

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' WORKING GROUP & SEMINAR-SYMPOSIUM AND THE PUBLISHED PROCEEDING.

An action based research initiative on oral cancer prevention and control was carried out, with the purpose of prevention and control of the disease and the results were discussed in an International Experts' Group Meeting which was held in 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011 in India. The research and the working group meeting were initiated by Professor Chitta Ranjan Choudhury, a JSPS Alumnus. He is director of the International Centre for Tropical Oral Health at Poole Hospital NHS, Department of Maxillofacial Surgery, Dorset. The initiative encompasses the underpinning issues of one of the deadly and disabling oral pre-cancerous lesions, known as Oral Sub-mucous Fibrosis (OSF: one of the pre-cancers found in the mouth cavity) which predominantly occurs in India, the regional countries and other Asian countries in the far East including the countries in the Asia Pacific region. This has an important place on the public health agenda, because each year millions of people are dying from this cancer. The specific aim of this initiative is the prevention and control of the disease. Professor Choudhury and his team have been working towards the identification and quantification of the causative factors of OSF. The areca-nut is one of the known causative factors for development of OSF. The experts agreed that the areca-nut contains a high concentration of copper. That was detected after screening of a wide range of betel-nut samples available in India. Simultaneously, the study screened 153 different samples to find the sources of copper. They found the soil is the main source of copper, not the copper-sulphate spray which the areca-nut farmers use to protect their nuts against fungal infection during the monsoon season. They also studied other samples such as different brands of commercial tobacco sachets, commonly available in every corner of the regional countries. The team lead by Professor Choudhury will conduct a variety of research including establishment of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and a clinical trial for an appropriate treatment of OSF cases which doctors are currently struggling to manage. Most importantly, this initiative is well linked to research being carried out in Japan which is providing not only the strategic support, but is also collaborating on advanced molecular investigations for the prevention and control of oral cancer and pre-cancer. The action group has come up with a good road-map during the proceedings of the working group sessions as follows:

- Identifying causative/associated factors
- Investigating pattern and type of tobacco consumption
- Development of appropriate treatment regimen (both conservative and surgical)
- Establishing a cost-effective nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) services and research
- Developing patient awareness and compliance for quicker recovery.
- In-depth molecular research in collaboration with Japanese colleagues

The published proceedings of the working groups are a communiqué for the actions of prevention and control of this deadly and disabling disease as a cause of suffering of millions in the world. The proceedings are edited by Professor Choudhury, and it delineates a clear road-map for future actions and also confirms important strategic

supports from the relevant authorities and learned organisations in India and abroad, of them, Professor Kozo Hiramatsu, Director of JSPS London has shown his full support. The proceedings feature a good will message for the initiative from him.

