Tohoku University
Advanced Graduate Program for
Future Medicine and Health Care
At the Launching of the Advanced Graduate Program for Future Medicine and Health Care

My name is Keiko Nakayama of the Graduate School of Medicine at Tohoku University. As a program coordinator, I have the great honor of informing you that Tohoku University will start a new graduate school program in April, 2019: the "Advanced Graduate Program for Future Medicine and Health Care". With graduate students who have strong enthusiasm for taking on new challenges and creating something new, we would like to launch this program to provide greater academic proficiency in the medical studies and health care.

Everyone, have you ever seriously considered what is likely to happen 10 years or 30 years from now? This program will cultivate human resources who can keep the future firmly in mind, and being at the forefront, guide society in safe and productive directions.

Nowadays, our society is flooded with information. Events of every moment of our life are going to be recorded as information. Future Medicine will take advantage of useful information in support of our health and welfare, and contribute to the construction of a society in which every person can live a self-supporting and productive life.

From your perspective, what is productive every day? Let’s think about it, let’s learn it, and let’s work together to research and develop it for better Future Medicine.

Keiko Nakayama
Professor, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine
Why We Run this Program

1 Requirement for the new concept of medical care and welfare in an unprecedented super-aging society

Japan is moving to the super-aging society. Tohoku University is located in Miyagi prefecture, where its population age composition has already matched Japan’s forecast age demographics of 15 years from now. We have encountered the various issues associated with a super-aging society and declining birth rate; such as an increasing number of people living alone, difficulty in accessing medical care, and emerging mental health disorders.

As elderly people tends to suffer chronic diseases, effective health care system needs to be established to prevent, diagnose, and treat particular diseases for the elder. We also believe that it is necessary to develop new paradigms that provide holistic lifestyle support including mental health care. Furthermore, we have to build efficient and comprehensive systems to curb the skyrocketing costs associated with providing medical care and welfare.

2 Nurturing of the right people for Future Medicine

- Integrating and utilizing vast amounts of medical information

  Broad range of medical data; such as human genomes, disease images, medical examinations, and other areas, are rapidly growing in number. Utilization of these big data will be crucial for the development of the effective medical care. However, these immense medical-related data has not been adequately integrated so far. Therefore, the student will be trained on utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies to apply this big data on the medical treatment.

- Utilizing and applying new materials and technologies

  A super-aging society is expected to cause not only changes in composition of diseases, but also a decline in the population which alter its age structure. The development of medical devices upon request from changes in social environments will be required, as well as the application of newly developed materials and technologies to medical care and welfare in society for practicing future medicine.

- Strengthening the cooperation between medical care, health insurance, welfare services, and the administrations in the community

  In order for a super-aging society to truly flourish as an affluent society, not only in medical field, society, economics, psychology and other areas need to be integrated as well. In other words, providing comprehensive medical care and welfare services to the elderly will require medical care, health and welfare services, and local administration to share accurate information and goals amongst each other, and it is important to treat and manage the prognosis and risk of disease, together with the improving lifestyle habit of the patients by considering any legal and economical limitations.
Program Objectives

We define this Program as Future Medicine supported by Data Science, Technology and Society (DTS), and set its objective as nurturing talented people who realize Future Medicine. By promoting the study of multidisciplinary and through industry-government-academia collaborations as well as international cooperation, we set out to support the Tohoku region, which is facing a super-aging society at a rate that outpaces the rest of the world, in developing future technologies and personalized medical care, and educating people that can bring future medicine to the world.

Miyagi prefecture, in which Tohoku University is located, is facing a super-aging society and the declining birth rate that will soon sweep the nation. We attempt to develop future medicine by utilizing these three key resources: The Tohoku Medical Megabank Organization (ToMMo), which structure genome cohort on 150,000 people of local residents; The Academic Science Unit (ASU), which has been jointly set up with a developer of medical devices in the Clinical Research, Innovation and Education Center in Tohoku University Hospital (CRIETO) for developing tools; The Miyagi Medical and Welfare Information Network (MMWIN), which has collected medical data on over 60,000 patients in Miyagi prefecture.

In this Program, we will implement future-oriented field training for an approaching super-aging society with a declining birth rate. The abovementioned three resources will be utilize to train students on the inventiveness and issue-solving abilities. We hope this Program will enable us to work with industry and government to realize a healthy super-aging society.

The needs for medical care in a super-aging society are rapidly shifting from acute to chronic stage medical care, and the composition of diseases is also notably changing. For instance, metabolic syndrome, cancer, dementia, frailty and other chronic illnesses require lifelong control (prevention and treatment). People expect to have access to medical care and a society that provides effective support within the limited medical and welfare resources available, so they can live independently while having such diseases. This requires the realization of personalized medicine and development of new tools and information networks, and the design of systems to implement them in society.

To meet these requirements, it is imperative for us to share knowledge and technologies that go beyond the multi-disciplinary framework, and promote exchanges across multiple professions. This is how we can create the new academic fields in which we must urgently provide the professionals to work.

The outstanding and talented individuals graduated from our Program will have skills to think outside-the-box, and develop capabilities and communication skills that span across specialties. They are also qualified to be leaders in research for developing future medicine, using their advanced data processing skills; spurring innovation in the development of medical devices, utilizing sophisticated information networks; and boldly tackling various issues in medical care, as well as health and welfare from an overarching perspective and by drawing on their extensive knowledge base.
Specific Curriculum

The Advanced Graduate Program for Future Medicine and Health Care (FMHC) comprises the following three courses.

- **Data Science Course**
  Developing data-based personalized medicine and effective nursing care, and methods for preventing, diagnosing and treating chronic diseases that affect the elderly, etc.

- **Technology Course**
  Applying new technologies to bring about innovations in medical care and welfare, and developing the tools for holistic lifestyle support, etc.

- **Society Course**
  Drafting and implementing practical policies for medical care, insurance and nursing care, and building efficient and comprehensive social systems to curb the skyrocketing costs associated with providing medical care and welfare for the elderly, etc.

Common subjects among the three courses include DTS basic and speciality courses, and backcast and build-up training. The program offers school-wide cross-sectional education that overcomes the boundaries of literature and science.

Backcast training gives students the chance to experience the current situation in Tohoku region, which is what the world will experience in the future. To stimulate their passion for research, we encourage the students to visualize the ideal future and envision the needs that should be accomplished, and also motivate them to work on promptly applying their research results in society. The training has its uniqueness for giving students from a diversity of academic backgrounds the opportunity to train and inexhaustibly brainstorm together. The teaching staffs also have a variety of specialist qualifications, which they utilize to provide mentoring that will create new values.

Opportunities for graduate students

Graduate students of this Program will become the new talents who are able to resolve the issues associated with a rapidly aging society as we enter Society 5.0. Working as professionals with extensive knowledge and comprehensive expertise, they will create a synergy effect by sharing their specialist knowledge, and quickly recognize and resolve the needs of a variety of social situations.

We hope this Program will cultivate talented people to society. Those people will be able to identify and promptly resolve the issues associated with an approaching aging society by themselves, and facilitate support for Self-Support System in the society where everyone can live independently.