

Japanese National Plan for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease

Cerebrovascular disease, including stroke, and cardiovascular disease are the leading causes of death in Japan, which together account for 23.2% of the total number of deaths in 2018. The major causes of the need for long-term care in Japan are also cerebrovascular disease (16.1%) and cardiovascular disease (4.5%), which together account for more than one-fifth of the total. Medical expenses for both cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease account for ~20% of the total, which is the highest by injury/illness classification.

The Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease Control Act, of Japanese national law, was promulgated by a legislative act on December 14, 2018, and enacted on December 1, 2019.¹ On the basis of the Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease Control Act, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, published the Japanese National Plan for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease (Japanese National Plan) on October 27, 2020.² This national plan was developed through 5 meetings of the Council for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease, 4 parliamentary associated meetings, and public comments. The Council is composed of patients with cerebrovascular or cardiovascular disease; those engaged in emergency services and health, medical, or welfare services; and those with academic experience. The Japanese National Plan reflects the opinions of not only medical professionals but also patients and other stakeholders. It has indicated both problems in the current situation and individual measures to address the problems.

The 2 main goals of the Japanese National Plan are to extend healthy life expectancy by 3 years by 2040 compared with 2016 and to decrease age-adjusted mortality of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease. The average life expectancy and healthy life expectancy for both men and women increased by 0.67 to 1.72 years from 2010 to 2016 in Japan. In 2016, the unhealthy period which is defined as differences between healthy life expectancy (men, 72.14 years; women, 74.49 years) and average life expectancy (men, 80.98 years; women, 87.14 years) was large: ~8.8 years for men and ~12.4 years for women. Therefore, extending healthy life expectancy is a primary goal of the Japanese National Plan. These goals are similar to those of the 2030 Impact Goal by the American Heart Association, which strives to equitably increase healthy life expectancy from 66 years to at least 68 years across the United States and from 64 years to at least 67 years worldwide by 2030.³ However, healthy life expectancy in Japan is much longer than that in the United States.

The Japanese National Plan includes 3 major measures: spreading awareness of prevention measures and accurate information on cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease; enhancing service provision systems related to health, medical care, and welfare services; and promoting research on cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease. The measures are important for all patients, and all the promotions are needed to achieve the plan's goals.

Masanari Kuwabara[Ⓜ],
MD, PhD
Megumu Mori, MD, PhD
Shigekazu Komoto, MD,
PhD

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An overview of the Japanese National Plan is shown in the Figure. The plan components were mainly derived by discussion in the Council for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease. It comprehensively promotes a wide range of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease measures, including prevention, health and medical care, and welfare services. Because cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease is characterized by the tendency to recur even after passing through the acute, recovery, and chronic phases, it is necessary to implement not only primary prevention strategies but also secondary and tertiary prevention of its recurrence, complications, and aggravation. A system for collecting and providing medical information on cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease is needed to serve as a foundation.

One of the important measures of the Japanese National Plan is spreading awareness of prevention measures and accurate information on cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease, including primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. It is necessary to promote the dissemination of knowledge to the public from childhood onward that lifestyle improvement can prevent lifestyle-related diseases, including cerebrovascular

and cardiovascular disease. The approach is similar to that of the American Heart Association's Life's Simple 7 or the Million Hearts Initiative, such as implementing cardiovascular preventive strategies to manage the ABCs (aspirin therapy in appropriate patients, blood pressure control, cholesterol management, and smoking cessation).^{4,5}

The Japanese National Plan describes 10 specific measures that are based on enhancement of service provision systems related to health, medical care, and welfare services: (1) promoting health checkups to prevent cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease; (2) improving emergency transportation systems; (3) securing emergency medical care and establishing medical care provision systems for cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease; (4) providing measures against cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease based on social cooperation and patient support; (5) developing a system to provide medical care and rehabilitation for cerebrovascular and cardiovascular diseases; (6) providing appropriate information and consultation support for cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease; (7) providing palliative care for cerebrovascular and cardiovascular diseases; (8) supporting patients with after-effects of

