

COUNTRY REPORT: JAPAN

Seeking Happiness for People with Down Syndrome and Their Families

Japan Down Syndrome Society (JDS)

Founded in 1995, we unite families to protect the rights and welfare of people with Down syndrome through nationwide **Consultation, Information, Awareness, and Research.**



Photo: 2023

Core Landscape and Challenges in Japan



1. Social Prejudice & NIPT

Despite increased visibility, true understanding of Down syndrome remains low. Expanding NIPT has surfaced biases regarding "happiness" and "worth."

Happiness is not defined by a medical diagnosis, but by the society's capacity to embrace every individual.



2. Longevity & Dual-Aging

Extended longevity brings adult-term health complexities like regression, alongside the aging of family caregivers.

These issues demand systemic medical progress and social reform beyond individual efforts.

JDS Mission and Strategy

"We proactively create a protective environment for our children by uniting and collaborating with professionals across all sectors."



Professional Unity

Building strong alliances with education, welfare, legal, and medical professionals to foster deep understanding and mutual support.



Win-Win Research

Investing in scientific research that benefits future generations while building sustainable partnerships between academia and the community.



Global Insights

Collaborating with international organizations (DSi/APDSF) to integrate global expertise into Japan's support systems.

Key Themes for 2026 and beyond



Advancing Adulthood Research

Expanding societies and congresses to support medical research on aging, ensuring specialists are ready to support adult members.



Global Insights & Exchange

Learning from international insurance models for regression and aging, while proactively sharing JDS's activities and results on the global stage.



Sustainable Funding

Driving impact through World Down Syndrome Day advocacy, corporate partnerships, and steady, recurring donations from our valued members.



Inclusive Consultation

Comprehensive support from prenatal to senior stages, including residents of foreign nationality and international media cooperation.

2025 Updates and Progresses

Status of NIPT issues in Japan

- NIPT is being performed without sufficient discussion of ethical issues.
- Although not covered by health insurance, non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) for three trisomies is performed in Japan.
- The problem is that many cases involve individuals undergoing testing without receiving appropriate genetic counseling.
- Involving Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, an NIPT Steering Committee has been established within the Japan Medical Association.
- It publicly lists hospitals that meet certain standards and provide appropriate genetic counseling (<https://jams-prenatal.jp/#>).

International Festival of Disabled People's Arts and Culture at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai

ここに私が、(そして) あなたは…

— 障害者の文化芸術国際フェスティバル —

**Here I am,
(and) where are you...**

International Festival
of Disabled People's Arts and Culture

2025.10.8-11
大阪・関西万博会場内
EXPOホール(シャインハット) & ギャラリーWEST

PeriodExpo 2025 Osaka, Kansai ©Expo 2025EXPO
Hall "Shining Hat" Performing Arts Program, Gallery WEST

本イベントは、一般社団法人障害者文化芸術推進協会が主催し、日本経済団体連合会が協賛し、2025年大阪関西万博実行委員会が後援する。このイベントは、障害者文化芸術の振興と、障害者文化芸術の普及を目的として開催される。また、このイベントは、障害者文化芸術の振興と、障害者文化芸術の普及を目的として開催される。また、このイベントは、障害者文化芸術の振興と、障害者文化芸術の普及を目的として開催される。



JDS News will now be published quarterly and in full color



Cover art is Taku Watanabe's work titled "Source of Energy", which was exhibited at 2024 APDSF Art exhibition in Malaysia

The joint meeting of the 5th Japan Down Syndrome Congress and the 7th Annual Meeting of Japan Down Syndrome Association



In November, the joint meeting of the 5th Japan Down Syndrome Congress and the 7th Annual Meeting of Japan Down Syndrome Association was held, featuring numerous presentations not only in medical fields but also in education, childcare, employment, and welfare. Notably, individuals with Down syndrome gained confidence by not only participating but also serving as staff members involved in organizing the event—chairing sessions, guiding attendees around the venue, and more.

JDS International Team

Formed by a group of dedicated volunteers within JDS, our International Team will actively bridge Japan and the world by facilitating the exchange of global insights and perspectives.



Established in 2023



13 diverse members with different experiences, ages, and nationalities



Bridging the gap by bringing global Down syndrome insights to Japan



Representing the Japanese Down syndrome community to international bodies such as APDSF and DSI



Supporting international families in Japan with accessible Down syndrome information

Any Questions?

We look forward to continued collaboration and the exchange of insights with the Down syndrome community across the Asia-Pacific region.

Contact Us: <https://jdss.or.jp/contact/>