

Yoshihiro Takashima

I am now working as Guest Professor at the Osaka University Center for Infectious Disease Education and Research, Specially-Appointed Professor at the Osaka University Center for Advanced Modalities and Drug Delivery System, Visiting Professor at the Hiroshima University Department of Epidemiology, Infectious Disease Control and Prevention, and Visiting Researcher at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases Center for Field Epidemic Intelligence, Research and Professional Development.

In the last 30 years and now, my research interests have been and are: (1) vaccine-preventable diseases; (2) disease eradication and elimination (polio, measles, rubella, maternal and neonatal tetanus, etc.); (3) application of infectious diseases epidemiology to development, implementation and evaluation of health policies, programmes and strategies; (4) prevention, preparedness, response and containment of diseases resurgences and outbreaks; (5) disease surveillance; (6) epidemic intelligence; and (7) preparedness for pandemic.

I graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University (Osaka, Japan) in 1991 (MD), the Harvard School of Public Health (Boston, USA) in 1997 (MPH) and the Osaka University Graduate School of Medicine (Osaka, Japan) in 1999 (PhD). Major study foci were: (1) international public health; (2) urban public health in developing countries; (3) polio eradication; and (4) measles elimination. In 1990s, I worked as surgeon and emergency physician at the Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital (Kobe, Japan) and several local hospitals in Japan in 1991 to 1996 and worked as medical officer at the National Center for Global Health and Medicine (Tokyo, Japan) in 1997 to 2000.

In 2000, I began my career with the World Health Organization (WHO). From 2000 to 2003, I was the Regional Coordinator for the WHO's Emergency and Humanitarian Action programme for the Western Pacific (Manila, Philippines). From 2003 to 2009, I was Medical Officer of WHO China (Beijing, China), responsible for supporting China in measles elimination, accelerated hepatitis B control and immunization safety. I worked with the Chinese Ministry of Health in developing and implementing the National Plan of Action for Measles Elimination in China, 2006-2012, which enabled China to mark the lowest measles incidence in 2012.

From 2009 to 2023, I worked with the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) /

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunization (VDI) at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (Manila, Philippines) as: Regional Focal Point for Immunization System Strengthening (2009-2013); Regional Focal Point for Measles and Rubella Elimination (2014-2017); and the Group Lead for Accelerated Diseases Control and Acting Coordinator of WHO's Expanded Programme on Immunization for the Western Pacific Region (2017-2018). During these periods, I led my team in developing the Regional Framework for Implementation of Global Vaccine Action Plan in the Western Pacific and the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Measles and Rubella Elimination in the Western Pacific, both of which were endorsed by the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in 2014 and 2017, respectively.

From 2018 to 2023, I lead the WHO's programme on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunization in the Western Pacific Region (WPR) as Coordinator in: (1) supporting WHO's Member States in the WPR to (i) sustain the status of polio eradication in the Region and respond to multiple cVDPV outbreaks (e.g. Papua New Guinea (2018), Philippines (2019) and Malaysia (2020)), (ii) achieve and sustain measles and rubella elimination, including prevention of and response to measles resurgence and outbreaks, and (iii) accelerate hepatitis B control and maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination; (2) developing and implementing the Regional Strategic Framework for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunization in the Western Pacific 2021-2030, which was endorsed by the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in 2020; and (3) supporting WHO's Member States in the WPR to plan and implement vaccination responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2023).