

## <Preface>

# Recent topics in public health in Japan 2020

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The “Journal of the National Institute of Public Health” is published 6 times a year to promptly cover up-to-date topics in the field of public health; including health, health care, social care and environmental health, and to transmit evidence-based accurate knowledge and information to healthcare professionals. Although the journal mainly targets the readers in Japan, a special feature issue to disseminate the information about the Japanese public health to countries all over the world has been published once a year since 2019.

This feature issue “Recent topics in public health in Japan 2020” covers various topics rather than a specific detailed one because the information accessible from other countries is very limited especially in the field of public health despite the attracting interest in Japan or Japanese public health from many countries around the world. Thus, this issue is a collection of the following 7 review articles dealing with Japan’s advanced efforts of public health, to which the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) has substantially contributed.

Takemura, Ohmi, and Sone outline the activities performed by public health center (*Hokenjo*) that have contributed to the development of public health in Japan, and describe how the NIPH supported Hokenjo and how the NIPH will contribute to the activities of Hokenjo and the public health system of Japan in the future. Yokoyama provides an overview of the history of national health promotion measures in Japan, which have been implemented since 1978 and have been revised approximately every 10 years according to “plan, do, check, and act” (PDCA) cycles, especially focusing on the midterm evaluation of the current 4<sup>th</sup> revision so-called Health Japan 21 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Sasaki, Aida, and Miura focus on social capital, give an overview of its impact on disaster affected areas, and report on the role of each phase before and after the earthquake, the usefulness of social capital for disaster recovery, and the negative aspects of social capital as well. Watahiki and Matsushige describe the second-phase training course on “Strengthening Social Health Protection towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC)” including content, results and feedback related to learning processes and activities, and assess the overall course to improve this training course to more effectively prepare participants to improve progress towards the achievement of UHC in their country. Sato reviews the basic components of crisis management, along with the promotion of patient safety, with a focus on communications, and introduces recent policies regarding safety promotion, as well as efforts to manage the crises caused by medical incidents in Japan. Kimura and Ueno overview the trends in health information and communication standards in Japan, including health care insurance, history of medical information standards, and activities of related organizations. Hayashi, Kobayashi, Kim, and Kaihara show the law for environmental health in buildings (LEHB) and the results of recent studies on environmental health management of building in Japan, the indoor air environment in specific buildings, and inspection of specific buildings by health centers and tasks for better building environments.

We hope that the information reviewed in this issue will help public health workers in the world to understand that Japanese health policies and related efforts by NIPH have played important roles in improving the nation’s health, and to find that the Japan’s experience will be useful for the improvement of public health in their own countries. For additional information, readers are advised to also see the past feature issue “Recent topics in public health in Japan 2019.”