

**The 5th International Conference on Nutrition and Aging and Its Satellite Symposium
OPENING REMARKS**

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This will be the fifth International Conference on "Nutrition and Aging" sponsored by ILSI Japan. The first meeting was held in 1991 in celebration of the tenth anniversary of ILSI Japan, at the suggestion of Tetsujiro Obara, ILSI Japan's first president. And the second one was held also in Japan at the ILSI headquarters' strong request that it be held in Japan because Japanese people have the world's longest life spans. As the meeting has been held in Japan every four years, it feels like Japan's hosting the meeting has been regularized. In each of the past meetings, we discussed what nutritional issues meet the needs of the times and chose a proper nutritional topic related to aging for researchers from home and abroad after

This time, we focused on several nutritional problems according to life stage, and planned three sessions based on them with the subtitle "Nutrition Problems by Life Stages." The first one is "Risk of Life-style Related Diseases and Characteristic Nutrition by Life Stage," the second one, "Fetal Nutrition and Risk of Life-style Related Diseases," and the third, "The Role of Exercise and Nutrition Maintenance of QOL in People of Advanced Age." In addition, we decided to hold a satellite symposium to discuss "Considerations for Setting Upper Intake Levels for Nutrition."

Nowadays there is an increasing number of obese people worldwide. In Japan as well, obesity rates are increasing yearly especially in men. In contrast, curiously enough, obese women are decreasing in number and overly-thin women are increasing. There is a diet craze among Japanese young women. It may be one of the reasons for those phenomena. Recently a diagnostic criterion for the so-called metabolic syndrome in Japan has been determined. There has been a lot of attention given to the increased rate of diabetes caused by the inheritable factors unique to Japanese people, and obesity caused by the accumulation of visceral fat is believed to be a significant factor for metabolic syndrome development.

Meanwhile, considering that epidemiologic studies have demonstrated that low-birth-weight infants have a higher risk of developing metabolic syndrome when they grow up, it seems more likely that dieting during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of metabolic syndrome. A recent increase in the percentage of low-birth-weight infants in Japan does not seem to be unconnected with the growing number of overly-thin Japanese women. I think that females being extremely underweight should be considered a risk of metabolic syndrome as well as male obesity.

I hope that discussions from a perspective like this will be conducted.

Recently in Japan, food safety has become a major concern to the people as one of the major social problems. Such a social background is part of the reason that the satellite symposium was organized. I hope you will be able to join us in the fifth International Conference on "Nutrition and Aging."