IN MEMORIUM: Takashi Sekine, M.D., Ph. D.

Takashi Sekine, Professor of Pediatrics at the Toho University Ohashi Medical Center in Tokyo, died on 25 April 2016, at age 53.

During his distinguished career spanning nearly 30 years, Professor Sekine contributed strongly to our understanding of renal tubular physiology and nephrotic syndrome. He was a die-hard physician scientist in the field of pediatric nephrology. His achievement reflected devotion to the children with renal and urinary tract disorders and their families, encouragement of students and young pediatricians and deep understanding of renal tubular functions and the mechanisms of proteinuria.

Professor Sekine was born in Tokyo, where his father taught at schools. He did his undergraduate medical studies at the University of Tokyo and trained at the Mejirodai Campus of the University of Tokyo. He also received training as a general pediatrician in the suburb hospitals in Tokyo. After he received the degree of pediatric specialist, he started his research at the department of Pharmacology, Kyorin University Medical School in Tokyo under the supervision of Professor Hitoshi Endo. During his basic research activities for six years, he performed the cloning, functional characterization and localization of a renal Na+-dicarboxylate transporter, which carries vast majority of drugs in the kidney. This work was published on American Journal of Physiology in 1998, and he received Ph.D. degree from the University of Tokyo. He joined the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Tokyo, where I had research groups. This was followed by appointment as a lecturer and associate Professor of Pediatrics, the University of Tokyo. His insight and deep knowledge in renal physiology helped us understand the broad spectrum of Japanese Dent disease, molecular pathogenesis of renal hypouricemia, and molecular understanding of isolated proximal renal tubular acidosis.

Professor Sekine then shifted his research direction to the pathogenesis on childhood nephrotic syndrome just before and after he worked very hard as the chair of Pediatrics at the Toho University Ohashi Medical Center in Tokyo in 2009. He identified the role of human myosin-9 homo sapiens (MYH9) protein in the pathogenesis of proteinuria and progressive chronic kidney disease (CKD).

For over a decade Professor Sekine cared for and observed closely the many patients with renal and urinary tract disorders. He was always gentle, warm and kind to the children with diseases and their families. His attitude was also shown to his students and young pediatricians in and out of his University Medical Center.

Professor Sekine's productivity owed very much to his happy domestic life. His wife and daughter supported and loved him. Professor Sekine left an indelible stamp on generation of pediatric nephrologists and basic scientists, in and beyond pediatric nephrology and pharmacology. We will never forget him.

Takashi Igarashi, M.D., Ph.D.
CEO, National Center for Child Health and Development, Tokyo
Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo