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Critical Care Medicine in Korea



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The Past, The Present and the Future

History of Critical Care in Korea and the Korean Society of Critical Care Medicine

The first intensive care unit (ICU) in Korea was established in 1968 with six beds in a university hospital in Seoul, and the number has since expanded to 220 ICUs taking care of 3197 patients (data from a one-day survey in 2009). As in other countries, such as Dr. Peter Safar in the United States and Dr. Bjorn Ibsen in Denmark did in the early 1950s, anaesthesiologists played an important role in starting critical care in Korea. The first ICU in Korea was established and run by an anaesthesiologist, Dr. Oh HK.

The foundation of the Korean Society of Critical Care Medicine (KSCCM) (<http://ksccm.org/eng>) accorded with the foundation of the Western Pacific Association of Critical Care Medicine (WPACCM). Korean delegates attended the meeting of the WPACCM, which was held in Tokyo on 26 July 1980. After the meeting the KSCCM was established on 19 December 1980 by over 30 founding members. Although the pioneers of critical care in Korea were anaesthesiologists, the founding members of KSCCM came from many different specialties (emergency medicine, surgery, pulmonology, cardiology and paediatrics). The first chairman of the board was Dr. Lee HJ, a cardiologist (the first president was Dr. Kim WS). The number of KSCCM members has expanded to approximately 1900 in 2015 (see Figure 1).

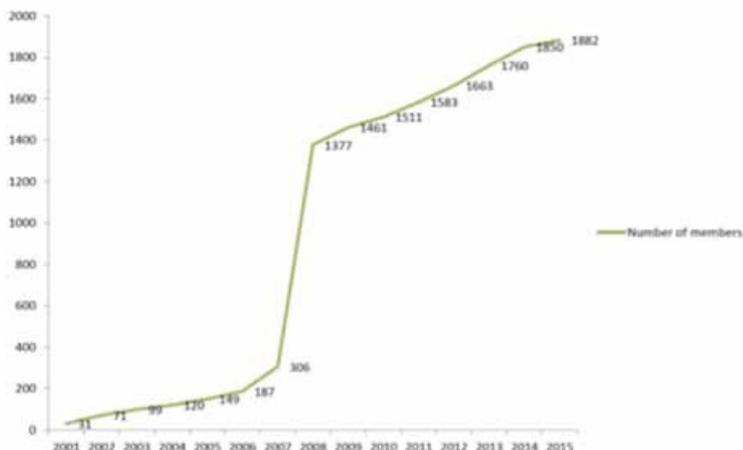


Figure 1 Number of KSCCM Members

The first Scientific Congress of KSCCM was held in 1981 and the *Korean Journal of Critical Care Medicine* (<http://www.kjccm.org>) started publishing in 1986. In 2004 the 13th Congress of the Western Pacific Association of Critical Care Medicine was held in Seoul, focusing on "Mutual Understanding and Development in WPACCM". Over one thousand attendees participated in the congress.

Critical Care Medicine Specialty Board and Training System

The *Textbook of Critical Care Medicine* was published by the KSCCM in 2006, which is the cornerstone of training for the critical care board. On 15 April 2008, the KSCCM started the critical care specialty board of Korea, which was endorsed by the Korean Academy of Medical Societies. The critical care subspecialty is supposed to be renewed every five years. With the stimulus from the critical care specialty board, a formulated critical care training system has been implemented in Korea, mostly in teaching hospitals. The number of board-certified intensivists has

increased to 1399 in 2015.

To ensure education of the trainees, two review courses are provided by the KSCCM. One is the Basic Critical Care Review Course (BCCRC), which was started in 2008; the other is the Multiprofessional Critical Care Review Course (MCCRC) Korea.

International Relationships Joint Congress of the KSCCM and the Japanese Society of Intensive Care Medicine (JSICM)

The first joint congress of the Korean and Japanese societies was held in 2001 in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the KSCCM. The two societies decided to continue the biennial joint congress and now the hosting society takes turn every year. The alliance between the two countries has evolved into performing joint collaboration research. The first collaborative research was published in Critical Care in 2012 (Lee et al. 2012).



Source: World Health Organization Health Observatory <http://www.who.int/countries/kor/en/> statistics are for 2012, unless otherwise stated.

Multiprofessional Critical Care Review Course (MCCRC) Korea

The Multiprofessional Critical Care Review Course (MCCRC) Korea began in September 2009 in Asan Medical Center. The MCCRC is held by the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) in collaboration with partnering critical care societies worldwide. The MCCRC Korea was the first review course run outside of the United States by SCCM and now it has spread to Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, and Brazil.

World Federation of Societies of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine (WFSICCM)

In 2015 the 12th Congress of the WFSICCM will be held in Seoul, Korea, with the motto of "One Step Further: the Pursuit of Excellence in Critical Care". Over four hundred abstracts have been submitted, and approximately 220 speakers have accepted invitations so far.

Future Initiatives of KSCCM

The KSCCM has conducted much of its work to set up a high standard of critical care in Korea.

Improving patient safety and patient/familycentered care should be the future directive of KSCCM to achieve this mission. Moreover, the nationwide spread of standardised care in ICUs based on the best available evidence could be the starting point of better healthcare in Korea. The KSCCM has also developed partnerships with societies in developing countries by providing educational opportunities.

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