



Editorial

Changes to JSID—From a closed to an open society



My service as Chief of the Scientific Program Committee for the International Investigative Dermatology (IID) meeting in Kyoto in 2008 and for the Japanese Society for Investigative Dermatology (JSID) meetings in 2007 and 2009 has provided me with a unique perspective, and I would like to say a few words regarding the changes that have occurred in JSID over the last 3 years.

For the last several years, the plenary session and all the posters of the plenary session of the JSID meetings have been presented in English, whereas concurrent sessions have been given in Japanese. Even the abstract book distributed during the meeting has been published in Japanese, and only later published in English in the *Journal of Dermatological Science*. Now, beginning with the 2009 meeting in Fukuoka, the official language of the JSID meeting will be English and all presentations, including plenary, concurrent, and special lectures, will be given in English, and all abstracts will be published in English. This decision has been hotly debated among JSID members, and arguments against the use of English have included the following: the audience is only Japanese; the exchange of information and discussion will be extremely inefficient because English is not our first language; this will increase the burden for young scientists beginning their research; and the JSID membership will decrease. Despite the initial sacrifice required by our domestic members, the JSID has decided that it is in the long-term interest of our members to move forward to open our society to other Asian countries and the international community.

Further changes have been made in how abstracts are evaluated. In particular, extra attention is required to select abstracts for the plenary session because less than 5% of the total submitted abstracts (34 of 1353 at IID2008 and 15 of 289 at JSID2009) are awarded this prestigious distinction for their presentation. The JSID scientific committee has worked to make this scoring system as fair as possible. JSID has been using its own categories based on active fields of research in Japan, but now JSID will use the same categories as IID or SID or ESDR. For each category, a couple of reviewers will evaluate the abstracts and provide scores. Determining the optimum method of normalizing

the scores among the different categories, however, has been difficult. If the abstracts are ranked by score alone, one category may dominate the plenary session if the reviewers for that category tend to give out high scores, while other categories may be under-represented if the reviewers for those categories are more critical. To overcome this problem, the following formula was applied for IID2008:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Number of plenary talks for each category} \\ &= (\text{total number of plenary talks}) \\ &\quad \times \frac{(\text{number of abstracts in each category})}{(\text{total number of abstracts submitted})} \end{aligned}$$

The number of abstracts in each category includes both oral presentations and posters. A greater proportion of abstracts, both oral presentations and posters, submitted for a given category indicates that the area is more active than the others. Therefore, the number of plenary talks for each category will to some extent reflect the activity of each field that year. JSID has combined several categories together to form a single group because some categories are too small to be evaluated independently. In addition, as the plenary session should cover as many fields as possible and provide a broad representation of as many topics as possible, only two abstracts will be allowed from the same university or institute for JSID2009. Presenters of the plenary session should take special care to prepare their talks with an appropriate introduction to make the content easily understood by the general audience of the annual meeting.

JSID is undergoing some exciting changes and, because moving toward greater international prestige is in the best interest of our members, JSID will continue to evolve from a closed domestic society to an open international society.

Masayuki Amagai*

*Department of Dermatology, Keio University School of Medicine,
35 Shinanomachi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-8582, Japan*

*Tel.: +81 3 33531211x62411; fax: +81 3 3351 6880
E-mail address: amagai@sc.itc.keio.ac.jp