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## **The establishment of the Japanese Regional Group of the Marcé Society**

I am pleased to inform the members of the Marcé Society that a Regional Group has been established in Japan and now boasts 35 members, most of whom have joined within the past two years. The group includes 13 psychiatrists, nine obstetricians, five clinical psychologists, five midwives and three paediatricians, one of whom works for a community health centre. Although the numbers are small there is a good balance of professions, which will serve to promote the development of multidisciplinary models of care in perinatal mental health.

The Japanese Regional Group was set up in the summer of 2016 following the September 2014 biennial International Marcé Society Congress in Swansea. The initiative was suggested by Dr. Jane Hanley who provided the “Guide to Setting up a New Branch of the Marcé Society”. Helpful input was contributed by a number of leading Marcé International members including Dr Nine Glangeaud. Many of the supporters were friends of mine from the 1990s when I worked with the late Professor Kumar in Perinatal Psychiatry at King’s College / Maudsley Hospital. My colleague Dr Hiroshi Yamashita, Professor Tadaharu Okano from Mie University and myself enjoyed a creative exchange of ideas with Marcé Society members between 1997 and 2002 while contributing to a cross-cultural study on postnatal depression set up by Prof Kumar and Prof Jon Cox. Yoshida and Yamashita are both perinatal psychiatrists as well as child psychiatrists and work in the same academic department at Kyushu University

There were only seven Marcé Society members in Japan when I returned from Swansea in 2014 and began the process of setting up the Regional Group. However, a number of colleagues had published or presented their work in English in the field of perinatal psychiatry and had accessed an international audience.

Another asset was a 15-year grant provided by the Ministry of Health and

Welfare in Tokyo in 1992 for research into the assessment and treatment of perinatal women and their families. The grant holder was Professor Nakano, an obstetrician in our University, who fully appreciated the importance of mental health in perinatal care. A number of professionals including psychiatrists, obstetricians, midwives, health visitors, nurses and community health centre staff worked together on the project.

This work led to the development of a policy prescribing that perinatal mental health assessment and care will be provided by obstetric staff from the start of pregnancy, continuing without interruption to one month after birth. After that care is provided under an existing policy offering growth and developmental check-ups to infants and young children up to three years old. The project members met again under this new government policy.

Having established the Japanese Marcé Society with 35 founding members, we reported this achievement to the president of the Marcé Society. Now we can report that the Japanese Regional Group is fully fledged with Keiko Yoshida as President, Dr Hiroshi Yamashita as Secretary General and Dr Yoko Sagara (Obstetrician) as Treasurer.

The Marcé Society Conference in Melbourne in September 2016 will be a big event for the Japanese Regional Group, half of whom plan to attend the conference. We look forward to meeting many friends there.

Meetings will take place annually and will provide a forum for the presentation of research and discussion of service developments. Between meetings members will communicate by email, telephone and video conferencing.

I hope that this account of the development of the Japanese Regional Group serves to give you a clear picture of our work here in Japan.

Keiko Yoshida, MD, Dr of Medical Science,  
Professor of Department of Child Psychiatry, Kyushu University Hospital, Fukuoka,  
Japan, tel: +81(0)92 642 5624 , e-mail: keikoy@npsych.med.kyushu-u.ac.jp