

President Address and Future Plans of ISBM

Norito Kawakami, MD, DMSc, President of ISBM
Professor, School of Public Health, The University of Tokyo
isbmpresdt@m.u-tokyo.ac.jp



I was elected President-elect of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine (ISBM) two years ago at the Governing Council meeting in Tokyo in 2008; and on August 8, 2010, I took over the position of President from Prof. Hege Eriksen at the closing ceremony of the 11th International Congress of Behavioral Medicine (ICBM) in Washington DC. I attended the First ICBM at Uppsala, Sweden in 1990, witnessing the birth of ISBM. I have been a member of Japan Society of Behavioral Medicine (JSBM), and thus a member of ISBM, for 18 years, since the JSBM was established in 1992. It is a great honor and extreme pleasure for me to serve the society and its members as the President for the next two years. I know that the role of President includes substantial responsibility and work, and I will continually strive to do my best. While I was working with Hege and other board members over the past two years, I learned how the ISBM works. Through my experience, I find that the ISBM is in good shape and has a lot of potential for future growth as well. The Governing Council, just before the 11th ICBM conference, also elected new Board members. I sincerely look forward to working with the Board members and with you, our members, in developing the ISBM even further.

Concerning ICBM's future plans for the next two years, my most important role as the president is, first, to keep the ISBM developing as we did in the past. The International Journal of Behavioral Medicine (IJBM) and international conferences are two of ISBM's major activities. The Journal is currently in good shape, and we will keep publishing high-quality research and increasing the Journal's visibility in the field of behavioral medicine. Just recently, the 11th ICBM conference was completed with great success. The next ICBM will be in Budapest, Hungary from August 29 to September 1, 2012, hosted by the Hans-Selye Hungarian Society of Behavioral Science and Medicine (<http://www.icbm2012.com/>). We will work to make this conference one of the most successful, with a lot of participants and high-quality scientific content.

Second, I would like to strengthen the committees' activities and ties with member societies. We have nine committees and 26 member societies from 23 countries, with two affiliate societies and three emerging societies. The committees and the member societies are two major pillars of the ISBM; in fact, the ISBM is an organization of member societies. To strengthen the committee activities, I would like to ask the committee chairs to work in a more organized way by selecting co-chairs and members, submitting their workplans at the start of this year, and a report at the year's end. To

make the activities visible to our members, all of the information will be posted on the website as well. We plan to make the Early Career Network, which is a group of young researchers, more formal by inviting its representatives to the Board and the committees. I would like also to strengthen ties with member societies by improving our ways of communicating with them, based on our past experience. I would also like to ask the member societies to do a small task for ISBM. This might include conducting membership campaigns in their counties or at an ICBM conference, and also working with other member societies in a same region, as well as helping neighborhood countries to develop their own societies of behavioral medicine.

The third pillar of ISBM is comprised of individual members. In the ICBM conference 2010, we had an ISBM Open Forum, which was very successful – bringing together 40–50 attendants for many great conversations. I would like to increase the opportunity for ISBM to interact directly with individual members at the next conference in Budapest. Also, between conferences, I would like to ask our Communication Committee Chair to prepare a way to make it possible for people to register their e-mails to the ISBM website, and receive timely information electronically. I also look forward to encouraging non-members who attended the conference to become members or even develop their own national or regional society.

I believe that the ISBM is responsible for taking more of a leadership role in behavioral medicine and global health. I propose that we identify some key areas or topics of research and practice in behavioral medicine to be promoted in the next two years. One such area/topic is economic crisis and health, about which there has recently been an increasingly urgent global need for research; however, behavioral medicine should not be limited to such areas. In addition, I propose to work more closely with international organizations, such as the WHO, ILO, United Nations, and other international societies, to contribute towards addressing current global health challenges.

The ISBM is your society. The ISBM Board serves your needs. Please contact me directly, if you like, to inform us of your needs and send your suggestions and proposals. During my term, I look forward to working with you, our members, member societies, and the Board as well as seeing all of you at the next ICBM conference in Budapest, Hungary in 2012.