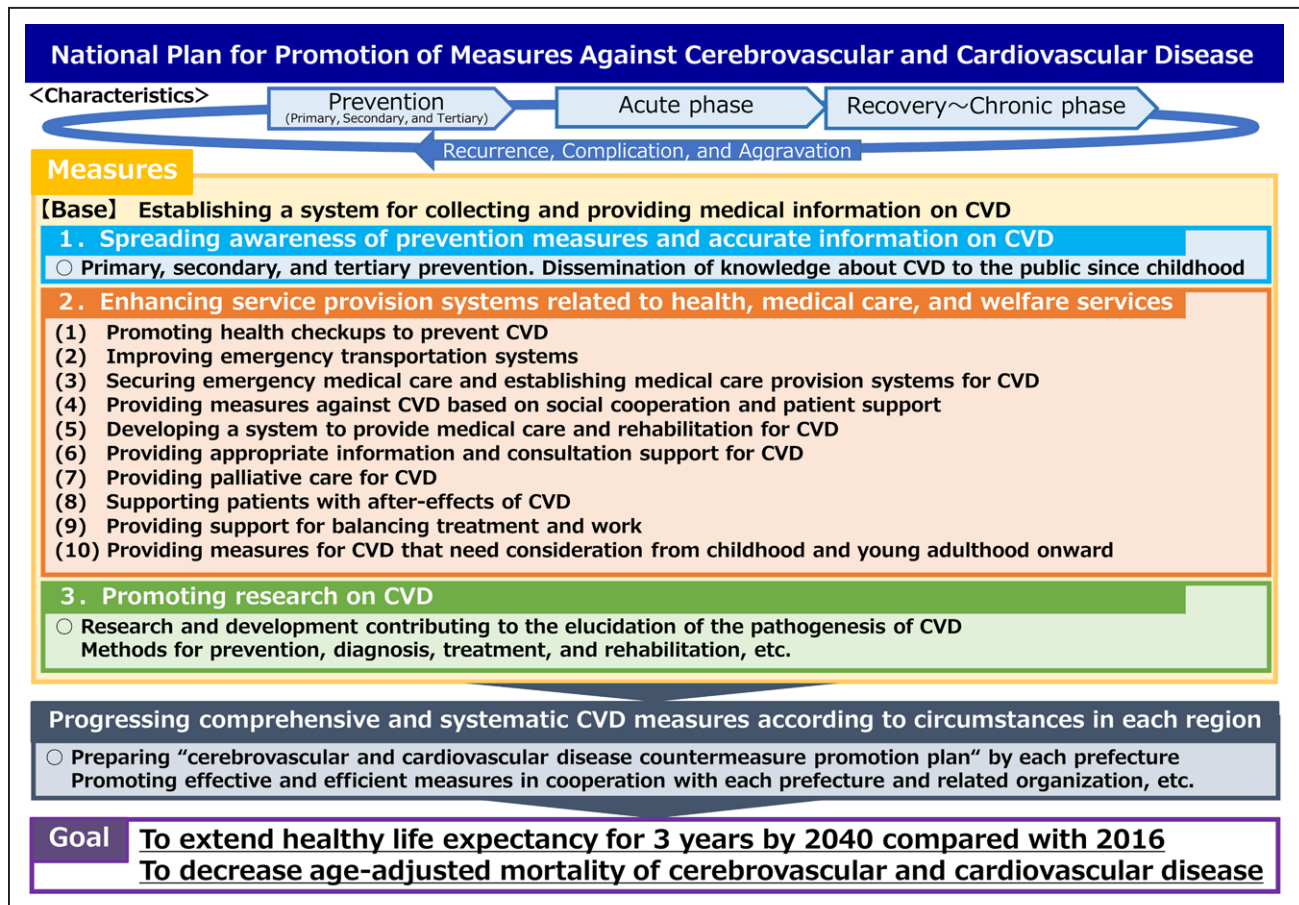


Figure. Overview of the Japanese National Plan for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease. The goal is to extend healthy life expectancy by 3 years by 2040 compared with 2016 and to decrease age-adjusted mortality from cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

cerebrovascular or cardiovascular disease; (9) providing support for balancing treatment and work; and (10) providing measures for cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease that need consideration from childhood and young adulthood onward, described individually.

Regarding the promotion of research on cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease, the Japanese National Plan describes research and development contributing to the elucidation of the pathogenesis of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease and methods for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. The plan promotes basic research as well as research for practical use that contributes to the development of diagnosis and treatment methods, which aims for industry–academia collaboration. The plan promotes research for establishing evidence-based policy and for elucidating the causes of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease.

On the basis of the Japanese National Plan, each prefecture must prepare a cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease countermeasure promotion plan to progress cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disease measures according to circumstances in each region. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan handles the plan along with the Council for Promotion of Measures Against Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease, including the members of the Japanese Stroke Society, the Japanese Circulation Society, and the Japan Medical Association. The government plans to establish a research team to measure and monitor the implementation of the Japanese National Plan and goals achieved.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Correspondence

Masanari Kuwabara, MD, PhD, Deputy Director and Senior Specialist for Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer and Disease Control

Division, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, 1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8916, Japan. Email kuwamasa728@gmail.com

Affiliation

Cancer and Disease Control Division, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Tokyo, Japan.

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Disclosures

None.

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