

Society outline and history

The Japanese Society of Immunotoxicology (JSIT) evolved out of the "Immunotoxicology Study Group" which consisted with researchers interested in this research field. The group was formed in June 1994. The JSIT was established as an academic society in April 2001. The JSIT has over 260 members and is an interdisciplinary society composed of researchers from the medical, pharmaceutical, and agricultural sciences. It is unique internationally as a single academic society for immunotoxicological forms of research. Although the original subjects of immunotoxicological research were immunodeficiency, allergy and autoimmunity caused by chemicals, medico-pharmaceutical substances and dietary constituents, the scope of research broadened with recent increases in various allergies and infectious diseases, around which social issues have sometimes developed, as well as with new knowledge of the participation of the immunotoxicological mechanisms involved in various chronic and common diseases. Because of the necessity for immunotoxicological research related to these diseases, the JSIT is now taking a leading role in this research field.

Today, the field of toxicology has again been recognized as science concerned with the safety of health and life. Immunotoxicological research, which includes the effects of various chemical substances, such as medico-pharmaceutical materials, food ingredients and numerous environmental factors, on immune system and the effects on health of an immune-system exposed to these chemical substances, have become involved in the field of toxicology. The importance of immunotoxicological research beyond the field of toxicology has been recognized, because of reassessment of immunological experiments directed toward the post-genome era, and because of the threat of recent emerging and reemerging infections, multiple chemical sensitivity, and the safety of biomedicines and genetically-modified foods.

The research subjects of this Society, the JSIT, have greatly expanded from the basic, applied and clinical research regarding health and immunity, to risk assessment or the regulation of chemical substances, because the members of our society come from universities, enterprises and administrative agencies.

Recently, the scope of research has tended to widen, because immunotoxicological research has been carried out in various scientific fields. This situation may lead our Society, the JSIT, to take initiative as a core society in the sub-fields of immunotoxicological research. Moving in such a direction, we have held annual meetings with the cooperation and co-hosting of related academic societies, such as the Japanese Society of Toxicology, the Pharmaceutical Society of Japan, and the Japan Society of Occupational Health.

During last decade, our Society has not only achieved recognition for immunotoxicology in Japan and has advanced immunotoxicological research levels, but has also contributed to the making of guidelines for immunotoxicological experimental methodologies corresponding to those of the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for the Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH). In addition, our Society members have been actively involved in the ICH. However, there are still many issues related to the immunotoxicity, which should be analyzed more precisely. The JSIT now needs to take the initiative in addressing various immunotoxicological problems as a moving force in immunotoxicological research. For the above-mentioned reasons, the JSIT has a mission not only present individual research and exchanges, but also to be which distributes important social and academic information, and one in which people can get fresh stimulation and motivation for research. Our Society, the JSIT, in being counted on for a huge contribution to the accelerated advancement of basic sciences and science for safety of life, and the health and welfare needs of civilization via thorough scientific inquiry with regard to the relationship between immunity and health.