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I would like to address the importance of the International Observership Program for the Japanese Society of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery that has been in existence for several years now. With the help of Drs. William Traverso, Howard Reber, myself, and Michael Farnell here, this has been a huge success. Not only is it an opportunity to share different ways of doing specific operations, but it is a form of communication between our two countries. I have made many friends related to this program. I know that the young, incredibly wonderful and talented surgeons from Japan that have visited here have benefited from this, not only living in a different culture and working in a different culture, but also being able to share thoughts between our two countries. This has been a huge academic advance for us here at Mayo Clinic and elsewhere. I hope it has been a productive clinical and academic advance for the young surgeons from Japan who have been in this International Observership Program. It is a tremendous commitment of time on their part, but I believe that it has undeniably increased communication, built many, many new friendships and collaboration between the two countries. I am hoping this is going to continue. Unfortunately, as of January 1, 2015, I will be retired, but Dr. Michael Farnell will be continuing for a year or so; and hopefully we will transition this over to one of the other HPB surgeons here in the near future.

From us here at Mayo Clinic, we would like to thank the Japanese Society of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery for starting this International Observership Program. This has been an enormous success. I hope we will be able to continue it in the future.