



National Academy of Medicine of Korea Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary

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National Academy of Medicine of Korea (NAMOK) was launched in 2004, after 2 years of incubation in the Korean Academy of Medical Sciences, a forty-year old federation of 156 medical specialty societies. Professor Je-Geun Chi, a pathologist and former president of the Korean Academy of Medical Sciences, was elected as the first President of NAMOK.

Two National Academies of Korea, The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea and the Korean Academy of Science and Technology encouraged the establishment of NAMOK, as an equivalent to the Institute of Medicine under the National Science Academies of the U.S.A. Around the time NAMOK was established, there were approximately 7,000 professional medical personnel in Korea.

The purpose of NAMOK is to promote medicine in Korea. To this end, NAMOK supports career development of medical professionals as well as encourages them to provide professional information and advice concerning health policy to policy-makers and the public to promote health and welfare of Koreans. It also supports international academic exchanges of medical professionals and resources.

The first members of NAMOK were elected based on recommendations from academic societies of each specialty area. At its founding, NAMOK had 350 members, there are now 402 members total, including 321 regular members, 74 lifetime members, and 7 honorary members. NAMOK consists of seven divisions, i.e., Division 1 (Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Physiology, Pharmacology), Division 2 (Anatomy, Microbiology, Parasitology, Pathology), Division 3 (Forensic medicine, Medical history, Preventive medicine), Division 4 (Dermatology, Family medicine, Internal medicine, Pediatrics, Neurology, Psychiatry), Division 5 (Obstetrics & Gynecology, Plastic surgery, Neurosurgery, Ophthalmology, Surgery, Otolaryngology, Orthopedic surgery, Thoracic surgery, Urology), Division 6 (Anesthesiology, Emergency medicine, Laboratory medicine, Nuclear medicine, Radiation oncology, Radiology, Rehabilitation medicine) and Division 7 (Dentistry, Dietetics, Nursing science, Health science, Oriental medicine, Pharmacy).

The election of a new member begins with a recommendation from the relevant specialty society or recommendations from two NAMOK members. The eligibility of NAMOK members is reassessed every five years and lifetime membership can be earned after the age of 70.

Standardization of technical terminology in Korea, particu-

larly medical terms, has been one of the major concerns of NAMOK since its start. Therefore, among the various activities of NAMOK, round table discussions on medical terminology have been the most productive and sustainable activity. The outcome of the discussions from 32 meetings was compiled into three volumes of reports. Another major activity of NAMOK has been the publication of the Korea Medical Research Report that monitors research activity in the fields of medical science and clinical medicine in Korea, with emphasis on total paper output, international rank and impact. The remaining activities include forums on healthcare policy, seminar reports on the national medical agenda including medical insurance, utilization of national big data, etc. Academic forums on salts & health, national cancer clinical trial system, obesity and health, dementing illness, etc. have been the important agendas. NAMOK also has encouraged high quality research through its Medical Research Awards. Recently NAMOK expanded its membership and included oriental medicine, together with nursing science, dentistry, and pharmacy to integrate all health-related disciplines.

Despite its short history, NAMOK has proved itself as an indispensable organization in reporting professional opinions for national agendas and also for the promotion of medical science in Korea. NAMOK should, and is sure to, carry on its essential role in procuring medical professionalism and also in producing consensus reports, workshop summaries and reports on major national agendas such as integrative medicine and public health, research priorities, the value of genetic and genomic technologies, measure of health literacy, ethical issues in studying the safety, etc.

REFERENCES

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