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It has been an honor and privilege to participate as a host for the International Observership/Research Fellowship under the auspices of the Japanese Society of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery for almost a decade. Initially hosted by my former colleague at Mayo Clinic, Dr. Michael Sarr, it was my pleasure to serve as the host since 2001. Since then, I have had the opportunity to interact with and mentor some five bright, energetic and very productive young surgeons from Japan.

Since my involvement with the international observership, I have had the distinct opportunity to work with Drs. Hiroyuki Shinchi, Keita Wada, Joe Matsumoto, Yasushi Hashimoto, and Toshiyuki Moriya. Currently Dr. Motokazu Sugimoto has joined us at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and is just initiating his experience.

The collaboration between the Japanese Society of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery and the collaborating centers in the United States has been a two-way street. The young Japanese surgeons have had the opportunity to participate in outcomes-based research and to observe clinical practice at three of the top pancreatic surgery centers in the United States. I have been singularly impressed with the energy, the work ethic, and the attention to detail that each of the young researchers has displayed in their six-month rotation with me at Mayo Clinic. Each has been extremely productive as evidenced by the prodigious list of publications that have resulted from their rotations. Moreover, it has been most gratifying to me to watch each of these young surgeons as they have progressed in their careers as hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgeons after they have returned to their native Japan. I continue to interact with them when I see them at international meetings. Their contributions are significant and I anticipate that they will continue to make major contributions to the management of patients with hepatobiliary and pancreatic diseases going forward.