Establishment of Two Joint Research Departments

The Joint Research Department promotes and enriches our research activities, utilizing funds offered by external organizations willing to conduct joint research with our university. In AY 2018, we established the following two Joint Research Departments that are expected to accelerate their research and to obtain a wealth of research results.

Joint Research Department of Telemedicine and Telecare (established on April 1)

Its purpose is to collect evidence for the effectiveness of telemedicine used by primary care doctors. It will examine experiences in telemedicine and telenursing and a multi-professional information sharing system.

Joint Research Department of Gastroenterology and Advanced Medical Science (established on May 1)

Its purpose is to conduct applied research to enable the practical use of polyphosphates, therapeutics for inflammatory bowel disease, ferrichrome, antitumor medicine, and to search for probiotics-derived substances potentially applicable for the production of pharmaceuticals.

AO Entrance Examination for the International Medical Professionals Course

Our educational goals are to train medical professionals to fulfill constructive roles in the international community through education, research, and health-care activities. We screen and train students with high aptitudes and a strong willingness to contribute to global medicine. We have conducted the AO Entrance Examination for International Medical Professionals Course (five places), since the first entrance examination, which took place at the end of 2017, and it has been attracting applicants from all over the country. Based on their school reports and application essays in the first stage examination and the results of their extended essays and interviews in the second stage examination, we admitted two successful applicants in AY 2018 and four in AY 2019. In October 2018, we appointed another Assistant to the President who specializes in supporting successful applicants in the International Medical Professionals Course.

Establishment of a Drug Discovery Venture Company on Campus

Asahikawa Medical University and Sapporo Holdings, Ltd. hold a patent for a drug candidate, long-chain polyphosphate, which can strengthen intestinal barrier function and be effective for inflammatory bowel diseases. The patent made it possible to establish a drug discovery venture company, Kamui Pharma, Inc.

This venture company launched by Asahikawa Medical University aims to develop a new medicine for inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis and to satisfy other unmet medical needs. The joint research by Dr. Mikihiro Fujiya, an associate professor of the division of Gastroenterology and Hematology/Oncology of the Department of Internal Medicine of our university, and Sapporo Holdings, Ltd., has revealed that long-chain polyphosphate extracted from a probiotic, Lactobacillus brevis SBC8803 (SBL88™), strengthens the intestinal barrier function and benefits patients with refractory ulcerative colitis. Kamui Pharma, Inc., will continue this research and contribute to the treatment of intractable diseases.

Agreement of International Exchange

We reached an international exchange agreement with Cape Coast Teaching Hospital and the College of Health & Allied Sciences at the University of Cape Coast (the Republic of Ghana) in July 2018 and with Pomeranian Medical University (the Republic of Poland) in November 2018.

The purpose of the agreement is to promote communication between faculty members, researchers, and students of both parties. Joint research activities are planned with the goal of advancing education and research.

We expect the conclusion of the agreement will further enhance our academic excellence and broaden our students’ international experience.
Commencement of Financial Aid for Test Takers of the TOEFL iBT

To promote and encourage international exchange, we offer financial aid for test takers of the TOEFL iBT. The scores show their English proficiency levels and are often required for study abroad. This system is intended for students in the Medical Course or in the Graduate School of Medical Science that take TOEFL iBT tests on or after September 1st, 2019, and the amount of the financial aid will be based on the score. We have so far had one applicant for this financial aid system.

Introduction of 8K Endoscope: Total Number of Pixels 16 Times That of 2K

In December 2018, we introduced the world’s first laparoscopic surgery system with an 8K endoscope. A resolution of 8K means 33 million pixels, 16 times higher than that of 2K, which corresponds to a visual acuity of 4.27 compared to 1.07 with 2K.

This system makes it possible to recognize blood vessels and nerves as thin as 0.1 millimeters and to conduct safer surgery for rectal and liver cancers with a reduced risk of bleeding and surgery complications, which would be impossible with a 2K endoscope. In addition to cancer treatments, other departments have started to use this system. The Department of Ophthalmology has equipped a surgical microscope with two micro 8K cameras for both eyes and developed a 3D-8K system for the first time in the world, which enables ophthalmologists to observe fine blood vessels in retinas three-dimensionally.

Construction of Midorigaoka Terrace Completed

On December 1st, 2018, Midorigaoka Terrace, located next to the cafeteria of Asahikawa Medical University Hospital, started operation. The construction of this building was made possible by the project to expand hospital equipment and facilities, and the purpose is to make our hospital more effective and convenient not only for patients but also visitors.

