

# Editorial

## INDUSTRIAL HEALTH: From the Cradle to an International Journal

*INDUSTRIAL HEALTH* (IH) was founded as a national and international quarterly by the National Institute of Industrial Health (NIIH) within the Ministry of Labour of Japan in 1963. It was the successor of the *Bulletin of the National Institute of Industrial Health*, which was the first journal of occupational health published in Japan in 1958, i.e., one year before the publication of the *Japanese Journal of Industrial Health* (Japan Society for Occupational Health). The founding Editor-in-Chief of IH was Dr Masayoshi Yamaguchi, MD, DrMedSc & MPH, a graduate of The University of Tokyo (UT) and the first Director General of the NIIH. The Editorial Members were Professor Haruo Katsunuma, MD, DrMedSc & MPH, Department of Public Health, UT; Dr Hiroshi Takahashi, DrSc & MSc, Department of Chemistry, UT; Professor Toshio Toyama, MD, DrMedSc & MPH, Department of Preventive Medicine, Keio University; and Dr Hiroyuki Sakabe, MD & DrMedSc, Division of Environmental Hygiene, NIIH.

In the years 1973 and 1975 during the infancy of IH, I published three original papers<sup>1–3</sup>) in it as part of my work for the degree of Doctor of Medical Sciences (DrMedSc), which was equivalent to a PhD. At that time I was working at the Department of Internal Medicine of the Tokyo Labour Accident Hospital as an occupational physician following graduation from UT in 1966, and was conferred a DrMedSc by my *Alma Mater* in January 1974. The publication of these papers, together with a few other previous papers<sup>4</sup>), was the start of my scientific communication with my colleagues throughout the world.

From this time on, I began to publish my own original papers in internationally distinguished journals such as the *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*<sup>5</sup>) (Scand J Work Environ Health), the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*<sup>6–10</sup>) (currently, *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, OEM), the *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*<sup>11, 12</sup>), the *Archives of Environmental Health* (ditto, Arch Environ Occup Health)<sup>13–18</sup>), the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* (Am J Ind Med)<sup>19–22</sup>), and some other journals<sup>23–30</sup>).

In 1977, sixteen years after the foundation of the IH, the NIIH was designated as the first WHO (World Health Organization) Collaborating Center in Occupational Health in Japan to expand its activity further to Asia and developing countries. Dr Yamaguchi, the first Director General

of the NIIH and the first Editor-in-Chief of IH was replaced by Dr Sakabe in that year. Thereafter, the number of articles published in IH tended to gradually decline until the year 1992. A rapid increase in the number of articles published ensued until 1997 during the period of Dr Sohei Yamamoto, the fourth Editor-in-Chief<sup>31, 32</sup>), after which a trend of decline was re-established until 2003, when a revival began which has continued through to the present<sup>32</sup>). In spite of these publication trends, the total number of citations received for articles published in IH was relatively constant until the year 1998, when the number began increasing, slowly at first, then rapidly after 2003 during the period of Professor Haruhiko Sakurai and myself, the fifth and sixth Editor-in-Chief<sup>32</sup>).

For the last nine years, I have had the special privilege of promoting the scientific and administrative advancement of IH as well as first as the Director General of the NIIH in 2000, then as the President of the NIIH (2001–2006), re-organized as an independent semi-governmental institution under the new Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan, and currently as the President of JNIOOSH from 2006 as well as the newly founded National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (JNIOOSH, 2006–2009)<sup>33</sup>).

The readers will have noted that IH has made a remarkable change as an international journal both in quantity and quality over the last ten years, as described by us previously<sup>34</sup>). Within this context, we have invited to our Advisory Editors, some Editors-in-Chief in our fellow international journals such as Am J Ind Med (Professor Philip Landrigan), Arch Environ Occup Health (Professor Kaye Kilburn), and Scand J Work Environ Health (Professor Mikko Härmä). With these continued efforts as well as the support of the MHLW of Japan, I hope that IH will further progress science and technology to promote the safety, health, and welfare of all workers in Japan and the world. Finally I thank all the past and current Managing Editors, Honorary and Consulting Editors, Editors, and Editorial Secretaries of the journal together with the authors, reviewers and readers for their kind help and collaboration.

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