Biobank-Related Survey Uncovers Recognition Divergence between Medical and Non-Medical Hospital Workers
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Background: Biological samples are one of the most important research tools for clinical as well as basic research. However, their collection, storage, and access are complicated and sometimes become rate-limiting steps of an entire project. To facilitate the sample collection process, more and more samples are now stored in biobanks. While the number of biobanks is increasing all over the world, including in Japan, the concept of biobanking is not fully understood in the Japanese research community. Thus, we conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire regarding the recognition of biobanks toward medical and non-medical personnel in our hospital.

Methods: Subjects were 30 physicians and surgeons, 30 nurses, and 60 medical clerks who work in our hospital. They were asked to answer 40 questionnaires about biobanks. The first half of the questionnaires consists of basic concepts of biobanking, answering the question of how participants understand biobanks, followed by the 20 questionnaires which asked more detail about biobanks.

Results and Discussion: Fifty percent of physicians and surgeons understood the concept of biobanking, whereas 30% of nurses had the correct recognition of biobanking. The majority of medical clerks, more than 90%, had a poor recognition about it. Doctors and nurses, but not medical clerks, gave much weight to the following three points: 1) the protection of privacy; 2) the right to veto participation; and 3) the use of stored samples. This survey implies that there is a similar tendency of conception about biobanking among medical professionals, doctors, and nurses. In contrast, non-medical workers need to have a chance to learn about biobanking to improve awareness, which will lead to obtaining correct recognition of biobanks.