Midorigaoka Terrace is a two-storied steel-frame structure and has 1,184 square meters of space. The building is designed utilizing wood that creates a warm atmosphere inside. On the first floor are two pharmacies, Ain Pharmacy and Nakajima Pharmacy, and a café, Morihiko, and the second floor has a large meeting room and two offices.

At the same time as the construction of Midorigaoka Terrace, the 2nd parking lot was expanded to make space for another 200 cars. Our hospital seeks to be a more comfortable place for hospital users, with less waiting time and less crowded parking lots.

Asahikawa Medical University Hospital Designated as the Only Cancer Genomic Medicine Liaison Hospital Serving Northern and Eastern Hokkaido

Medical scientists have been making efforts toward individualized cancer therapy and developing multiple organ treatment provided by doctors from different disciplines according to each patient’s genetic mutations, identified by gene panel testing for cancer. Our country has been promoting cancer genomic medicine, with its designated core hospitals and liaison hospitals all over Japan.

Asahikawa Medical University Hospital is designated as the only cancer genomic medicine liaison hospital other than in Sapporo, the capital city of Hokkaido. At the moment, cancer gene panel testing is exclusively for patients who have already received standard medical treatments or for those whose medical conditions prevent the use of standard treatments. In the future however, we hope to develop effective remedies for genetic disorders detected in multiple organs for all patients.
Work Phones Distributed to Doctors in the Hospital

In February 2019, we distributed modified smartphones to all 465 doctors, including residents, to promote quick and effective communication while enhancing security and privacy.

The smartphones are installed with a modified operating system and SNS applications to facilitate communication between users. They were specially developed for corporation use and, beginning in April 2019, it enables the users to read radiographs taken in our hospital. Now, an additional 20 smartphones are in use for connecting with the hospital information system, and within a year, the doctors will be able to refer to patients’ information with the smartphones.

Establishment of the Nursing Support Center for Career Development, Education, and Research

To improve the operation of our university, in March 2019, we established the Nursing Support Center for Career Development, Education, and Research.

The purpose of the center is to support the career development of nurses as professional medical workers and their life-long learning and to improve the quality of nursing care they provide. This is made possible by the mutual collaboration and cooperation of the Department of Nursing of Asahikawa Medical University and the Nursing Department of Asahikawa Medical University Hospital.

The center is composed of four sections. The Educational Program Development Section does research on the nursing curriculum. It conducts studies, evaluates programs and disseminates information. The Support for Career Development Section provides support for the career development of nursing students, nurses, and nursing faculty. The Personnel Exchange Section promotes personnel exchanges between the two nursing departments. The Support for Regional Nursing Section advances community-based integrated care systems.

The center supports nursing career development by paying attention to social needs, collaborating and cooperating cross-organizationally in our university, our hospital, and local health, medical, and welfare institutions.

Establishment of the Integrated Medical Education Center

To improve the operation of our university, in April 2019, we established the Integrated Medical Education Center.

The purpose of the center is to enhance our education, collaborating with the Admission Center, the Education Center, the Post-Graduate Clinical Training Center, and the Center for Training Advanced Medical Specialists. Seeking to understand situations in Japan such as our super-aging society and the population decrease, as well as creating a model of future medical care according to the needs of local communities, we will build the “Asahikawa Medical University Model” for medical education from admission into university through the certification of medical specialists after graduation.

Other

- Notification of Academic Records to Students’ Guardians (since 2013)
- Course Available in the Postgraduate Clinical Program Admission for Junior Residents to be Admitted into Graduate School (since 2013)
- Clinical Professors in Charge of Groups of Students in the Medical Course (since 2013) and Clinical Professors as Advisors (since 2014), Mentor System (Since 2018)
- Construction of the Forwarding System Using the CT Scanning System in Emergencies (since 2013)
- Participation in Taisetsu Anshin i Medical Network (since 2014)
- Introduction of Annual Salary Scheme to 10% of the Faculty Members (since 2015)
- Selected as a Base of the Project for Establishing an Open-access-based Center for Sustainable Creation of New Medical Technology for Translational Research Network Program (since 2017)
- President Akitoshi Yoshida Attended the Ceremony of the Imperial New Year’s Lectures at the Imperial Palace (in January 2019)

See Telemedicine Center on page 40 for more information about the remarkable activities taking place there.