

Event Report:

~ First International Cooperation Research Using Medical Big Data ~

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signing Ceremony for a Japan-Thailand Joint Research

The Institute for Global Health Policy Research (iGHP) of the National Center for International Medical Research (NCGM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Thailand's National Health Security Office (NHSO) on June 18, 2018. This MOU will serve as the basis for Japan's first international cooperation research using medical big data.

In 2016 under the cooperation of the Governments of Japan and the Kingdom of Thailand, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) started a technical cooperation project called the "Partnership Project for Global Health and Universal Health Coverage (UHC)" in Thailand. In the following year, a Japan-Thai collaborative research team based on this project was formed in order to generate scientific based evidence using Thailand's medical big data. Since then, iGHP, as a major research institute in Japan, has been working with Thailand's NHSO to improve the research infrastructure and strengthen the capacity of young Thai researchers.

With a full-fledged start of comprehensive research under way, NCGM and NHSO signed a MOU under the presence of Thai health ministry and JICA officials. Dr. Suwit Wibulpolprasert, an advisor to the Minister of Health from Thai Ministry of Public Health commented on how the trust built by Professor. Shibuya Professor, the Director of iGHP, and the long-term relationship between Thailand and Japan resulted in the MOU of this collaborative research. Dr Suwit also mentioned how he expects and is convinced that the findings from this research utilizing Thai's big data will contribute to our future health system. Dr. Norihiro Kokudo, the President of NCGM, commented to say, "This research has the characteristic of utilizing data covering the large population of Thailand, but by making use of the know-how to research on big data in Japan, we can contribute to better medical treatment internationally."

The themes of comprehensive research under the MOU are "diabetes", "asthma", and "health finance". Of the three themes, iGHP will be responsible for the analysis and research of big data mainly on patients with diabetes and asthma.

This policy research, utilizing a large-scale medical big data of Thai citizen as large as 47 million people, is a new initiative globally. The pioneers of Japan's medical big data research, headed by Hiroaki Miyata (Professor of Keio University), who is the Director of Global Health Systems and Innovation Department at

iGHP, and the research team at the University of Tokyo, will contribute to the development of this field in the middle-income countries. The use of national-level big data in international health policy will be the first in our country and is a pioneering attempt in the world.

The event was covered by several media including the below (in Japanese):

- <https://sp.m3.com/news/kisokoza/610160> (members only)
- <https://medit.tech/ighp-ncgm-thai-bigdata/>