

Current problems and future perspective of medical care at the time of disaster in Japan: Objectively observe the status and grasp its various aspects

Naoto Morimura

Introduction

Since ancient times, Japan has experienced many natural disasters and mass casualty incidents. The response plan should be prepared based on "risk assessment" and "strengthening of vulnerable part of daily medical care system", and it should include the following vital elements, i.e. "prevention", "mitigation by resilience", and "support for restoration".

Current Problems

The problems of the acute phase response are essentially similar to the problems related to the daily emergency medical care system. In order "to treat right patient at right place in right time, "lack of collaboration" among related organizations and "cumbersome system of information sharing" are major problems to disturb the fluent medical response. In addition, recent increase of adults with vulnerability or chronic disease resulting from the increase of older adults causes the increase of emergency medical demand beyond its supply. Furthermore, lack of medical risk assessment, lack of strategic operation plan to manage the medical support teams from many organizations, bloated system of information sharing are problems recognized from recent experiences of disaster.

Toward Problem Solving

To solve these problems, following several strategies are absolutely required. First is strengthening of vulnerable part of daily medical care system, especially implementation of community-based integrated care systems and an inter-hospital network for mass casualty incidents. Second is risk assessment by creating a geographic mapping of medical demand-supply imbalance at each region. Third, efficiency improvement and strengthening of integrated medical support system. Forth, extreme strengthening of information sharing system with introduction of IoT (Internet of Things) is the nuts and bolts toward many problems solving. Finally, in consideration of the current situation where the significant diminishment of the concept of community and progressing of personalization in society, it is necessary to build up culture to cultivate leaders who can manage the community based on the enhancement of social capital.