

Preface

Hirosaki University has issued *Radiation Emergency Medicine (REM)* since 2012. An educational program for professionals in Radiation Emergency Medicine was initiated in 2010, and our prompt response to the Fukushima nuclear accident which occurred in 2011 motivated the publication of this journal. Many prestigious scientists from not only Japan, but also foreign countries have contributed to REM thus far.

In addition, the inaugural symposium was held in February 2012, with a focus on natural radiation exposures and low-dose radiation epidemiological studies (NARE2012). The symposium attracted more than 150 participants from 30 countries. Additionally, the ninth symposium in the series of international symposia on Natural Radiation Environment (NRE9), which commenced in the 1960s, was held in September 2014. A special session on the Fukushima nuclear accident was also included in the symposium. Approximately 200 participants from 35 countries attended NRE9. According to these two large symposia, many scientists in the world now recognize Hirosaki University as one of the prominent Japanese institutions, whose faculty conduct research on a wide spectrum of radiation topics.

Last August (2015), the Nuclear Regulation Authority designated Hirosaki University as having two important centers which cover radiation emergency medicine and radiation emergency medical assistance. In addition to these domestic situations, there have been recent developments worldwide in the area of natural radiation exposures and their control. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a handbook on indoor radon in 2009, and more recently the European Radon Association was formed to address the health burden due to indoor radon in Europe. It is of interest to note that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a revised version of the Basic Safety Standards (BSS), which includes protection of the public against indoor exposure to radon and other natural sources of radiation last May (2015) .

From such international circumstances, many articles concerning environmental radiation and radioactivity, including natural radiation exposure studies, have been published in *Radiation Emergency Medicine*. Therefore, the editorial board elected to change the journal name to *Radiation Environment and Medicine* as the continuation of *Radiation Emergency Medicine* from the publication of Volume 5. The scope of the journal now widely covers not only medical issues including radiation emergency medicine, but also environmental issues.

On behalf of the editorial board, we welcome your submission to the new *REM*.

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Editor-in-chief
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