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Special Topic: “Evidence-Based Evaluation”

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The Japan Evaluation Society (JES) was established in 2000. Since then, JES has published its professional journal twice per year (see the archives at <http://www.idcj.or.jp/jes>). The most recent issue—Volume 6, Number 1—was published in March 2006. It includes 12 papers and the summary report of the 6th annual conference held at Hiroshima University. With more than 200 pages, this issue marks the largest volume since the journal started. We can say that evaluation is becoming popular and receiving significant attention by academia and practitioners in Japan.

The special topic for this issue is “Evidence-based Evaluation”. Four papers are contributed on this topic and on the evidence-based movement in major sectors, such as health, criminology, education and international development.

The first paper is *The Genealogy and Direction of Evidence-based Medicine (EBM): The future and role of the Cochrane Collaboration to achieve health care evaluation*. The authors are Dr. Tomoya Masaki, International University of Health and Welfare Graduate School and Dr. Kiichiro Tsutani, The University of Tokyo. This paper first reviews the genealogy of the Evidence-based Medicine (EBM) and the Cochrane Collaboration. Then the role and the future direction of EBM in Japan as well as the global scene are discussed with respect to the importance of accumulating quality information as a social infrastructure and social epistemology.

The second paper is about criminology, titled *Utilization of Evidence in Criminal Justice with a Focus on Prevention and Treatment of Delinquency*. The author is Dr. Hiroshi Tsutomi, University of Shizuoka who is also a representative of the Japanese division of the Campbell Collaboration (<http://fuji.u-shizuoka-ken.ac.jp/~campbell/index.html>). This paper describes the two approaches to evidence utilization so far developed in the U.S. and discusses the relative applicability of these approaches in Japanese contexts. The first approach is a model program approach which encourages practitioners to discard ineffective and harmful programs and to adopt effective model programs based on the results of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) and Systematic Reviews (SRs) while the second approach is a model principle approach which encourages practitioners to assess their programs in terms of effective program principles derived from SRs.

The third paper focuses on the education sector. The title of the paper is

Evidence-Based Education: What Works Clearinghouse in the United States. The author is Satoko Tanabe, National Diet Library of Japan. This paper firstly explains the current practice and background of The No Child Left Behind Act, which was enacted in the United States in 2002, and the systematic review called *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC). The paper concludes that the Japanese education sector is far behind in using empirical research and evaluation. It would be important for Japan to evaluate programs using the strictest methods as possible, especially experimental designs.

The fourth one focuses on international development. The title is *Challenge of Evidence-Based Evaluation in ODA sector: Poverty Action Lab*, contributed by Ryoh Sasaki, Western Michigan University. This paper first reviews the history of aid evaluation since the 1950s. Then the paper introduces the progress of the current initiative, which is MIT's Poverty Action Lab. Based on those reviews, several issues relating to randomized designs are discussed, including issues pertaining to ethics, cost, and bias, as well as reasons why true experimental designs are preferable to quasi-experimental designs, and why this design has not yet been used in this sector. Then, the current situation and issues in Japanese aid evaluation are discussed. Finally it is recommended that Japan should actively commit to this project because it is the largest financier of the World Bank that has financially supported this project.

In addition to the special topic, six academic research papers are contributed. Three of them collected data from international development (i.e., Japanese aid programs

and projects) and the other three employ the data from Japanese domestic evaluation practices.

The first group which collected data from international development includes: (1) *The Influence of the Decentralization in the Area of Junior Secondary Education in Indonesia: An Empirical Study Using Causality Model on the Relationship between Educational Environment and Outcome* by Atsuko Toi and Dr. Hiromitsu Muta, Tokyo Institute of Technology who extensively apply structural equation modeling (SEM) for their analysis; and (2) *The Twentieth-Year Review of Japanese Structural Adjustment Loans: Political Background and Decision-Making of the Japanese Government* by Dr. Yayoi Tanaka, University of Tokyo, who suggests difficulties in evaluating programs that are directly connected to major political purposes.

The second group, which is about evaluation practice in Japan, includes: (3) *An Analysis of Diffusion and Developmental Process in Local Governments' Evaluation and Performance Measurement*, by Dr. Sun' ichi Furukawa and Harumi Morikawa, who apply quantitative event-history analysis and case study methods to ten Japanese local authorities; (4) *Evaluation of Social Capacity for Urban Air Quality Management* by Kazuma Murakami and Dr. Shunji Matsuoka, Hiroshima University, who propose a new evaluation framework that is called Actor-Factor Matrix for Air Pollution; (5) *A Quantitative Evaluation Utilizing Standardized Effect Unit: Application to the Evaluation of Foreign Student Policy and Regional Cooperation Program* by Yuriko Sato, Tokyo Institute of

Technology, who proposes a new concept of “standardized effect” for evaluating effectiveness, impact, and efficiency of social interventions; and (6) *The Evaluation and Analysis of a Policy about Information Flowing: The Case of Eco-Mark Program*, by Takashi Hirahara, Kyoto University, who uses the sophisticated methods of policy network analysis.

The issue also includes a research note, titled *A Study of Evaluation Methodology for Donor-funded School Construction Projects in Developing Countries: Through Establishing Evaluation Guidelines* by Satoshi Morita and Yasuyuki Sagawa, University of Tokyo, and a report about evaluation practice titled *A Study of Student Intern Program of Its Promotion: The Case of Evaluation on Nonprofit Organization Operation of “Action with Lao Children” (DeknoyLao)* by Isam Moteki, Saint Paul’s University, Japan.