“Create a more affluent society through research”—this is the responsibility of researchers. The implication of the word “affluent” may differ from one person to another, but we think all researchers share this understanding. However, this responsibility will not be fulfilled simply by carrying out many experiments in the lab and publishing articles.

One of the goals of medical research is to offer newly developed medicines, medical devices, or treatment methods to patients. However, achieving the goal inevitably requires tremendous financial and human resources and time, as well as multidisciplinary expertise and experience. Only with these things combined, and possibly with a little luck, can we achieve the goal. Given the fragmented disciplines today, however, the responsibility cannot be borne by one or two laboratories.

We established the University of Tokyo, Academic Collaboration Society in January 2009 to create an environment for academic collaboration to share knowledge and experience with each other and hold discussions. We first conceived the idea of establishing the society when we were eager to fulfill the hope of a woman with cancer who wanted to have a baby (see Message from editorial board for details). To realize her hope, we needed to work in collaboration with different departments, including plastic surgery, hematology, transplant surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics, as well as engineering and veterinary medicine. Consequently, for us, the creation of an environment for collaboration was a necessity arising from our desire to promote studies in the startup phase toward clinical application and to deliver the fruits of research to patients as soon as possible.

This society consists mainly of young researchers and features the promotion of multidisciplinary academic collaboration. Coming from different disciplines, we do not know much about each other’s disciplines, of course. The attitude of the members of the society is that we will learn what we do not know and teach what we know, for all members are aware that such academic collaboration will lead to the creation of new ideas and the promotion of research.

For researchers of basic studies in medicine to deliver the fruits of research to society, the path to clinical application may seem too long. Even a very important study might be buried among mountains of other articles. Hearing patients cry for help, physicians in clinical practice cannot afford the time for research. We want to bridge the gap between basic studies and clinical practice.

If you are interested in joining us after reading this article, please contact us. Membership is not limited to researchers; we welcome nurses, social workers, people suffering from disease, and others who are interested in our research. We expect that your participation will lead to new creation.

University of Tokyo, Academic Collaboration Society

Researcher, Takashi Nakagawa

Attempts of the University of Tokyo, Academic Collaboration Society

We hold weekly study sessions with visiting lecturers for the purpose of crosscutting research involving the faculties of medicine, engineering, science, and agriculture of the University of Tokyo.