

Preface

On the Occasion of the Publication of This Special Issue On "Music Therapy"

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It is with great pleasure that we publish this special issue of the Niigata Journal of Health and Welfare (Vol.2, No.1) devoted to "Music Therapy". This issue will become available at the same time as the International Mini-Symposium on "Music Therapy" at the Third Special Meeting of the Niigata Society of Health and Welfare, to be held on December 7, 2002.

Music Therapy is a subject of great interest in Japan. Music Therapy has been advocated for use in children, young adults, and the elderly in fields such as mental health and welfare education.

The Japanese Federation of Music Therapy was formed in 1995 through the unification of the Japan Biomusic Association and the Association for Clinical Music Therapy. In 1996, the Federation created the discipline of the certified music therapist.

Based on the Japanese Federation of Music Therapy, the Japanese Music Therapy Association (JMTA) was founded in 2001. The JMTA maintains the system of training and certification for the music therapist.

The Niigata Music Therapy Society (Kenkyukai) was established in Niigata Prefecture in 1992. The Society met biannually, and consisted of occupational therapists, care workers, piano teachers, nurses, music therapists, and school teachers.

The Third Special Meeting of the Niigata Community Rehabilitation Society, established for the exchange of information on community rehabilitation, was held on December 13, 1998. The theme of this meeting was "An Introduction to Music Therapy - How to Learn the Basis of Music Therapy". Mr. Alan Wittenberg was the special lecturer at this meeting. Participants were very much impressed by his lecture and demonstration of musical instruments.

The interaction between music and the brain began to be investigated scientifically in Niigata. On October 15-17, 1999, Professor Tsutomu Nakada of the Brain Research Institute of Niigata University presided at an international symposium at the Niigata City Performing Arts Center entitled "Neuroscience of Music 1999", a Center of Excellence (COE) project of the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. Many researchers gathered at the symposium from Germany, France, Finland, the United States, Canada, Austria, and Sweden. Furthermore, a symposium open to the public and a citizen concert were also held on October 16th and 17th, respectively. Music Therapy is continuing to be developed and applied in medical treatment, particularly in area of rehabilitation, and in the field of welfare.

Professor Nakada kindly contributed to this special issue with an article on "Fundamentals of Human Brain Function". We are also fortunate to have an article in this issue from Mr. Wittenberg, who has made significant contributions to Music Therapy in Japan. Professor Koji Sakurai a councilor of the Japanese Music Therapy Association, presents a short history of the JMTA. Mr. Hayakawa, Ms. Maruyama, and Ms. Matsuda have been actively practicing Music Therapy in Niigata Prefecture for many years, and have written about their experiences.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to this special issue. This is an excellent opportunity to promote and popularize Music Therapy as an important and indispensable method in the fields of medical rehabilitation and welfare in Niigata.