

Embark on a New Journey in Niigata

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こんにちは！ I am Ian (イアン) from the Division of Dysphagia Rehabilitation. I was graduated from the University of Hong Kong in 2019 with a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences. After completing my undergraduate study, I had worked as a speech therapist (言語聴覚士) in a non-governmental organization in Hong Kong for 4 years. My work focused primarily on dysphagia management for elderly residing in long-term care facilities. Apart from that, I sometimes visited day-care centers as well and provided rehabilitation services for community-dwelling seniors.

The idea of studying abroad in Japan came up when I was working in the geriatric rehabilitation sector. I came across a wide variety of dysphagia-related innovations that were originated from Japan, including appealing dysphagia-friendly bento, specialised enzyme for diet modification, oral hygiene kits for frail patients, and lingual rehabilitation tools that could be performed individually by patients at home. These cutting-edge products have greatly enhanced patients' quality of life and alleviated caregiver burden.

Japan has always been the global pioneer in dysphagia rehabilitation, with significant research effort invested in the field. The annual meeting of Japanese Society

of Dysphagia Rehabilitation provides a platform for encouraging knowledge exchange and advocating evidence-based practices. On the other hand, well-categorized dysphagia-friendly products can be easily found in the local community, which reflects high social awareness and respect on patients with swallowing difficulties among the Japanese society. In this regard, I have decided to continue my endeavor on dysphagia rehabilitation in Niigata University since September 2023.

Studying in Niigata University has been fruitful and rewarding, with ample opportunities to meet patients with different medical etiologies. I also greatly appreciate the opportunity to observe instrumental evaluations of high-risk dysphagic patients, something that I rarely had the chance or resource to access during my previous work in Hong Kong. Colleagues and friends from my division have been helpful and encouraging during my clinical and research works. I have been enjoying my post-graduate study in Niigata University.

