

EDITORIAL

Celebrating the global impact of rheumatology research: preface to the Viewpoint Article – ‘What are the hot topics in Japanese rheumatology? – Go above and beyond’ by Yoshiya Tanaka, Japan

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Science is global, as is the impact of the rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMD). Our journal, RMD Open, which is an official organ of the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology, aims to publish high-quality research covering the full spectrum of RMD research coming from all parts of the world and not only Europe. This ambition is reflected by the composition of the Editorial Board, where all continents are represented.

Interestingly, international collaboration in the field of immunology which is closely linked and, in many aspects, an integral part of our discipline, started many years ago, not only with international exchanges between the USA, Canada and Europe but also with Japan. A perfect example concerns Shibasaburo Kitasato who came to Germany in 1885 as a postdoctoral fellow and together with Emil von Behring was instrumental in the development of the first antibody therapy to cure diphtheria, which was the number one killer of children at this time.¹ Another more recent example of a powerful and rapid international approach addressing urgent unmet need in the rheumatic diseases comprises the response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, whereby EULAR worked together with other global agencies, for example, ACR and APLAR to prosper new treatment guidelines in the context of active disease, and advanced information concerning the use of emerging vaccines in people with RMDs. The rheumatology community responded rapidly, and by working together, saved lives.

Never more than now, it is important to learn what is ongoing across the regions

of the world in our field. We plan to cover this in a new series of articles addressing important aspects of research in rheumatology across the globe starting with Japan, on the occasion of the imminent Congress of the Japanese Society of Rheumatology, which will be a physical meeting again after 2 years of virtual exchange. It is exciting to learn what has been achieved in this country, itself a powerhouse of rheumatology innovation, and what are the current topics that dominate thinking therein. Of course, fascinating research is going on in so many other parts of the world and we will cover this work in subsequent articles. So please watch out for future viewpoint papers to learn what is done in the rheumatology regions that have remarkable impact on the global development of our field.

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REFERENCE

1 Robert Koch Institute. Friend and collaborator - Shibasaburo Kitasato

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