAP education and training program will be much more empowered by using all possible technologies and mechanisms.

Stronger Support for the Establishment of National Accreditation Systems

Related to continuous quality improvement of EC/IRB ethical practices, we are strongly proposing that each country establish a national accreditation system to improve its quality that their society can rely on. We will support such efforts to establish national accreditation systems.

Promotion of Ethical Product Research and Development for Public Health

We have been working together for 10 years dreaming of our final products that will benefit our own societies and communities. To make this dream come true, EC/IRB quality is essential and at the same time we will need more human resources in the region to push the activities of product research and development to meet regional public health needs. Along this line, six universities namely, Nagasaki University, Tokyo University, Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University, Shanghai Second Military Medical University, Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia, made an alliance through a *Diploma Course on Product Research and Development to Meet Public Health Needs* six years ago. The fifth course was held in Nagasaki last October 10 to November 1, 2011. This course will finally be connected to a Ph.D. course in each university. FERCAP will continue to help in providing the ethical component for these Diploma and Ph.D. programs.

Beyond Expectation

I like the word synergy. Synergistic effect will be produced by our passion. I hope that FERCAP will advance further not only along the proposed agenda but ***beyond expectation***.