

## **【Campus Asia Report】 Sung-hae KIM**

Home university : Yonsei University

Period of your stay : August 2017

Name of the host department : Bio-system Pharmacology (Kanai Lab)

### **1. Program description**

In professor Kazuto Kanai's laboratory that focuses on study of biotechnology and health policy, we had active discussions for about three to four times a week, sometimes 1:1 discussion, yet often in a small group of three and four researchers. The topics include health research and development policy (AMED system in Japan), culture differences and public's perception about new biotechnology, further medicine (robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), stem cell therapy and clinical application, etc.), how to provide correct and adequate health information to the publics, eHealth, public engagement in health policy making, and many more.

### **2. Learning outcomes**

In discussion with a Japanese medical doctor, we have found out that many Japanese people seem to struggle with health literacy, perhaps due to its aged population; yet its essential problem might be that people have less interest in listening to detailed health information, which is difficult to understand for nonmedical experts. Doctor - patient's relationship is based on the trust, which is very important in clinical setting, so in Japan, patients strongly believe what their doctors say. However, this relationship seems to be in a paternalistic position, while in Korea patients are more likely in position of consumer, yet with the tradition of medical tourism. In Korea, there were constant civil movements in 1960s and 80s nationwide that derived from student movements. From this experience, Korean citizens learned if they speak up together, their voices could be heard. Therefore, this is the nation that fully understands the power of public voice, and they have strong willingness to decide themselves about the matters that may change their life. This seems similar for patient's willingness to make his/her own medical choices. More and more, the patients want to learn about their health and receive correct health information that they tend to search their symptoms on Internet through smartphones, and want to listen to doctor's advice online. A part of the government's long term eHealth project included the provision of online health

information, and this is nowadays helping patients to participate in making health decision.

### 3. Experiences in the country you studied

While discussing about the dynamic informed consent project for rare genetic disease RUDY with Professor Kato, I was convinced that research of nowadays should no longer remain at domestic setting, but indeed requires interdisciplinary and international collaboration. If we stay within the country, we tend to remain the same, always meeting the same people, and ideas same – it is then difficult to move step forward. Certainly, innovation is limited if we do not learn and experience new outside world.

### 4. Influence on future career goals or choices

This program helped me confirming the importance of international research collaboration in academic areas, including health policy, even though this is the field that needs to greatly reflect national situations. When we talk about 'globalization', many people first think about modernization or sometimes believe this aims to make society more westernized, but I personally believe globalization is about learning how to communicate comfortably with different nations, in spite of our historical, cultural, social, and economic differences. As a young generation who lives in this era of globalization, I believe I am having more opportunities to work with various experts who frequently share the same ideas, which derived often from different perspective, and I believe this is one of the most exciting work processes that an academic researcher could find out. CAMPH allowed me to discover my potential to work abroad.

### 5. Comments

It would have been much meaningful if there were some opportunities I could meet other Japanese students/researchers and/or other Campus Asia students of different fields, not just seeing the research from the laboratory I was assigned to. I think doing so, this CAMPH program would create stronger interdisciplinary network among its Japanese and foreign students.

Also, I thought that for undergraduate students, 3 to 4 weeks of exchange program would be enough to stimulate their research enthusiasm, but this term seems to very short for a graduate student, who is willing to do more research focused activities. However, this short visit was enough for researchers – both from Japan and abroad – to

know each other, share different ideas, and find out common research interests for future collaboration. If a graduate student wants to do actual research, I would recommend to stay more that 3 to 6 months.