

Latin American Collaborative Research Center, TMDU Santiago, Chile

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The Latin American Collaborative Research Center (LACRC) was established within the Clinica Las Condes (CLC) facility in Santiago, Chile, as one of TMDU's overseas activity centers, according to an agreement concluded in July 2009 between TMDU, CLC, and the Ministry of Health of Chile.

TMDU Activities in Chile in 2010

A national colorectal cancer screening project was scheduled to start in Chile in May 2010 pursuant to the agreement mentioned above, but this project was postponed until 2011 because of the unexpected occurrence of the tragic Chilean earthquakes of Feb. 27, 2010. To help support our Chilean partners as they recover from this disaster, TMDU held an internal fundraising effort and was able to donate ¥2,054,285 to CLC. With this donation, CLC was able to restore the medical equipment in the Department of Pediatrics in Felix Hospital, which was heavily damaged by the earthquakes.

LACRC operations began in May 2010 when Dr. Takashi Ito, a human pathology specialist, became the first TMDU faculty member to be assigned to the overseas activity center. Clinical collaboration via LACRC was initiated in June 2010 when Dr. Hiroshi Uetake, a colorectal surgeon, was posted to the facility for two months. Dr. Ito was joined in January 2011 by Dr. Tetsuro Nishikage, an esophageal and general surgeon. Drs. Ito and Nishikage will join the national colorectal cancer screening program in clinical practice (endoscopy and pathology), research, and the educational training of at least eight young Chilean doctors each year.

TMDU dispatched a delegation from Aug. 4 to 15, 2010 which was headed by President Takashi Ohyama. President Ohyama was accompanied by Dr. Sasaki, Trustee for Planning/International Exchange, three professors of clinical medicine (Drs. Sugihara, Kawano, and Watanabe) and three pro-



LACRC is located on the 3rd floor of CLC's main building. The door reads "National University Corporation Tokyo Medical and Dental University" and displays the TMDU and CLC logos.

fessors of basic medicine (Drs. Yuasa, Inazawa, and Eishi). There were three delegations: Attended the LACRC opening ceremony, supported a symposium and training course organized by CLC and TMDU, and discussed TMDU activities for the national colorectal cancer screening proj-

ect and student exchange programs between TMDU and the University of Chile.

LACRC Opening Ceremony

The LACRC opening ceremony was held at CLC on Aug. 9, 2010. TMDU invited many people who were involved in the establishment of this new activity center, including officials from the Ministry of Health of Chile, the CEO and hospital doctors from CLC, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine and representatives from the University of Chile, the ambassador and staff members from the Japanese Embassy in Santiago and the director and staff members of the JICA office in Chile. The ceremony celebrated the inauguration of LACRC with congratulatory speeches, which were followed by a dinner party.

The speeches provided an introduction to the long history of TMDU's contribution to research and clinical work on gastric cancer in Chile, in particular with regards to the introduction of Japanese methods and knowledge through the JICA training courses that have been held both in Tokyo and Santiago for the past 20 years. The troubling recent rapid increase in the mortality rate of colorectal cancer in Chile was also reported to the audience. The necessity of close collaboration in



TMDU Drs. Nishikage (left) and Ito (right) are now working in LACRC with a LACRC secretary, Ms. Andrea Vergara Carmona (far right) and a medical technician, Ms. Ana Maria Wielandt (far left) for colorectal cancer screening using the immunological fecal occult blood test.

this field through the establishment of LACRC and posting of researchers and clinicians from TMDU to LACRC, became apparent to all.

On the day of LACRC opening ceremony, the TMDU delegation visited the Ministry of Health to see the Health Minister, Dr. Jaime Manalich, who was a formerly director of the CLC hospital. Dr. Manalich and Dr. Ohyama confirmed their shared keen desire to implement the national colorectal screening program. Dr. Manalich was unable to attend the LACRC opening ceremony as he was managing the medical response for the trapped Chilean miners, whose accident occurred just after the delegation arrived in Santiago. We saw Dr. Manalich every day on the TV news in



TMDU delegation members (from right, Drs. Yuasa, Ito, Inazawa, Sasaki, Watanabe, Uetake, Sugihara, Ohyama, Eishi, Kawano, Ms. Iida, and Prof. Yoshida, respectively) in front of the CLC emergency helicopter at the CLC hospital heliport with the Andes in the background.



On the day of the LACRC opening ceremony, TMDU President Ohyama and the new Minister of Health of Chile, Dr. Manalich, confirmed their keen desire to implement the national program of colorectal cancer screening in Chile.



Chile, and were very pleased to see him handling the medical aspects of the rescue effort so well.

Symposium and Training Course

A symposium and training course were held in CLC over a four-day period to teach Japanese knowledge and techniques to doctors in Chile and the greater Latin American region. At the opening of the symposium, Dr. Ohyama explained the background and purposes of the training course to more than 200 doctors in attendance. According to the agreement reached between TMDU and CLC, the symposium will be held every year for a total of five years.

A total of 15 lectures on diagnosis and treatment of esophago-gastric and colorectal cancers were provided by six TMDU professors at the symposium. There were also four panel discussions and an interactive workshop. Several German professors were also invited, and the Japanese and German researchers wore soccer uniforms as they debated the different diagnostic criteria and treatments used in their respective countries.

Two graduates of the TMDU-JICA training course also made presentations at the symposium. Dr. Eduardo Fenocchi, the leader of the national colorectal cancer screening program in Uruguay, reported on the results of screening 20,000 people in his country. Dr. Alexandra Montalvo, who is now trying to organize a similar national project in Ecuador, reported the results of screening 1,000 people in her country. The two doctors also helped the TMDU professors and Latin American doctors communicate with each other in English and Spanish, and attended the LACRC opening ceremony.

The National Colorectal Cancer Screening Project

All of the TMDU delegation members visited

CLC's hospital to discuss TMDU activities for the national colorectal screening project. First, a large-scale pilot study will screen 30,000 people a year for five years starting in May 2011, and supported by Chilean research grants (FONDECIT and FONDEF) with donations of screening test kits (150,000 kits for five years) from EIKEN, and recent model endoscopes (two sets) from Fujifilm. In addition, JICA will support the research aspect of this project by dispatching a Japanese molecular biologist to LACRC.

Although the project targets the screening of asymptomatic people for early detection of colorectal cancer, TMDU also supports work on public health issues in Santiago. Many symptomatic people are waiting for medical examination and treatment in Chile's largest national hospital, San Borgia Hospital. Doctors from TMDU and CLC will help the hospital's endoscopy unit decrease the number of patients on the waiting list. To this end, training in endoscopy and pathology for young Chilean doctors will be done at both CLC and San Borgia Hospital.

TMDU Exchange Students

In October 2010, six medical students were dispatched to LACRC for a 5-month term in order to do medical research as part of their project semester, a key feature of the TMDU curriculum. These 4th year students completed all of their lectures in clinical and basic medicine with excellent results.

President Ohyama provided a scholarship for these students to work at LACRC, with the expectation that they will be motivated to pursue research and international activities thanks to their early exposure to collaborative activities undertaken by TMDU and its international partners in Chile. The students are now working with three CLC professors in the fields of molecular biology, cancer genetics, and histopathology.