

U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Japanese Fellowship Program 2023



Program Directors' Welcome



Dr. Sang Kim, LCDR, MC, USNH, YOKOSUKA

Executive Program Director

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the Japanese Fellowship program and I sincerely hope you consider applying. I think the strength of this program is in our ability to work hand-in-hand to take care of patients and to help you achieve your goals. It has been extremely enjoyable for me to work with the Japanese fellows and form friendships. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for advice or any questions you might have.

Thank you!



Dr. Benjamin Chi, CDR, MC, USNH YOKOSUKA

Academic Program Director

Thank you for your interest in the Japanese Fellowship Program. This program is an incredible platform for building relationships that improves the care for our patients and will help you grow as a physician. In just one year, I have seen fellows gain experiences, associations and friendships that benefit our mutual missions. There is so much that can only be experienced by participating in the program as a fellow, so please submit your application! I look forward to meeting you and answering any of your questions.

Fellow Expectations and Roles

Fellows are a critical and integral part of USNH Yokosuka. Since 1952, the Fellowship has forged a partnership between Japanese and American healthcare professionals. The primary mission of the Fellowship is to educate Fellows regarding Western medicine, evidence-based practice, and patient-centered care. A secondary mission is for Fellows to act as a liaison and translator with Japanese hospitals during the transfer of acutely ill American patients that exceed the capabilities of USNH Yokosuka. The liaison role is difficult as it bridges gaps in cultures and standards of care, and it is immensely rewarding to the Fellows and meaningful to the American patients.

Communication and Cultural Differences

The staff of the Naval Hospital speak English as do the majority of the patients. Most of the staff will be stationed in Japan for two to three years, during which time some USNH staff take Japanese language courses but few become fluent. Rarely are the USNH physicians proficient enough to communicate patient information in Japanese. Fellows are constantly challenged to speak English as well as understand cultural differences between the Japanese and USNH patients. Military family and Service members come from all over the world – not just America – providing significant racial, language, religious, and cultural diversity that you may not be accustomed to when practicing medicine in Japan. USNH staff are always available and happy to assist with questions about a particular problem regarding English (conversational, medical, or military.) Although you may question your English ability, you will be pleasantly surprised to see just how quickly your proficiency improves during your time here.



Duty

Also known as "on call." Fellows are on duty on average every sixth day. The Fellow on duty is responsible for translating and assisting with transfer of USNH patients to Japanese hospitals. This responsibility is critical to safe patient care at USNH since Fellows are the link between USNH physicians and Japanese physicians accepting the patient for transfer. Most patient transfers occur during normal daytime business hours, but they can also happen overnight and on weekends

Duty is covered seven days a week, including holidays. Many days there are no transfers, and the Fellow on duty can use this free time to rotate in a clinic, participate in academics, study, or sleep if after hours. Two on-call Fellows have to be available for transfer every day. The Fellow on duty (1st on call) must report to the hospital within 15 minutes if called in for a transfer. Fellow on duty typically resides in the duty room in the hospital overnight. The Fellow for back-up (2nd on call) should be prepared to take other transfers when the other fellow (1st on call) is already called in.



Rotation

Although Fellows are not credentialed to independently care for patients at USNH, they are active participants during rotations in clinic, the operating room and the emergency room. Fellows are expected to have frequent opportunities to practice history taking, physical exams, presentations, note taking, and can participate in procedures as an assistant under direct supervision of credentialed health care providers in accordance with the laws and regulations of the United States. More details are provided below.

Rotation Schedules and Curriculum

All fellows can rotate through various departments. The rotation schedule can be flexible depending on individual career goals. In addition, fellows will have elective weeks through which they may allocate their time for "Overseas Elective", an opportunity to study abroad for observation. The available departments are below:

Internal Medicine	Family Medicine
Pediatrics	Obstetrics/Gynecology
General Surgery	Emergency Medicine
Ophthalmology	Urology
Otolaryngology/ENT	Radiology
Orthopedic Surgery	Anesthesiology
Neurology	Psychiatry
Dermatology	Pathology
Operational Medicine	Occupational Health
"Overseas Elective"	



Teaching Conferences and Educational Forums

The didactics of the USNH Yokosuka Fellowship are one of its greatest strengths. There are several different formats as explained below. Some, such as noon conferences and joint conferences, are Fellow-led whereas others are staff-led or formatted as a group discussion.

Noon conference

Case Presentation

Case presentations take place from 1200 to 1300 on Mondays, led by Japanese fellows. The focus is mainly on gathering pertinent historical and physical findings and developing a differential diagnosis as a group in a "morning report" type format. Emphasis is also placed on interpreting laboratory and radiological data and synthesizing all available information to arrive at the correct diagnosis. Staff physicians from various specialties are present to help guide the discussion and provide education. Fellows present approximately 15 times during the year. This is an excellent opportunity for output.

