



Dr. Etsuko Kita,
Chair of Sasakawa Memorial Health
Foundation

Promoting Home-visit Nursing Care in Japan

Background: Japan is a super-aging society. By 2025, it will have the highest ratio of elderly people of any country in the world. Over 25% of the population will be 75 or older, and one in every three persons will be 65 or older. In response to a critical shortage of home-care nurses and nursing stations in Japan, Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation (SMHF: <http://www.smhf.or.jp/e/>) received a grant from The Nippon Foundation (TNF: <http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/en/>), our parent foundation, to initiate a project in the area of home-care nursing.

In 2014, SMHF introduced a comprehensive program to train nurses in how to establish and run home-care nursing centers, recognizing that nurses engaged in the field of home-care nursing will be essential to sustaining the integrated community care system now being promoted by the Japanese government. We called this project Start-Up and Operation of The Nippon Foundation Home-care Nursing Centers.

Each nurse who completes the training program will become a director of one of The Nippon Foundation Home-care Nursing Centers. These also serve as community health hubs, meaning that the nurse will also act as a coordinator to enhance inter-professional collaboration within the community care system.

Helping nurses to develop as human beings and acquire entrepreneurial acumen: The main objective of this intensive eight-month training program is to prepare nurses for the challenging and rewarding role of home-care nursing. The curriculum aims at total capacity-building of nurses and is designed to equip them with the skills, knowledge and professional dynamism needed to operate The Nippon Foundation Home-care Nursing Centers. The program is divided up into an initial two months of lectures, followed by 10 weeks of clinical practice, a further two months of lectures and a final six weeks spent drafting business plans and making presentations.

The first course of lectures provides an overview of issues in home-visit nursing, focusing on four main subjects: 1) health governance, 2) marketing and business management, 3) nursing practice, and 4) "inter-professional collaboration."

In the lectures on health governance, trainees are introduced to topics such as Japan's current policies on medical care, long-term care, home-care nursing



and rehabilitation, and social welfare. For marketing and business management, sessions include domestic and international health economics, finance and marketing management, accounting, academic writing, drawing up an action plan, community rehabilitation, understanding leadership, and Project Cycle Management (PCM). Nursing practice lectures cover a wide variety of topics, among them dementia,

swallowing and ingestion, rehabilitation nutrition, sarcopenia, pathology of infectious diseases, infectious disease prevention, physical assessment, long-term care and mental health of the elderly, palliative and hospice care, oral cavity care, end-of-life care, and ethics.

In the field of inter-professional collaboration, lectures cover social welfare and long-term care, legal issues in home-care nursing, family support, orthopedics of the elderly, locomotive syndrome, nutritional management for the elderly, pharmacotherapy, clinical laboratory medicine, nursing research, health literature search, consultative and supporting roles in home-care nursing, collaboration in community health care, nutritional and diet support, terminal care of patient and family, and understanding loss and grief.

After the two months of lectures, students spend most of the next 10 weeks in a clinical setting at home-care nursing stations to learn at firsthand how to communicate with and care for home-based patients and their family members. These and other concepts are studied and applied in increasing depth throughout the program. This helps to provide the trainees with the skills and knowledge required for home-visit nursing. Importantly, it enables them to develop skills in information gathering, decision making, and plan execution, all of which are required for operation and management of The Nippon Foundation Home-care Nursing Centers.

To date, 17 nurses have completed the program. Of these, 10 have already or will soon launch The Nippon Foundation Home-care Nursing Centers in downtown Yokohama, suburban areas of Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka, and other parts of Japan. Another nine nurses are currently receiving training. We will be grateful to update their progress in the latter issue of this bulletin.

SMHF is fully committed to supporting the total capacity development of nurses who can play a vital role in the field of home-visit nursing care for a super-aging society, thus enabling more people to live out their final days in comfort and with dignity at home.

¹ The integrated community care system is a system that provides the elderly with housing, medical care, long-term care, preventive services, and livelihood support in an integrated manner. The system needs to be created by municipalities according to the features of each community, aiming to enable people to continue to live in their home towns to the end of their lives with a sense of security (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare 2013).