

PREFACE

UNITED STATES–JAPAN COOPERATIVE MEDICAL SCIENCES PROGRAM 40TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

On January 13, 1965, Prime Minister Sato of Japan and President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States signed the memorandum of agreement that established the United States–Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program (USJCMSP). Both leaders recognized the important contributions that scientific collaboration could make in the relationships between two great countries. Their choice of scientific focus for this collaborative relationship was indeed a wise one. But perhaps more important was the concept that this collaborative research program would work to find solutions not only to the myriad health problems of Japan and the United States, but most important, to the health problems of Asia. The decision to establish the USJCMSP sent a clear and unambiguous signal that we needed to do all that we could to better understand these health problems and to apply the research capabilities present in both countries to solve these problems. The impact of this joint decision on scientific efforts in Japan, the United States, and Asia has been transcendental.

Their joint decision is easy to understand in full light of history, for both men were indeed visionaries—President Johnson saw the possibilities of a “Great Society,” and Prime Minister Sato saw the economic and technological brilliance of post-war Japan. It is also clear that their interests in improving health were at the forefront of their thinking. The health problems of Asia, with two-thirds of the world’s population, were indeed daunting. Many of these problems—malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, and other infectious diseases—were endemic in the region. They clearly appreciated the central fact that these infections compromised economic, social, and political development in Asia.

Now we are about to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the USJCMSP. The USJCMSP can rightfully claim many scientific accomplishments during these last 40 years. The USJCMSP has been at the forefront of efforts to control cholera. These efforts, fueled by the development of improved vaccines, and many new therapies have extended life throughout Asia. Many interventions, such as oral rehydration therapy, have also improved the control of diarrheal disease throughout the world. Other important accomplishments include the development of vaccines to prevent hepatitis B, rotavirus, influenza, and other important diseases. But perhaps most important, the USJCMSP has demonstrated that two nations can work productively for over 40 years, develop strong scientific bonds, and also make meaningful, permanent contributions to the betterment of society.

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