Lectures

USNH staff lectures take place from 1200 to 1300 on Wednesday and Friday. These lectures cover core topics that are important aspects of American medicine and resident-level education. Additionally, we will have guest lecturers from subspecialty areas from specialty areas of medicine within USNH Yokosuka, providers from other clinics/hospitals, or visiting Fellowship alumni. This is an excellent opportunity for input.

Transfer conference

This monthly case discussion centers on reviewing transfer cases from the previous month. In this conference, Fellows report the cases that they experienced. This discussion is aimed at identifying the problems and accidents that contributed to the outcome in order to prevent similar occurrences in the future. This discussion is also helpful in fostering good relationships between host nation hospitals and USNH.

Joint Conferences

Joint conferences are an opportunity to formally present cases in English in front of the staff of USNH and a local Japanese hospital. The presentation quality is similar to what would be delivered at an academic conference. USNH and the local hospitals alternate hosting the conferences, and Fellows are expected to present twice during the year. Fellows are expected to thoroughly know these patients and all aspects of their diagnosis in order to field questions from the audience. Presenters will work closely with a USNH attending involved with the case while preparing for the conference.



Life Support Certifications

Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), and Neonatal Transport Education (STABLE) are available free of charge to all interested fellows.



Miscellaneous

Housing

All Fellows need to find off-base housing. Because of the upcoming renovation of the hospital, the stork's nest, which was previously provided as on-base housing, has become unavailable. The on-base housing for Fellows won't be available in 2024.

On-base Privileges

Fellows have full access to the base and may come and go freely. They also have access to the Officers' Club, Purdy Gym, Fleet Recreation Center, base theater, bowling alley, restaurants (Taco Bell, Popeyes, Starbucks, McDonald etc), and base sports fields and courts. If properly registered, the fellows may ride bicycles on the base.

Military Medicine

Fellows have the unique opportunity to be involved in disaster drills with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and local hospitals. In addition to working as a liaison and translator, Fellows get exposure to dive chambers, medical aircraft, and other specialized medical equipment unique to the military in Yokosuka. Several times a year.

American patients are transported back to the United States via a Critical Care Air Transport Team, which converts military aircraft into an intensive care unit on par with hospital based facilities. Fellows are integral to these transfers since the patients are complicated and usually admitted to Japanese ICU at the time of transfer. Involvement in these cases is highly sought after given the critical condition of the patient and the unique capabilities of the critical care team.

FAQ

Q. *What is an average day schedule for Fellows?*

A. 0700-1200: Rotation assignment

1200-1300: Lunch/Noon conference

1300-1600: Rotation assignment

If you would be “On-call”, you may have to transfer patients to Japanese hospital at any time at which time you would be excused from rotations.

Q. *What do Fellows do after work?*

A. It depends on each individual. Some Fellows have their own family and spend their time with them. Some Fellows use time to study English, USMLE, or prepare for the match. We are also allowed to use this time for moonlighting.



Q. *Can Fellows use any study materials in the hospital?*

A. Yes, Fellows are free to use the library in the hospital. Moreover, we are able to use many kinds of Internet resources such as UpToDate, Dynamed, NEJM and so on. You can ask the librarian for further information during the externship program.

Q. *Do Fellows have holidays?*

A. Yes. We follow American national holidays.

We can also enjoy some American traditional events, such as Easter, Halloween and so on.



Q. *Can Fellows buy food in the hospital?*

A. Yes, the hospital has a restaurant (Galley), commissary store (NEX mini mart), and coffee shop (Seattle's Best Coffee), where Fellows can get food.

Q. *What kind of physicians apply to this program?*

A. A variety of doctors apply to our program each year. In the class of 2023, we have three PGY3, PGY7 (Internal medicine), PGY8(Pediatric surgery), and PGY9 (Trauma surgery).

In the class of 2022, we had two PGY3, three PGY5 (Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine), PGY6 (Internal Medicine).

Some doctors apply to the match, some have just started to take USMLE, and some are considering applying for fellowship, Master of Public Health, Ministry of health and so on.

Q. What are the outcomes after graduation from this program?

A. It depends on career goals and experience.

For instance, in the class of 2022, one doctor matched to EM/IM combined residency program in the U.S., two doctors matched to Internal medicine residency programs in the U.S., one doctor got another fellowship year at the Air Base, one doctor enrolled in a graduate school in UK to attain an MPH, and one doctor started her specialty in Japan.



Q. *How many transfers do Fellows have in USNH Yokosuka?*

A. Since our hospital does not have an ICU and cannot perform certain imaging tests or procedures, we have to send patients to host nation hospitals to perform them. Usually total transport numbers are /year (in Oct 2021 – Sep 2022).

