On the COVER

The Great East Japan Disaster

Masami Ishii, MD, Japan Medical Association

On March 11, 2011, a giant earthquake rocked eastern Japan. At Iwate Prefectural Takata Hospital (Rikuzentakata City, Iwate), the tsunami wave that followed the quake reached the fourth floor of the building, by which time all patients had been moved to the roof. The four cover photos were taken from the roof by Dr Masahiro Ueno, one of the hospital physicians, to document and share the experience of the deadly tsunami front rapidly approaching the hospital. I would like to thank Dr Ueno and Dr Shinji Akitomi (Iwate Prefectural Advanced Emergency Care Center) for permitting me to publish these pictures in *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*.

Within a few hours, the tsunami had entirely wiped out the familiar houses and streets of Rikuzentakata City. The hospital was completely destroyed. With great effort, a temporary facility was set up only four months later, and home-visit and outpatient care resumed. The in-hospital ward was completed this February, and inpatient care has resumed as well. The bed number is now down to 41 from 70, but the number of nurses has increased to 38, with 10 physicians. I truly hope that Iwate Prefectural Takata Hospital–the only hospital with inpatient beds in the city–will fully regain its function soon and serve as the core of community health care.

Seeing both the power of nature and its astonishing aftermath as captured in these images, I cannot help but feel awe. These pictures also signify the importance of the medical profession being prepared and united. We, Japan Medical Association, fully intend on fulfilling our mission: to attend to the needs of the disaster victims.



Cover photo credits: Upper left (approaching tsunami waves [15:28 March 11, 2011]), upper right (tsunami attack [15:29 March 11, 2011]), lower left (cruel destruction [15:30 March 11, 2011]), and lower right (the city under water [dawn, March 12, 2011]), Dr Masahiro Ueno (Iwate Prefectural Takata Hospital, Iwate, Japan). Reproduced courtesy of Nikkei Business Publications, Inc, and JMA International Affairs Division

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