— To our future collaborative researchers —

“Will you freeze and preserve my ovaries...? cryopreserve my ovaries...?”

On December 16th, 2007, I received an e-mail from a patient with uterine cancer. She had searched among all her connections to finally ask me for ovarian cryopreservation. At that time, I had just started the research of ovary cryopreservation using my special surgical technique, “Super-Microsurgery”, collaborating with a company who had an innovative food freezing technology. The patient, who was in her twenties, was scheduled for the surgery of hysterectomy and bilateral oophorectomy to remove the cancer.

Along with the ethical problems of cryopreserving an ovary, there was a possibility of cancer cells remaining in the frozen ovary which could result in the recurrence of cancer when returned to the body. Also, there were opinions that preserving an ovary is unworthy if the uterus had to be removed. There were numerous problems to be solved before ovarian cryopreservation could be performed clinically. But, the patient pleaded “Even if it is a slightest chance, I want to leave the possibility of having a baby.” While still struggling with the aforementioned problems, we contacted the University of Tokyo Ethics Committee, conducted the cryopreservation of a part of her ovary, which was surgically removed from her body, on December, 26th 2007.

We are now engaging in the research and development of cryopreservation technology of the ovary for patients with cancer, collaborating with academic researchers of medicine, pharmacology, veterinary and engineering, and with a food freezing company. We believe that bring researchers with different backgrounds together and working toward a shared goal of helping this patient who stand in front of us will lead us to a development of innovative technology.

Collaboration among researchers from different fields is not at all simple. But we are trying to overcome the barriers of technical terms and specialized knowledge, and of difference in research approaches. We try to take the full advantage of each other’s research technique in order to realize our goal little by little. And we realize it is bringing good results little by little.

This journal, [Academic Collaborations for Sick Children (ACSC)] aims to publish papers of researches on diseases of sick children, achieved through academic collaboration. We aim to release pioneer researches and technologies by cross-field collaboration, and to create unprecedented community of academic collaboration.

This first volume of ACSC introduces research papers on the current issue, (fertility preservation in children with cancer). We present the result of innovative researches from Japan. We are planning to continue our research in hope that it would provide a piece of “hope” for as many patients and their families as possible. Researchers who sympathize with our goal and approach, please take your first step forward and join us in our journey toward the promising future.

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