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Conference Report: The 20th JASMEE Academic Meeting



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On Saturday, July 22 through Sunday, July 23 JASMEE (The Japan Association of Medical English Education) hosted their 20th academic meeting at Orque d'or Salon in Nagoya which focused on cultivating international health professionals by improving their medical English education. With this in mind, we were happy to see JANET members come together and begin making headways into aiding this effort for nursing English Education in Japan. During the conference, attendees informally made introductions, shared opinions, thoughts, and suggestions. Participants also volunteered to pass out JANET pamphlets to help spread JANET's new found role. It was certainly a good stepping stone for our starting year. We are looking forward to seeing more of our members at JASMEE, and perhaps give a presentation that is within our area of interest to help enhance nursing English education in Japan.

During the day, the conference covered many aspects of medical English education, but there were some presentations that were significant and linked closely to nursing English. One presentation of note was by Ian Willey of

Kagawa University on how Japanese doctors and nurses feel about English brush up programs, their perception of English language needs, and whether or not they are interested in these programs. The results indicated that nurses, especially in the rural areas, had shown a greater doubt and disinterest due to the lack of speaking opportunities in their working environment, but at the same time encountered communication frustration when working with foreign patients. Within this backdrop, nurses wanted to improve their speaking skills, which indicated the significance of assessing learner needs when designing these brush-up programs and the need to improve EMP curricula.

Another topic of interest presented by Sabina Mahmood, Nobuko Ohi, Kyosuke Satake, and Makoto Tahara from Okayama University was on an extra-curricular active learning group focusing on nursing English education. Nursing students with an International Baccalaureate Degree (IB) formed a 10 member "Nursing English Study Group" with 7 non-IB nursing students. The presentation reported that IB students who have specialized communication skills with a well-rounded background can enhance nursing English education when learning with non-IB students while helping them improve their English communication skills. Led by a medical teacher and carried out strictly in English, topics of discussion ranged from practicing nursing English technical terms to role playing a clinical setting. After a

year, results showed that students were comfortable using their English outside the classroom environment which sharpened their English speaking skills, but at the same time also created opportunities to interact with students from different educational backgrounds. The presentation suggested strong support from educators is needed when extra-curricular activities are initiated by nursing students to help improve English nursing education.

One more presentation of note aiming in JANET's interest was a presentation by James Thomas and Timothy D. Minton from Keio University School of Medicine about using students more effectively as simulated patients. This presentation was of particular interest for those who have, or may be planning to implement nurse and native English-speaking simulated patient encounters in their course curriculum, but have faced logistical and financial issues in doing so. Though this particular presentation was on doctor-patient role playing encounters, it suggested using students more adequately and argued the educational advantages of using students to benefit their English language learning. Other advantages include developing empathy while providing an opportunity for peer feedback, self-reflection thus encouraging creativity and engagement amongst their peers. However, noted challenges were students' language limitations, confidence, motivation, realism, and the transfer of bad habits.

To conclude, the JASMEE conference

had been a great opportunity to mark JANET's first year by meeting members with common goals and aims within the field of medical English and to make JANET known among other JASMEE members. JANET hopes this small milestone will in some way encourage more members to come to JASMEE and participate with the intention that there will be more nursing English related topics to be presented. This will not only improve the quality of nursing English teaching but also help support medical English education in general as well.