

17-2 Support for Disaster Victims (Mental health and physical care of children in disaster-affected areas)

Case study	Iwate Children's Care Center
Location	Iwate Prefecture
Phases	Emergency response phase Recovery phase Early reconstruction phase Late reconstruction phase
Members	Iwate Medical University, Child and Family Division (currently, Office for Children and Childcare Support), Health and Welfare Department, Iwate Prefecture

Activity overview:

The Iwate Children's Care Center is a specialist child psychiatric facility opened to provide mental health and emotional care for children in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake (until September 2019). Iwate Medical University was commissioned by Iwate Prefecture to operate the center.

Primary functions:

- Dispatch physicians to community care centers in Miyako, Kamaishi, and Kesen areas to provide medical treatment and counseling
- Provide medical treatment and counseling for children living inland who are experiencing stress resulting from the disaster
- Secure and train child psychologists and train pediatricians and support staff

Activity details:

■ Establishment of Mental Health and Emotional Care Centers for Children

The loss of family and friends due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and the fearful experience of the earthquake and tsunami had a significant impact on the mental health of children. In response to this, Iwate Prefecture established the Miyako Mental Health and Emotional Care Center for Children in the Miyako Child Consultation Center, the Kesen Mental Health and Emotional Care Center for Children in the Taiyo Child and Family Support Center, and the Kamaishi Mental Health and Emotional Care Center for Children in the Kamaishi Public Health Center from June 2011, and started to provide mental and emotional care in cooperation with physicians from in and outside the prefecture. However, approximately 90% of the children treated at the centers were pre-school, elementary and junior high school age, raising the need for long-term care.

■ Establishment of "Iwate Children's Care Center" prefecture-wide base

A project team of experts from the prefecture was set up in March 2012, with the Child and Family Division (currently, Office for Children and Childcare Support), Health and Welfare Department, Iwate Prefecture operating as the secretariat, to discuss the state of mental health and emotional care for children.

Since Iwate Prefecture had few pediatricians, psychiatrists and medical institutions even before the disaster and relied on support from outside the prefecture, the Iwate Children's Care Center was

opened in Yahaba Town in May 2013 to fulfill the need to establish a base for long-term, stable support, with assistance from the State of Kuwait and the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Iwate Medical University was commissioned by Iwate Prefecture to manage the center. With four psychiatrists (including one child psychiatrist) and more than 20 staff from multiple disciplines (as of 2018), the center took over the functions of earlier child mental health care centers in different regions and established branches at prefectural hospitals in Miyako, Kamaishi and the Kesen area, where treatment was offered on a weekly basis. The center also functions as a child psychiatry outpatient department at university hospitals, with a prefecture-wide medical network in place to provide treatment and support for both trauma conditions directly related to the disaster, as well as more general mental health issues. Post-disaster trauma care for children is offered comprehensively at relevant centers through a multi-layered care system over three stages: (1) monitoring in collaboration with schools and communities, (2) logistical support for support staff involved with children who require some form of intervention, and (3) medical care for children who require psychiatric treatment.

Iwate Medical University Hospital expanded its specialized treatment system, including the opening of a child psychiatric ward, in line with the relocation and reconstruction of the hospital in September 2019. Treatment functions were transferred from the commissioned work to Iwate Medical University Hospital, which continues to offer counseling services and medical consultation support in disaster-affected areas, specialized recommendations to schools, and training programs (FY 2020 – Iwate Children's Care Center Disaster Area Medical Support Project)

- Location: 1F, Multimedia Education and Research Building, Iwate Medical University (Yahaba Town)
- Operated by: Commissioned to Iwate Medical University
- Functions:
 - Clinical treatment at child psychiatric clinics and in coastal areas
 - Medical treatment of children in inland areas (including evacuees from the coast)
 - Training of child psychiatrists and other specialist staff
 - Support for support staff using training programs
 - Awareness-raising activities and research on caring for children's mental health
- Maintenance costs: Support provided by the Japanese Red Cross Society, with relief aid from the Government of Kuwait
- Construction completed: April 26, 2013

■Support from Kuwait

The Government of Kuwait donated 5 million barrels of crude oil (equivalent to approximately JPY 40 billion) to the Government of Japan in October 2011 to support reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake. This oil was distributed through the Japanese Red Cross Society to Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, the three prefectures that had been hit hard by the disaster, taking into account the scale of the damage and overall response to the nuclear accident.

Relief aid was allocated for projects carried out independently by each prefecture, which ranged

from reconstructing local infrastructure, medical care, education, public welfare and nursing care, to restoring agriculture, forestry and fisheries, creation of jobs and support for victims of the nuclear accident.

On July 19, 2012, the Government of Kuwait also sent approximately JPY 157 million to the Japanese Red Cross Society, separate and apart from crude oil aid, from which about JPY 137 million was used to support the Iwate Children's Care Center.

Sources (Listed in other case studies, etc.)

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Systems and mechanisms applied:

- ・ Support projects for disaster victims under general subsidy for support for affected people (comprehensive support projects for health and livelihood measures for children affected by the disaster)

Project cost:

- ・ FY 2019 (actual): JPY 92,122,000 (JPY 92,121,000 funded by the national government)