

## Japanese Society for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (JCAM)

Promoting evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine

[www.jcam-net.jp](http://www.jcam-net.jp)

JCAM Secretariat 4-52 Minamimachi, Shin-Bldg. 203 Aichi 443-0022 JAPAN	Founded in No. of employees State of Ownership Primary stock exchange	1997 1000 non-profit N/A
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**April 2009:** The Japanese Society for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (JCAM) consists of scientists, various medical professionals, therapists, and companies from different industries. In 1990 a small research group started studies on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) at Kanazawa University. The group was incorporated as JCAM in 1997. Its secretariat is located in Kanazawa City, around 300km northeast of Osaka, Japan. The JCAM 's purpose is to promote evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine.



Venture Valuation (VV) interviewed Dr. Nobutaka Suzuki, JCAM chairman and Professor at the Graduate School of Medical Science of Kanazawa University.

**VV:** **Would you please explain what JCAM does and major characteristics of CAM in Japan?**

**Suzuki:** The definition of alternative and complementary medicine (CAM) varies. For instance, the U.S. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) classifies CAM into five groups: whole medical systems (traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, etc.), mind-body medicine (meditation, music therapy, etc.), biologically based practices (foods, herbs, vitamins, etc.), manipulative and body-based practices (chiropractic, osteopathic manipulation, etc.), and energy medicine (biofield therapies, bioelectromagnetic-based therapies).

JCAM defines CAM as a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices and products that do not present scientific evidence required by modern Western medicine. We are an interdisciplinary organization with 1 '000 members. They are scientists, clinicians, pharmacologists, nurses, acupuncturists, dentists, nutritionists, veterinarians as well as business people from pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, etc.

Our activities are:

a) Promote evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine. The process flow of the modern Western medicine starts from in vitro research, animal experiments, clinical trials, to approval by the authorities and prescription by doctors. CAM is completely the other way around. It has been applied, proved and supported by users for a long time. JCAM advocates clinical examination, basic research toward identifying new substance, filing license and approval (see Figure 1 below)

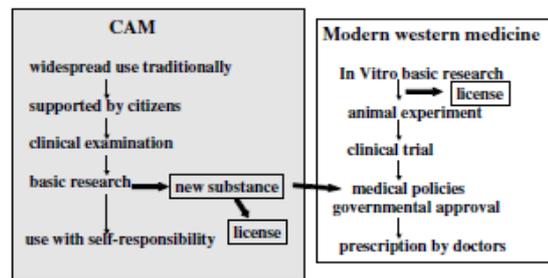


Figure 1. Flowchart of scientific research method.

Source: Evidenced-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Vol. 1, Issue 2

The first international peer review publication eCAM (Evidenced-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine) was jointly issued in 2004 by scholars in Japan and the U.S. with assistance from Oxford University Press. PubMed has been monitoring eCAM from the initial edition.

b) Encourage collaboration between university and industry. This year we are going to launch a web-based database named STIP, a venture project funded by scientists at Kanazawa University. STIP will provide information on traceability, safety, clinical research status, and academic publications about products which have potential business opportunities.

c) Educate and train medical students about the importance of CAM in treating patients. Under the current education system, medical doctors' knowledge is limited to treatments covered by public health insurance. (Most CAM is not covered except acupuncture and Kampo, Japanese herbal medicine) The reality is that, in the oncology field, 44.6% of cancer patients rely on CAM.

With regard to characteristics of CAM in Japan,

- Possessing advanced Western medical sciences coupled with long experience in traditional Asian medicine allows Japan to lead research on this new yet old field of complementary and alternative medicine.
- Preventive care is a growing trend. In 2006 the market of health foods including dietary supplements and foods for special dietary uses was 1.880 trillion yen (around US\$19 billion), which exceeded the OTC market of 1.145 trillion yen (around US\$11.7 billion).

The Japanese are conscious of "Mibyuu", the pathological concept describing a pre-symptomatic physical condition. It is not a disease but a predecessor to developing a disease, such as physical fatigue, gastrointestinal trouble, cold hands and feet, etc. "Mibyuu", which first appeared in the oldest Chinese medical book about 2'000 years ago, is the theory of preventive medicine.

**VV:**

**What are your objectives in the future?**

Suzuki:

As mentioned earlier, we are going to start the web-based database STIP. By developing STIP in Japanese and English, we plan to establish a global platform for exchanging information and products and to create business opportunities.



**VV: What opportunities are you looking for?**

Suzuki: CAM is a worldwide phenomenon and a growing field. We identify two kinds of opportunities for which JCAM will play an important clearinghouse role.

First, American and European companies are searching for clinical experts in Japan who are able to examine the functionality of products. For instance, a European company requested us to conduct clinical research on herbs for anti-inflammatory use; another European company requesting clinical trials on its cosmetic products.

Second, Japanese companies are exploring the opportunity to promote their products and develop the market abroad. Due to cultural and linguistic barriers, they have difficulty marketing their high potential products outside Japan.

**VV: What is your challenge?**

Suzuki: CAM research activity in Japan is financially challenged. There is no governmental organization equivalent to the NCCAM in the U.S. that provides grants to research projects. The NCCAM has a budget totaling around USD\$121 million as part of the National Institute of Health. We hope our STIP web-based database project will provide visibility and funding opportunities to JCAM.

**VV Comments after the Interview:**

The complementary and alternative medicine approach presents insightful aspects. It illustrates that "personalized medicine", a buzz word in the current life sciences industry, is not a new concept. It has existed and been for centuries in traditional Chinese medicine. Each patient is prescribed different kinds of herb mixtures and dosage with the personalized treatment based on diagnostics. Another aspect is the preventive medicine "Mibyou" a pathological concept describing a pre-symptomatic physical condition. This approach may be considered a hint to improve or redesign the health care system.

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