

## Sasakawa Nursing Fellow 2023 Progress Report

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## **1. Background**

I am a first-year Master of Public Health (MPH) student in the Global Health Department (GH) at Emory University. After obtaining my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in Japan in 2014, I worked mainly as a public health nurse in a private organization providing comprehensive health support for a resettlement assistance program for refugees from arrival to resettlement in Japan. Through the study of the Sasakawa Nursing Fellows from 2022, I realized that the issues faced by individual refugees are connected to issues facing Japan and the world. Therefore, I decided to study at Emory to acquire evidence-based effective approach skills to contribute to solving various global and local health issues.

## **2. The objectives and their progress**

I am pursuing three specific objectives in my studies at Emory University, in relation to the background mentioned earlier. The specific goals and their progress are as follows:

### **Objective 1: Understanding global health issues and acquiring collaborative skills**

In the core class of the Global Health department, instead of focusing solely on the objective of understanding global health issues, I studied fundamental ethics, principles, and relevant international organizations that underpin these issues. This knowledge could equip me with a solid framework for analyzing and approaching complex health challenges from a broader perspective. For instance, in the lecture on the grant proposal, I wrote a proposal on implementing measles vaccination among a specific immigrant community displaced and living in groups due to a disaster. I had numerous opportunities to gain a multifaceted perspective, such as hearing reasons for the decline in vaccination rates from a medical doctor of that nationality and being advised in the peer review by other classmates to delve deeper into the impact of the intervention on the community, particularly concerning vaccine hesitancy and medical mistrust. This collaborative approach could enhance my understanding of global health issues but also strengthen my ability to develop effective interventions that are sensitive to the unique needs and contexts of vulnerable populations. I continue to develop skills in addressing global challenges alongside peers through group discussions and presentations in GH classes.

### **Objective 2: Acquisition of fundamental epidemiological and statistical skills**

For this objective, I studied Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the core GH classes. Additionally, I plan to apply these skills during my practicum at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Global Public Health Emergency Branch. During this practicum, I participate in the MET-PILOT project (Mitigation of Emergent Threats for Pregnancy and Infant Linked Outcome Initiatives). This project aims to improve maternal and newborn health (MNH) outcomes by enhancing case detection and monitoring of urgent threats to MNH, such as emerging infectious diseases and obstetric complications<sup>1</sup>. My role involves developing an assessment tool for emergent infectious diseases and small and vulnerable newborns to empower midwives in district-level health facilities. I develop a framework and intend to pilot-test and complete the project locally during the summer break of 2024. Furthermore, I will continue to enhance my skills in classes and apply them to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes in Indonesia.

### **Objective 3: Adaptation to new cultures and environments**

Pursuing this objective, I actively engaged in cultural exchange events and interacted with individuals from diverse backgrounds. In addition, I learned about life and culture from my roommate, a Ph.D. student in political science, and stayed at her parents' house, which helped me get used to American life. Furthermore, my experience providing comprehensive medical support for refugees upon their arrival in Japan has heightened my interest in living in the United States. Through discussions with refugee support workers at churches and NGOs in Atlanta, I have gained insight into the challenges faced by refugees, including medical expenses, limited access to healthcare due to transportation issues, and language barriers. Nonetheless, there may also be aspects that Japan, where the refugee population is on the rise, could adopt. For example, health screenings and vaccinations tailored to the refugee's country of origin, and religious food options in supermarkets. Additionally, support organizations that actively accept volunteers and aim to provide broad support to refugees facing diverse issues such as mental health may also be applicable in Japan. As Japan's refugee population tends to grow and diversify, implementing such approaches could facilitate their integration and well-being. As a Sasakawa Nursing Fellow, I continue to actively engage in and share various activities with people from diverse backgrounds to broaden my perspective and gain a clearer understanding of the world.

### **3. Acknowledgments**

I am deeply grateful to the Sasakawa Health Foundation for their generous support, which enables me to study in the MPH program at Emory University. Thanks to the financial

assistance, academic lectures, and life advice provided by the Sasakawa Health Foundation, I have been empowered to embark on this academic journey and pursue my passion for research and advocacy on global and Japanese local health issues.

### **Reference**

1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Mitigation of emergent threats for pregnancy and infant link outcome initiatives*. [Unpublished Study Proposal].