

Issue 17

Nagasaki University's social contribution to fight the novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19)

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Hello.

This is Kohno Shigeru from Nagasaki University.

Today I continue my summary of the conversation with Prof. Izumikawa.

Nagasaki University has a long history in infectious disease research and many specialists are working here. The Nagasaki University Institute of Tropical Medicine is the only World Health Organization (WHO) designated COVID-19 reference laboratory in Japan. It administers PCR tests of the novel coronavirus in collaboration with government administrative agencies.

Using these strengths of Nagasaki University, what contribution can we make to gain control over the novel coronavirus infections?

Controlling infections requires both prevention and treatment. The following departments of Nagasaki University Hospital play a central role in diagnosis and treatment. The Infection Control and Education Center specializes in infection control. The departments of Infectious Diseases, Respiratory Medicine, and Pediatric Departments are all engaged in treatment of the infectious disease. The department of Laboratory Medicine conducts tests that are indispensable for diagnosis. We conduct daily medical examinations and tests for suspected cases of the novel coronavirus and we are preparing to care for confirmed cases in the future. Furthermore, some Nagasaki University staff have conducted various off-campus support activities at the time of this crisis.

Let me introduce some of the external assistance that Nagasaki University has conducted below.

The novel coronavirus outbreak started in Wuhan, China and Japanese nationals in that area returned home by flights chartered by the Japanese government. After arriving in Japan, the passengers were separated into various accommodation facilities and were isolated and observed for about two weeks. During that time, Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Jimi Hanako

consulted me regarding support for infection control at such facilities.

Nagasaki University took charge of the care of 36 returnees who stayed at the annex of the Customs Institute in Kashiwa City, Chiba Prefecture. Seven doctors and one nurse were dispatched from Nagasaki University Hospital for 12 days from February 4 to 15 in rotation. Led by the Cabinet Secretariat, the following organizations participated: The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Kashiwa City Public Health Center, Japan Ground Self Defense Force Eastern Army Medical Service, Japan Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and Japan Disaster Psychiatric Assistance Team (DPAT).

Nagasaki University provided advice on infection control, made a manual for treatment, enhanced the living environment, and supported the returnees by providing information about the infectious disease with leaflets and questionnaire responses. Fortunately, the people in that annex could return home after their test results were negative, and our task was completed.

In addition, the staff of Nagasaki University Hospital took part in providing advice on infection control for crew and passengers of the Diamond Princess cruise ship and creating infection control manuals for members of the Japan Society for Infection Prevention Control – Disaster Infection Control Team (JSIPC-DICT).

Many infectious disease specialists at Nagasaki University have made various contributions. These important social contributions were made possible by Nagasaki University's strengths.

In the next issue, I will introduce our university's system to admit confirmed COVID-19 patients when discovered in Nagasaki Prefecture.