The diving exchange between countries has become so popular that many Japanese have come to dive in foreign countries. Recently, they have encountered problems in finding a hospital for first aid when they have suffered from decompression sickness or air embolisms and are getting worse. The situation is the same for foreign divers coming to dive in Japan. An HBO treatment network should be established, controlled by an international organization like CMAS. This network would be a godsend to divers who want to dive at foreign diving spots.

PROPOSAL

There are nearly 200,000 sport divers in Japan, and their activity has recently been extended to dive spots throughout the world. In reality, there has been an increase in the numbers of divers who have suffered from the bends overseas but did not know where to come for treatment, so they came to our university for treatment directly from the international airport. Many divers from other countries have also come to us complaining of bends or other diving diseases, and for most of them there has been a delay in HBO treatment due to lack of information about an HBO network.

Up to 1984 there were 134 serious types of decompression sickness (class two bends) recorded, and 6 recorded air embolisms, at our university. In at least 12 of these cases, the HBO treatment was prolonged due to lack of information about an HBO network.

There are over 200 hospitals which have one-man hyperbaric chambers for HBO treatment, but very few with double-lock chambers and medical staff for the treatment of decompression sickness and other pressure-related illnesses. Divers are limited in their choice of hospitals for bends treatment, and some divers have prolonged the time before visiting the hospitals even if the onset happened in Japan. It would be even more difficult for foreigners to find appropriate hospitals for treatment immediately after the onset of symptoms.

Diving is now international and very common, so there will be an increase in the number of divers who suffer from the bends or air embolism. There has been a lack of proper information concerning the guiding of divers to hospitals where HBO treatment can be done. The increase in the numbers of divers, and in their exchange between countries, creates a need for an international network of HBO treatment centers and diving medical specialists.

If this proposal is accepted by the CMAS committee, we can set up a domestic network of HBO specialists and hospitals in Japan. The proper guidelines for an HBO treatment network must be established in the near future.