



BLOOD RESEARCH

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## Perspective

### Blood Research: a new journey of passion with harmony beyond Asia onto the world

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Experts from the diverse areas of hematology, in recognizing the growing volume of medical research in the field, came together and founded the Korean Society of Hematology (KSH) on June 11, 1958. Their aim was to pursue in-depth research in each sub-division of hematology. Celebrating its 55th anniversary in 2013, the KSH is proudly positioned as the leading academic society in the field, and is now ready to take the next step towards becoming a world-class organization. The tireless energy that enabled the development of the society has its roots in the perceptive vision and dedication of our senior members. The society continues to flourish in pursuit of academic excellence and constructive competition based on cooperation between all our members.

The **Korean Journal of Hematology (KJH)** published its first volume in July 1966. The journal's earlier volumes included studies covering the topics of normal hemoglobin levels in healthy adult Koreans, the epidemiology of various types of anemia, national rates of hematologic malignancies, and the incidence and treatment of various bleeding disorders. As research activity increased and more papers were submitted for review, the journal became a bi-annual publication in 1971, a tri-annual publication in 1994, and has been published quarterly since 2001. International ex-

change in hematology research has also increased, prompting more research activity in each sub-division of hematology. Such efforts have led to the foundation of various sub-societies within the KSH, and eventually the establishment of other hematology-related academic societies, including the Korean Society of Blood Transfusion in 1982, the Korean Society on Thrombosis and Hemostasis (KSTH) in 1991, the Korean Society of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology (KSPHO) in 1993, and the Korean Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation (KSBMT) in 1996. These societies have begun to publish their own journals. As part of its international academic activities, the KSH has successfully hosted numerous international meetings, including the Asian-Pacific Regional Congress of the International Society of Hematology (ISH) in 1979, the Korean-Japanese Hematology Symposium in 1995, and the World Congress of the ISH in 2002. The year 2005 was a significant year for the KJH: the journal attained the status of the official unified journal of 4 hematology-related societies (the KSH, KSBMT, KSPHO, and KSTH). This event provided the basis for further advancement of the KJH. On March 31, 2010, the first English-language issue of the KJH was published and dispatched to overseas libraries and domestic readers [1].

The publication of research from the various sub-societies in KJH and its English-language issue was made possible by the substantial contributions of numerous working parties (WPs) within the KSH. The WPs encouraged joint research on different diseases at a variety of institutions and promoted academic and personal networking among researchers. The successful establishment of the WPs and the robust research they have conducted have made significant contributions to the overall growth of the KSH. Altogether, there are 13 WPs within the KSH. They are constructively competing against one another to hold more workshops, conduct more joint research projects, and promote further exchange with overseas research societies and associations at the working-party level. The members

of the WPs also actively present their results at numerous international conferences and publish their papers in renowned journals. All of these activities are improving the international recognition and status of the KSH as a whole. I would like to review the past achievements of our society and evaluate its present status, and then suggest ways, in which its influence can be globalized. At present, we have 13 WPs in the KSH. The Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) WP focuses on AML and myelodysplastic syndrome and is currently performing a nationwide registration study aiming specifically at the establishment of a national database and the promotion of prospective studies [2]. The AML WP has held more than 10 scientific meetings to date, including 5 international symposiums. The Lymphoma WP has published the results of more than 20 excellent studies on the prevalent subtype in far East Asia [3]. The results of these studies have been accepted in the 2013 National Comprehensive Cancer Network guideline, which has increased international awareness of our society and led global lymphoma study groups to propose collaborations with the Korean WP. The Multiple Myeloma (MM) WP has an important role within the field, because the incidence of MM is increasing in the era of an aging population. The MM WP has presented the results of clinical trials using various new drugs, which has led to collaboration with international study groups [4]. The Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML) WP established the Korean treatment guidelines for the disease and is keeping step with rapid progressions in the tyrosine kinase inhibitor drugs. The CML WP is also attempting to standardize CML diagnostic and follow-up methods. The Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) WP is divided into 2 groups: the children and adolescent group and the adult group. The 2 WPs have performed separate prospective studies to develop tailored treatments. Recently, they held a joint symposium to develop further integrated protocols based on the approaches each WP has taken. The Aplastic Anemia WP, established recently as the 13<sup>th</sup> WP in the KSH, has reported excellent outcomes with immunosuppressive treatment and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. We are trying to support other WPs for rarer diseases, to allow balanced research across the spectrum of hematology. Members active in the areas of deep vein thrombosis, myeloproliferative disease, hereditary hemolytic anemia, histiocytosis, cord blood transplantation, and hemophilia are developing clinical diagnostic and treatment guidelines in each WP [5]. In addition, through an ongoing process of internationalization, our cooperative efforts with the Japanese Society of Hema-

tology, the European Hematology Association, and the American Society of Hematology have continued to progress, and we have launched the Asian Joint Symposium on Cord Blood Transplantation and Lymphoma.

However, it is all too clear that we cannot be content with our accomplishments so far. The global trend in hematology research shows that numerous research groups are being set up in blocks, based on different research topics. Prospective diagnosis and treatment protocols are shared, enabling a high level of research output in a shorter time frame. If the KSH is to join this trend, move beyond Asia, become more globalized, and position itself at the center of hematology research, it will need to further collaborate in the spirit of passion and harmony. A higher level of cooperation between different institutions and joint research must be pursued.

At this time, the **Korean Journal of Hematology** has changed its title to **Blood Research**, an international journal focused on all aspects of blood. This change will provide an opportunity for us to look back on the past 50 years of achievements and acknowledge our efforts, while at the same time set even higher goals. The KSH is ready to set out on its new journey to become a world-class academic entity, and its members are ready to join the group of world-renowned experts.

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