

ASIA: JAPAN

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

-No.1 of Longevity: The life expectancy for men and women in Japan in 2014 is the highest ever recorded, according to a report released by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare on July 2015. Japanese women took the top spot in average life expectancy worldwide for the third consecutive year in 2014 at 86.83 years, while Japanese men climbed a notch to tie for third place at 80.50 years. (The data covered 49 countries plus Hong Kong.) Japanese women have enjoyed the world's longest average life expectancy since 1985, except in 2011 when they fell behind women in Hong Kong in the aftermath of the massive earthquake and tsunami in the northeast region that March. According to the KYODO news, the results "seem to reflect the progress in medical treatment. Average life expectancy may still be extended," a health ministry official said, citing improving survival rates for cancer, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and pneumonia.

Japan has a "universal health insurance regime" to ensure that anyone can receive necessary medical treatment. Under this regime, every citizen enters a publicly regulated medical insurance system, such as employees' health insurance or national health insurance. This medical care system has contributed to Japan's achieving the highest life expectancy in the world, as well as a high standard of healthcare along with improvements in the living environment and better nutrition.

-Cost for Longevity: However, reform of the whole system is being undertaken in order to preserve the stability of this medical insurance system in the future. Currently, national medical care expenditures have been severely increasing. In fiscal 2012, the expenditures totaled 39.2 trillion yen (about US\$ 327 billion) or 11.17 percent of Japan's national income. Especially, medical costs for treating the latter-stage elderly were 13.7 trillion yen (about US\$ 114 billion), or about one-third of national medical care expenditure, and accounted for 3.89 percent of the national income. The per-capita cost of medical care for the latter-stage elderly averaged 919,452 yen (about US\$ 7,669) for the year. Rising medical costs for the latter-stage elderly, resulting from the rapidly aging population, etc., is one of the major contributors to the overall uptrend in national medical care expenditures.

-Mental Control for Longevity: Worse more, due to the increasingly complex social environment created by a highly-technological, competition-oriented society, the stress levels felt by all age groups are rising. The number of suicides in Japan was 26,063 in 2013, and had remained at the same level of around 30,000 a year since 1998. In order to cope with those issues, the government will require employers regularly employing 50 workers or more to offer an annual stress check to employees from December 2015.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas & Wellness Tourism: Ryukyu University, a national university located in Okinawa Island, has been successfully provided the Spa Management Course for their current students and professionals from the Spa industry and they create many of innovative plans of spa development project and its wellness tourism.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: Supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), highly evaluated universities and innovative enterprises from various industries have been dedicated to their research with local community at 12 core sites and 11 satellites for several Center of Innovation (COI)'s themes such as "Smart Lifecare", "Nurturing Mental Welfare", "Platform on big life data from unconscious sensing to support human and social well-being", "Self-Management Healthcare Sustainable Life Care, Ageless Society", "Development of an innovative strategy for disease prediction and prevention by combining neuroscience research and analysis of big health data", and so on.

Beauty, Fitness & Nutrition: RIZAP, the emerging group of personal training gyms, succeeded to establish the style that they are absolutely committed to producing results toward the body what their clients required, by customized 1-on-1 exercise programs, personal trainer's dietary control with nutrition, all under the guidance of a nationally-registered dietitian.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

-Incentives for Employee's Health and Productivity Management: The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) for the first time, jointly selected 22 enterprises (including Japan Airlines, ASICS, Konica Minolta, TOTO, Terumo etc.) as the "Brand of Companies Enhancing Corporate Value through Health and Productivity Management (Health & Productivity Stock Selection)" and on March 2015 (http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/0325_01.html). The Health & Productivity Stock Selection is a program in which METI and TSE select and introduce attractive enterprises to investors who prioritize improvement in corporate value from a long-term perspective. METI and TSE aim to make the program an incentive for more enterprises to undertake health and productivity management. In connection with the above, the Development Bank of Japan (DBJ) has been provided its loans to some enterprises under the DBJ's health management rating system. This loan system, the first of its kind, is intended to actively support health management efforts in by introducing technical methods for rating health management, in which DBJ evaluates and selects companies with superior health-conscious initiatives for employees and reflects the findings in its loan conditions. Kao Corp., one of the highest rated enterprises (a major Japanese household

products manufacturer) by the system, has been working to determine and analyze the health condition of employees from in-house information, including health check data and individual research, and has established a system to implement measures based on the results in cooperation with businesses, health insurance associations, industrial physicians and outside experts. The company has also appointed a person to be in charge of health promotion in the office, while offering opportunities to report present conditions to management through a committee promoting health control to make further improvements.

-Mandatory Stress Test: From December 2015 amendments to Japan's Industrial Safety and Health Act will require employers regularly employing 50 workers or more to offer an annual stress check to employees. This will include staff on secondment to overseas offices. These amendments are aimed at preventing work-related mental illness, by helping employees to identify impacts of stress and helping employers improve the work environment through collective analysis of data. The Act also requires employers to establish a 'health committee'. The health committee will be expected to oversee introduction of the stress check system and arrange for tests to be conducted. For stress checks, employers will have the option of using: (1) stress check software; (2) another form of stress-check test; or (3) a set of Ministry questions.

Using this occasion and opportunity, many innovative stress check solutions are introduced in Japanese market at the moment.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics only 5 years away, a stream of huge complex buildings and 5-star hotels are under construction in central Tokyo. Especially, Aman announces plans for a second property in Japan, following the successful launch of Aman Tokyo in December 2014. Amanemu will debut in the first quarter of 2016 in Ise Shima National Park in Honshu's Mie Prefecture, central Japan. It will be the brand's first hot spring resort. Celebrating Japan's ancient onsen (mineral hot spring) tradition in serene natural surrounds, Amanemu is perched on the shores of Ago Bay, known as the 'Bay of Pearls'. On the other hand, Hotel Okura, a traditional prestigious domestic brand closed recently to rebuild the main building for a hefty 100 billion yen (= about US\$ 1 billion), with a grand reopening slated for 2019. Hoshino Resort group also is set to open Hoshinoya Tokyo, a Ryokan-type facility with Onsen (natural hot springs) even in central Tokyo in 2016.

Mitsui & Co., Ltd with Mitsui Fudosan, the largest real estate enterprise in Japan, also rebuilt Mitsui's main buildings with surrounded buildings located at the right next to the imperial palace. They will have the world prestigious foreign hotel and spa.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

Firstly, I think the politicians have the responsibility to create a well world. Secondly, the employers must have that. And lastly, I dare to say that every single person should have that.

SUBMITTED BY:

Name: Tomonori Maruyama (MARU)
Title: Manager / Chief Research Consultant
Company: Mitsui Knowledge Industry Co.,Ltd.
Email: maruyama-tomonori@mki.co.jp
Phone Number: (+81) 90 1535 6055

