



Professor Shinichi Kikuchi 1946 – 2022

Shinichi Kikuchi, Professor of Orthopaedics, Fukushima Medical University, Fukushima, Japan passed away on February 2, 2022 at the age of 75 years, after a short illness. He is survived by his wife Yumiko and their two daughters Junko and Masako and their families.

Shinichi Kikuchi was member of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine, ISSLS, since 1984 and his research group was very active in ISSLS for many years with large numbers of oral and poster presentations on a wide range of topics in lumbar spine research, from basic science to clinical science.

Shinichi Kikuchi was born in Ishikawa town in Fukushima prefecture. He studied medicine at Fukushima Medical University and became specialist in orthopaedic surgery following work at the Red Cross Hospital in Tokyo. He spent two years (1977-1979) in Toronto, Canada with Dr. Ian Macnab. Shinichi Kikuchi often mentioned that he respected Dr. Macnab very much and that he was influenced by Dr. Macnab's spine research and clinical work as well as the way that Dr. Macnab had organized the Department of Orthopaedics at the Wellesley Hospital in Toronto.

Shinichi Kikuchi was appointed Professor and Chairman, Department of Orthopaedics, Fukushima Medical University in 1990. He vitalized the department by visionary leadership and his team became well known in the international spine community. Shinichi Kikuchi established long-term research collaboration with spine researchers at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden in 1992 and a few years thereafter with pain researchers at the University of California San Diego in USA. This international research collaboration, initiated by Shinichi Kikuchi, was ongoing for many years and lead to increased understanding of various painful spinal disorders. He was awarded an honorary doctorate at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden in 2003 for his scientific contributions to that university, and he was elected an international member of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences in Gothenburg in 2006.

Shinichi Kikuchi was appointed President of Fukushima Medical University in 2008, a position that he held until his retirement in 2017. After the national disaster in Japan in March 2011 that followed the earthquake and tsunami, Shinichi Kikuchi was in charge of the healthcare efforts to provide care for those who had been affected by this catastrophic event.

Shinichi Kikuchi was president of ISSLS from 2005 to 2006. His presidential lecture "International collaboration beyond the culture gap" was memorable and was subsequently

published in the journal SPINE. In 2019 ISSLS awarded Shinichi Kikuchi the ISSLS Wiltse Lifetime Award for his outstanding achievements over many years in a broad range of lumbar spine research.

In Japan Shinichi Kikuchi initiated the Study Group for Nerve and Spine, SGNS, in 1996. This study group has since then had annual meetings to present and discuss recent advances regarding various spinal disorders. These meetings are always held in English with presentations by young spine researchers and clinicians - with a few invited international speakers. Shinichi Kikuchi was a respected leader in spine surgery and spine research in Japan. He was president of the Japanese Society for Spine Surgery and Related Research between 2007 and 2012.



Figure 1: Shinichi and Yumiko Kikuchi, September 2020

Shinichi Kikuchi was a unique person in many ways. He was a skillful spine surgeon, a talented spine researcher and a visionary leader. He inspired many collaborators and friends in Japan but also in other countries through his knowledge, integrity and respect. We know that we write on behalf of many colleagues and friends when we state that we miss him very much. Many are grateful for having known and worked with Shinichi Kikuchi.

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