

Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2020

Professor Yasuo Kagawa MD, PhD

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Professor Yasuo Kagawa is Professor in Nutrition at Kagawa Nutrition University, Japan, and Visiting Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine at Jichi Medical University, Japan. He is currently a Vice-president of Kagawa Nutrition University. Dr. Kagawa has made significant research and educational contributions to biochemistry and nutrition. He is a Vice Editor of the Japanese Edition of Nutrition Reviews published by ILSI, and was the Managing Editor of both *Biochimica Biophysica Acta* and *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communication*. Professor Kagawa was President of the Japan Society of Gene and Cell Therapy, Vice-president of the Japanese Biochemical Society among others, and is an honorary member of both the Japan Society of Metabolism and Clinical Nutrition and the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science. Professor Kagawa has been a member of many Academic Council of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology committees.

He was born in Tokyo in 1932 and trained in Medicine at the University of Tokyo, graduating in 1957. Following that he completed a PhD in biochemistry at the University of Tokyo, graduating in 1962. He has worked in various research institutes and universities, including Cornell University in the USA and Jichi Medical University, developing multidisciplinary collegiate links especially in nutrition and molecular biology. He was a postdoctoral Fulbright fellow for two years in the Department of Biochemistry at the Public Health Research Institute of New York, USA (1963-65). He returned to Japan in 1965 as an assistant at the University of Tokyo. In 1968, Dr. Kagawa was appointed a professor of Biochemistry at Shinshu University before moving on to Cornell University, New York, as a visiting professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Dr Kagawa remained in this post until 1972 when he returned to Japan as a professor in the Department of Biochemistry at Jichi Medical University. During the next 26 years at this University, he focused on bioenergetics, with studies of F_1F_0 ATP synthase, for which have achieved international acclaim. He retired from this post in 1998 and was appointed an Emeritus Professor at Jichi. At the same time, he joined Kagawa Nutrition University as a professor in Medical Chemistry. He became vice-president of Kagawa Nutrition University and, in 2001, Director of the University's affiliated Institute of Nutrition Sciences. In this capacity, he has promoted nutrigenomics studies across the Asia-Pacific region beyond Japan, in Mongolia, China, Palau, Thailand, and Tonga among others. As a consequence, the differences in frequencies of energy-related SNPs including *ADR3B*, *PPAR γ 2*, *LEPR*, and *UCP3-p* between Mongoloids and Caucasoids have been documented. These SNPs differences may result from natural selection dependent on type of agricultural practice. Dietary interventions which take account of to these SNPs show promise in health outcomes.

His bioenergetics papers are his most highly cited. These include "Impact of Westernization on the nutrition of Japanese (Preventive Medicine 1978)" has been 319, and "Eicosapolyenoic acids of serum lipids of Japanese islanders with low incidence of cardiovascular diseases (JNSV 1982)". Okinawa islanders' longevity is associated with their high fish intake and few electrocardiogram abnormalities consistent with a benefit of EPA/DHA as found in the Inuit.

Inter alia, Dr Kagawa has been bestowed the Japanese Society of Vitaminology Award in 1962, the Japanese Medical Association in 1985 and the Violet medal of the Japanese Government in 1996. In 2006, he received the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon from the Government of Japan. In 2016, he received the Medal of Merit of the Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) for the promise of nutrigenomic research in the Asia-Pacific region.

His achievements have promoted and developed nutrition science in the interests of the peoples, not only of Japan, but also of the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society's 2020 Award to him is further recognition of his distinguished contributions to nutrition science and its health relevance.

Citation by
Prof Duo Li MD, PhD

Chair of Nomination Committee
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