

Establishment of specialized departments responsible for international medical care and efforts for internationalization



**New establishment of International Medical Support Office
Joint training and interaction with the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa**



University of the Ryukyus Hospital

Activities of the International Medical Support Office

Our hospital newly established "International Medical Support Office" in July 2020, and started the approach to the internationalization as well as strengthening the medical service for foreign patients.

Members of the International Medical Support Committee are multi-disciplinary and have become able to integrate and improve issues and field needs related to handling foreign patients. And also, the International Medical Support Office plays a central role in initiating international exchanges with the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, including joint the disaster drill.

Improvement and strengthening of medical services for foreign patients

In order to provide safe and secure medical care to all patients regardless of nationality or language, the translation of medical documents is being advanced at any time, and efforts are being made to enhance the website for foreign patients. In addition, by installing medical interpretation tablets and dials for foreign patients, the burden on the staff has been reduced. It is possible to correspond to patients in languages other than English, and there is the use of Persian, Vietnamese, Korean, etc. It is pleased to provide a safe service for foreign patients.

Cooperation with the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa

Our hospital is scheduled to relocate to the former site of the Western Air Station Futenma by January 2025. The plan was launched with the aim of holding a joint disaster drill and establishing a framework for collaboration with the adjacent U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. The director of the hospital held an on-line meeting with the new commander of the Navy hospital before the joint drill in 2021.

On December 17th 2021, we held the disaster drill (Tabletop Exercise) that included anti-infection measures, and conducted communication training to exchange information on the number of patients that can be received and the number of patients that need to be transferred between the two facilities by using disaster telephones and applications. This drill was very meaningful because it mainly involved the use of disaster telephone lines and revealed the challenges of using applications. We plan to continue to hold it regularly to strengthen cooperation.

Hawaii-Okinawa medical education Fellowship

As part of the project plan of the Regional Medical Playback Fund in Okinawa, we started the medical education fellowship program to develop young teaching doctors at the clinical training hospitals in Okinawa (Ryu MICs, prefectural hospitals, and Muribushi Okinawa) under the cooperation of the John A. Burns School of Medicine University of Hawaii in 2012. The program has been implemented by the Fund for Comprehensively Securing Regional Medical Care since 2016.

Developed in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine University of Hawaii to develop future leaders in clinical education in Okinawa, the program aims to enhance the clinical teaching skills of young teaching physicians in the prefecture, deepen their collaboration with each other, build networks of teaching physicians, provide English-language questions and answers with the University of Hawaii faculty members through a web meeting system, and develop international skills.

Participation in online training sessions

We participated in online seminars, etc. of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's subsidized project "Promotion of the accreditation system for medical institutions accepting international patients", and viewed about the correspondence of foreign patients at other hospitals. Also, we exchanged opinions with medical institutions in the prefecture, and it was a good opportunity to share problems of Okinawa prefecture as a whole and problems to be tackled in the future.

Continued implementation of English conversation training

In the past, the Okinawa prefectural government fully subsidized English conversation training for employees. However, the training continued even after the completion of the subsidy program and was held one time in two weeks in 2021. The main purpose of the training is to acquire practical medical English conversation skills by learning English conversation, which is mainly used for interviews, examinations, and reception at outpatient clinics.