

The 18th WFC Biennial Congress & Assembly

Japan Country Report

May 5th, 2025

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Simon Takayanagi, President of the Japanese Association of Chiropractors. This is Junko Usuda, vice president of our association. We are delighted to have been invited here to present our country report this year. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those involved in organizing the 18th WFC Biennial Congress, as well as the General Assembly.

The Japanese Association of Chiropractors (JAC) is the only WHO-standard national chiropractic association among numerous local organizations in Japan. As there is currently no legislation governing the chiropractic profession in Japan, it is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 individuals claim to practice chiropractic or similar therapies. In contrast to the large number of substandard practitioners, there are only 651 chiropractors registered with the Japan Chiropractic Register (JCR)—a self-regulated body that adheres to WHO standards. The JCR has adopted the International Board of Chiropractic Examiners (IBCE) exam as its registration test since 2011 and introduced a registration renewal system in 2024.

In cooperation with the JCR's registration system, we provided our members with seminars on safety and medical laws, conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Consumer Affairs Agency, and insurance companies.

The current Prime Minister, Shigeru Ishiba, serves as the chief advisor to the Japan Chiropractic Register (JCR). On November 11, 2024, the JCR submitted the "15th Roster of Registered Chiropractors" to the Japanese Ministry of Health. We also attended this meeting at Mr. Ishiba's office, where we requested a new government study by the Ministry of Health to consider approving chiropractic education within a university-based program. The Ministry of Health responded by expressing hope that the public will increasingly recognize the JCR's list of registrants.

The recent issue threatening our profession is that the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) has accepted a substandard Japanese group into its membership. This group offers brief training—ranging from just a few days to a week—to certify individuals as so-called

chiropractors.

The ACA's partnership with this group is causing significant confusion, not only in Japan but also in other Asian countries. In regions like Asia, where many countries have yet to establish chiropractic legislation, ethical issues in one country can easily impact neighboring nations.

With the support of national associations across the Asian region, the JAC has formally requested that the ACA promote chiropractic education in accordance with WHO chiropractic guidelines, and cease its partnership with the substandard Japanese group.

On February 5, 2025, the JAC had official meetings with several politicians, including Cabinet Ministers who have long supported JAC activities. We exchanged views with Mr. Keisuke Suzuki, Minister of Justice, regarding plans to realize university-level chiropractic education. We also submitted a "Request for Approval of Chiropractic Education in an Incorporated Educational Institution" to Mr. Takamaro Fukuoka, Minister of Health, and reported on our efforts to establish chiropractic education at the university level. Mr. Fukuoka spoke about the government's promotion of academic research to gather evidence on the effectiveness and safety of chiropractic, as well as its collaboration with related academic societies in the medical field.

The JAC will continue its efforts, in collaboration with supportive politicians, to gain approval for chiropractic education that aligns with WHO guidelines in Japan. We hope the upcoming WHO Benchmarks for Training in Chiropractic will strongly reinforce our appeal to the Ministry of Health.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize that our slow and steady political efforts will one day yield fruitful results for our profession. We firmly believe that every small effort counts. That is all for our presentation. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Prepared and presented by Dr Simon Takayanagi