Examples are shown below:

- ex.1) a patient suspected of cerebral infarction; transferred to have an MRI and to have further treatment if needed
- ex.2) a patient presented with chest pain; transferred to have CAG and further investigation and treatment
- ex.3) a GA32weeks woman diagnosed w/ severe preeclampsia; transferred to have cesarean delivery and NICU care subsequently

*USNH Yokosuka can NOT manage neonates under GA35weeks.

Q. *What kind of patients do we encounter in clinic?*

A. Most patients are people working in the navy and their families.

Sometimes we also treat veterans, contractors or pregnant women on base that have no labor facility (ex. Atsugi, Iwakuni, Sasebo etc).

Q. *Do Fellows have an opportunity to contact alumni?*

A. Yes, Fellows can contact alumni by using a membership list of the alumni association. Some alumni visit the hospital and give lectures to Fellows several times a



year, which provide real voices such as one's own experience about getting a position in residency program in U.S., life as an attending physician in the U.S. etc. (six times in 2019)

Q. Do Fellows have an opportunity to practice the OET?

A. Yes in prior years, although it is not included in the program officially.

Exam rooms equipped with medical devices such as otoscopes and fundoscopes for practice. Most providers are cooperative in teaching about history taking and physical exam.



Q. Is an Externship necessary to apply for the Fellowship program?

A. Externship is not required for application.

However, we strongly recommend applicants to participate in the Externship program. By participating in this 5 day program, you can rotate in several departments of our hospital, ask questions to current Fellows, and get to know more about life in USNH. You can also have time to do an English case presentation that not only gives you a chance to introduce yourself to the USNH doctors, but also receive feedback from the audience. It is also a good opportunity to meet other externs from many fields since there are 4-6 participants participating during the same time period. During Externship, a casual dinner party is held of a local Izakaya or at a restaurant on base. This provides participants an opportunity to have a relaxed talk with providers and current Fellows.

Alumni Voices

"The experience as a Japanese fellow at US Naval Hospital Yokosuka perfectly prepared me for my upcoming residency in the U.S. Transfers can be quite a challenge sometimes, but they also instilled in me a great sense of advocacy, teamworking, and dedication for patients. Hanging out with my colleagues and mentors, whom I can proudly call "friends", brought me so many exciting and fun memories, as well as a huge boost for my English proficiency. If you are on the fence, just come and join our externship or open house, and you will see what I meant.!"

- **Yuya Takahashi**, M.D. Class of 2022

"Numerous, fabulous memories always come back to my mind with the scent of salty sea breeze just by closing my eyes. Here you are in a unique position to connect two countries with meticulous communication and knowledge as a JA fellow. But also you come here to flesh out yourself to achieve your promising career. Are you a bit nervous? No worries. The crews here always support you. Your colleagues will give you a helping hand anytime. Trust me. You are on the right track. It's not that long until you realize that you are making progress in your variety of skills. This is the best place to get ready for your coming adventure in the U.S."

- **Ryoichi Inoue**, M.D. Class of 2022

"Being the liaison between USNH Yokosuka and the Japanese hospitals has been one of the most unique and valuable experiences as a physician who aspires career in the U.S. As a Japanese Fellow at USNH Yokosuka, you will meet with the best colleagues you can ever have, and your Program Directors and the American physicians will help you achieve your future goal. After graduation, this Fellowship Program will allow you a smooth transition to the U.S. which would not have happened elsewhere. You will face hardships, but it will definitely be an unforgettable experience that you will cherish for a lifetime!"

- **Kazuki Toda**, M.D. Class of 2022

"This fellow ship program will brought me such an extraordinary experience that helped me to develop my career. Being the middle person between US and Japan taught me what American style medicine is, and also I could have a better grasp of the medical system in our country. Throughout this experience I could find not only amazing mentors but also lifelong soul mates."

- **Daiki Debun**, M.D. Class of 2022

"The one year in USNH Yokosuka was like a precious dream for me. I had initially worked as an internal medicine resident in Japan, and it was my first experience in the U.S. medical field, realizing what it was like to work as a doctor in the U.S. My rotations included internal medicine, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, pathology, dermatology, and various other departments. I exposed myself to multiple aspects of U.S. medicine by participating in surgeries, grossing specimens in the laboratory, taking histories and physical examinations, practicing presentations, and so on... In addition, thanks to the other five fellows' and the USNH staff's strong motivation and support, I was able to pass USMLE STEP1 and OET, starting my path as a pathologist in the U.S. I believe that USNH has been the place where the fellows develop both professionally and personally. I genuinely appreciate and miss you so much, USNH!

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- **Yoriko Nishikawa**, M.D. Class of 2022

It was a fantastic year that I spent at USNH Yokosuka. You can experience US-style medicine in each clinical rotation, hone your knowledge at daily academic lectures, and learn a lot from the differences in medicine and culture between the US and Japan during emergency transfers. You may face many challenges; however, I guarantee there is no better place in Japan to improve your English and take the next step toward your career goal than here.

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- **Toshiaki Takahashi**, M.D. Class of 2022