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Two Types of Malaria Epidemics during the Postwar Occupation Period in Japan

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Objectives: The objective of this study was to elucidate the condition of malaria epidemics during the postwar Occupation period in Japan.

Methods: The statistical records listed in the appendices of the “Weekly Bulletin”, an official document of the General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ/SCAP) that is currently kept in the National Diet Library Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room, were converted into electronic files. On the basis of these records, the monthly prevalence of malaria was plotted in graphs to analyze the course of epidemics with respect to time and place.

Results: The prevalence was high in all regions in the summer of 1946, when the present records were initiated. As a general trend, the prevalence was high in western Japan and low in eastern Japan. In all regions except the Kinki region, the prevalence decreased with time thereafter and virtually no epidemics occurred after 1948. In the Kinki region, epidemics with a prevalence of over 70 cases per 100,000 individuals repeatedly occurred until 1949, but the prevalence rapidly decreased in 1950. By prefecture, Saga Prefecture showed the highest prevalence in the nation in July 1946. While the prevalence in most prefectures decreased with time, Shiga Prefecture was the only prefecture with recurring epidemics with a prevalence of over 800 cases per 100,000 individuals until 1949.

Conclusions: Malaria epidemics during the Occupation were classified into epidemics caused by “imported malaria”, which was observed in many prefectures, and those caused by “indigenous malaria”, which was observed only in Shiga Prefecture.

Effects of Aircraft Noise on Preschool Children’s Misbehaviours: Results of Research around the Kadena and Futenma Airfields in Okinawa

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Objectives: To investigate the association between aircraft noise exposure as expressed by Weighted Equivalent Continuous Perceived Noise Level (WECPNL) and preschool children’s misbehaviours around the Kadena and Futenma airfields in Okinawa.

Methods: A questionnaire survey on children’s misbehaviour was conducted in nursery schools and kindergartens around the Kadena and Futenma airfields. The children living around the Kadena airfield were divided into four groups according to WECPNL at their residences and those around the Futenma airfield into three groups according to WECPNL. The subjects were 1,888 male and female preschool children, 3–6 years of age, whose parents, caregivers, and teachers answered the questions. The answers used for the analysis were limited to those of respondents fulfilling the following conditions: parents living with their children, fathers with a daytime job, and mothers with a daytime job or no job. Thus, the number of valid answers was 1,213. The responses were analysed using logistic regression models taking the number of misbehaviours related to the items of Biological Function, Social Standard, Physical Constitution, Movement Habit, or Character as the dependent variables, and WECPNL, age, sex, size of family, birth order, mother’s age at birth, mother’s job, caregiver’s career, and category of subject as the independent variables.

Results: A significant dose-response relationship was found between the odds ratio and WECPNL for the outcomes of Physical Constitution around the Kadena and Futenma airfields.

Conclusions: It would be reasonable to conclude that the aircraft noise exposure is a factor that increases the number of preschool children's misbehaviours.

Approach to Sick Building Problem in Schools: a Workshop "Saga Forum on Environment" Project

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Objective: Saga University has the "Saga Forum of Environment" project conducted in collaboration with the Saga city local government. In this project, a workshop was held to study the sick building syndrome at schools. The purpose of this workshop was to evaluate indoor air pollution levels in elementary and junior high schools in Saga city.

Methods: The levels of aldehydes and volatile organic compounds (VOC) were measured in 96 classrooms of the 49 schools in August. The sampling of these chemicals were performed by the passive sampler method and measured by high-performance liquid chromatograph or gas chromatograph–mass spectrometer by participants of the workshop.

Results: In 40% of all classrooms, formaldehyde levels were higher than that of the standard of Japanese Ministry of Education. Relatively high levels of formaldehyde were found in some music classrooms. The origin of formaldehyde was thought to be musical instruments, furniture or wooden floors. A significant correlation was found between formaldehyde level and room temperature. The classrooms with ventilators showed lower levels of formaldehyde than those without ventilators. The levels of most VOCs except that of α -pinene were low.

Conclusion: There is still room for improvement of air pollution in elementary and junior high schools.

Involvement of Local Dietetics Professionals in Risk Communication Program on Food Safety in Municipal Governments and Their Attitude towards the Program

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Objectives: The objective of this study is to gather statistical references on food safety education that encourages competence of food choice from the view-point of food safety. A survey on the involvement of the risk communication program on food safety in municipal governments and the attitude of local dietetics professionals towards the program was conducted.

Methods: In November, 2006, self-reported questionnaires were mailed to 1990 local dietetics professionals who worked in municipal governments in Japan. Descriptive statistics and cross tables were used for data analysis.

Results: 1162 questionnaires were mailed and 1130 available surveys were returned. Among the respondents, 41.5% answered that they inform the community about food safety, but 49.9% answered that they did not get information from the community. Most of the respondents answered that risk communication of food safety was important; 21.8% answered "extremely agree" and 62.3% answered "rather agree" on a scale of four from "extremely agree" to "do not agree". More than one-half of the dietetics professionals answered that their confidence in conducting risk communication was low; 20.5% answered "no confidence" and 52.5% answered "hardly have confidence" on a scale of four from "without confidence" to "with confidence". More than 80% of the respondents answered that they needed "professional knowledge" and "support from professional agencies".

Conclusion: This study suggests that educating local dietetics professionals about professional knowledge on food safety, and obtaining support from special agencies will be essential in the upgrade of risk communication program on food safety in a community.