

## Editorial

### *Integrating NBN and EBM in Kampo Medicine*

EBM is an essential concept in modern medicine. However, not all problems can be resolved using EBM methodology. It is particularly difficult to apply to diseases and pathological conditions that are deeply associated with psychological elements. The concept of NBM came to be widely known through *Narrative Based Medicine—Dialogue and discourse in clinical practice* (BMJ, 1998), edited and published by Trisha Greenhalgh and Brian Hurwitz in 1998. It introduced NBM as a complementary concept to EBM in the medical care field, and made it known that the two concepts function as the two wheels of a cart.

With regard to a certain treatment for a certain disease, it cannot be said that “no evidence exists unless its effectiveness is proven in a randomized controlled trial (RCT).” Yet, Kampo medicine is placed in this precise situation. We do not have the right to abandon Kampo prescriptions that have a history of some 1800 years for the reason that no evidence exists. This is because “no evidence means its effectiveness has not been proven yet, and is not the same as being invalid.”

In Kampo medicine, physicians place importance on history taking, and make a diagnosis and provide treatment based on the patient’s narrative. Needless to say, other examination methods such as visual examination, auscultation, and pulse feeling are also certainly important, but history taking, including medical history, plays an extremely important role in Kampo medicine diagnosis, and helps determine the selection of a prescription. Patients frequently say that “Kampo medicine specialists listen carefully to what patients say.” However, listening carefully to a patient’s narrative is nothing special. Kampo medicine specialists listen carefully because doing so is necessary for making a diagnosis and providing treatment, even if they are not aware that NBM is taking place in that process. NBM is not a new concept in traditional medicine, but has existed from ancient times.

The series on “Integrating Kampo and Evidence Based Medicine” by Dr. Yasui, which begins with this issue, is expected to shed light on the characteristics of Kampo medicine from the perspectives of both NBM and EBM. In the series, Dr. Yasui shall classify Kampo medicine as practiced under a centralized medical system into four categories, and define the role of Kampo medicine in each category.

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