

### After editing the special feature

The content of the symposium featured in this volume of the JMAJ has already been summarized in Japanese and distributed in Japan. Looking at this content, while it contains some issues that are particular to Japan, it also suggests that medical issues shared among many countries are also beginning to appear in this day and age. For example, there is a limit to agreement on informed consent regarding health care services provided by health insurance, and even with standardized health care services, the uncertainty of outcomes cannot be avoided. A paradox is occurring where, while treatment outcomes are improving due to advances in medicine, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to accept the small number of undesirable outcomes that unavoidably occur, leading to an increase in patient dissatisfaction. Consequently, conflict can arise between those giving and those receiving medical care, and the limitations of civil damage compensation are becoming apparent. Despite diffusing of patient safety methodologies, disputes in individual cases are becoming more serious than ever, and it is possible that a draconian process could be set in motion

through the transformation of medical accidents into criminal cases. Meanwhile, the administrations and government that oversee these matters focus on economical aspects such as reducing healthcare expenditures and have been slow in undertaking total legal reform. This approach has negative effects on daily medical practices and the professional autonomy.

In editing this special issue, along with the symposium's speeches for individual cases, explanations are added about the situation of criminal cases involving medicine in Japan to ensure that the essence of the discussions arising from these cases can be easily understood. In addition, the JMA's proposals are also reported for solving the complicated medico-legal issues. Final manuscripts have been decided with the further approval of presenters after English language translations were completed.

I hope that this special feature will provide a reference for medical professionals in other countries who are facing the same issues.

---

Masami ISHII, Executive Board Member, Japan Medical Association (jmaintl@po.med.or.jp); Vice-Chair of Council, World Medical Association (WMA); Secretary General, Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO).