



ISN

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
OF NEPHROLOGY

PROFESSOR DONAL O'DONOGHUE GLOBAL KIDNEY POLICY FORUM 2026:

ISN NORTH AND EAST ASIA REGION





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1. ADVANCING GLOBAL KIDNEY HEALTH THROUGH POLICY DIALOGUE



The late Donal O'Donoghue

The Professor Donal O'Donoghue Global Kidney Policy Forum is an annual high-level meeting organized by the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). Its purpose is to bring together policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and patient representatives to address the growing global burden of kidney disease and help translate evidence into practical policy action.

The first policy forum, held in Mexico City, Mexico, in April 2017, marked a significant milestone: the development of the **ISN Recommendations for Global Kidney Health**. These recommendations address the escalating global burden of kidney disease and guide future efforts to reduce its impact, serving as the foundation of each Global Kidney Policy Forum.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GLOBAL KIDNEY HEALTH

1. Work toward prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and management of kidney diseases.
2. Monitor the burden of kidney diseases.
3. Raise public awareness of kidney diseases.
4. Address kidney diseases across the life course through universal health coverage.
5. Integrate kidney disease services within existing health and multisectoral initiatives.
6. Close education gaps on kidney diseases among all healthcare workers.
7. Invest in strengthening the kidney care workforce.
8. Strive toward equitable and sustainable access to care for kidney failure.
9. Promote and expand kidney transplantation programs.
10. Support research for kidney diseases.



The 2026 forum took place on March 28 in Yokohama, Japan, gathering 282 participants and 12 speakers from across the North and East Asia region and beyond. The session featured two expert panels and interactive discussions, creating space for both technical exchange and real-world perspectives.

This year's forum focused on kidney health in North and East Asia, with particular attention to prevention strategies, health system sustainability, and the implementation of the [World Health Organization's 2025 kidney health resolution](#). In the opening remarks, ISN President Marcello Tonelli emphasized the urgency of translating this global resolution into national strategies, while Advocacy Working Group Chair Ifeoma Ulasi highlighted regional challenges, including aging populations and disparities in urban and rural care systems.

2. SHARED CHALLENGES, REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

The forum discussions revolved around several interconnected themes reflecting progress and ongoing challenges in kidney care across the region, while also highlighting lessons learned to help inform and accelerate efforts to advance kidney health in other countries, in line with the WHO kidney health commitments.

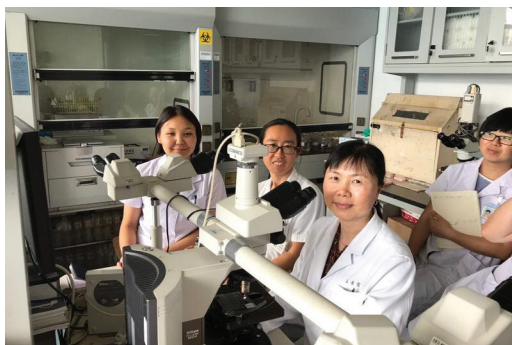
The first panel explored Japan's robust national strategy to address kidney disease, while the second highlighted best-practice examples from across the region.

A central theme across discussions was the shift toward early detection and prevention. Yosuke Yamada illustrated how Japan's national strategy prioritizes diagnosing chronic kidney disease (CKD) before symptoms appear, supported by structured collaboration between primary care physicians and specialists. Naoki Kashihara described how this sustained approach is beginning to show results, with dialysis patient numbers gradually declining in Japan.

Health system sustainability also featured prominently. Yusuke Suzuki framed CKD as both a financial and a medical challenge, warning that rising dialysis costs threaten universal health coverage. He argued that the solution lies not in increasing spending, but in using resources more effectively through earlier intervention and smarter allocation.

Data and digital innovation emerged as key enablers of change. Mai-Szu Wu presented Taiwan's "AI-on-Kidney" strategy, which uses big data and predictive models to personalize care and shift toward prevention. Similarly, Luxia Zhang explained how China is leveraging the China Kidney Disease Network and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered diagnostic tools to support large-scale, equitable care, particularly in underserved areas.

Patient-centered care was also central to discussions. Patient advocate Takeshi Shukunobe





emphasized the importance of recognizing patients as active partners in healthcare, highlighting the role of peer support programs and patient involvement in shaping national policy. Patient advocate Manvir Victor highlighted the role of lived experience in advocacy, showing how real-life achievements can help transform public perception and influence policy decisions.

Different national approaches also revealed contrasting perspectives. While Japan's model focused on structured national strategies and integrated care systems, Taiwan and China emphasized rapid technological innovation. South Korea is focused on long-term goals with the National Health Plan 2030, which prioritizes prevention, quality control in dialysis services, and shared decision-making between patients and providers.

The forum also highlighted important data from the [ISN Global Kidney Health Atlas](#). Across North and East Asia, access to kidney replacement therapy is generally high, but gaps remain in government funding for medications, early-stage disease registries, and patient advocacy. Workforce shortages, particularly in pediatric nephrology, were also identified as ongoing challenges.

3. POLICY AND PRACTICE INSIGHTS FROM NORTH AND EAST ASIA

Panel 1

Japan's CKD Strategy in Action: Lessons From an Aging Society

Addressing Kidney Disease in Japan: How Does the National Policy Meet Global Commitments

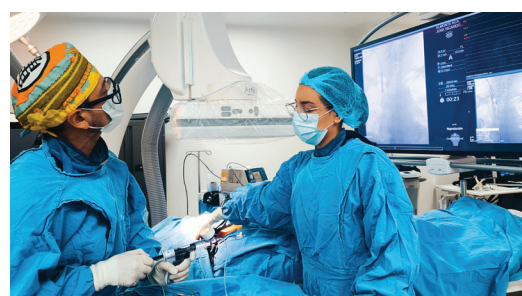


Dr. Yamada outlined Japan's kidney disease strategy, which aims to reduce the incidence of new dialysis patients by 2028 through early detection, standardized medical collaboration, and multidisciplinary care. Despite these efforts, the government faces ongoing challenges, including stagnant dialysis rates and rising rates of lifestyle-related kidney disease, necessitating continued focus on efficient resource use, regional adaptation, and the integration of palliative care.

Transforming Kidney Care Through National Strategy: A Nephrologist Perspective



Dr. Kashihara's presentation detailed Japan's successful national transition toward slowing kidney disease progression, highlighted by a historic decline in the number of patients on chronic dialysis. By integrating kidney care into high-level national policy, Japan uses a comprehensive patient-journey framework that spans from early detection and multidisciplinary collaboration to lifestyle-focused public health initiatives, creating a sustainable, long-term ecosystem for kidney health.



Living the Strategy: A Patient's Perspective on Navigating Kidney Care in Japan



Mr. Shukunobe shifted the perspective from clinical strategy to the lived experience of people with chronic kidney disease. His message focused on the evolution of patient involvement: from being passive recipients of care to active partners in shaping healthcare itself and its policy.

Financing Kidney Health: Sustainable and Innovative National Approaches



Dr. Suzuki pointed out that the rising cost of dialysis threatens the sustainability of universal health coverage, necessitating a shift toward “upstream” investment in early detection rather than increased spending. By leveraging data-driven policy, structured five-year planning, and integrated preventive care, Japan demonstrates that managing CKD can effectively curb the economic burden of noncommunicable diseases while ensuring a more resilient and efficient healthcare system.

Panel 2

Advancing Kidney Health Across North and East Asia: Regional Challenges and Opportunities

Data-driven Kidney Health: The Taiwan Experience



Dr. Wu highlighted Taiwan’s shift toward a high-tech “AI-on-Kidney” strategy that leverages big data and population-level risk prediction to transition from reactive care to individualized, precision medicine. By implementing the ambitious “888” target to manage chronic risk factors and incentivize a shift toward home-based dialysis, Taiwan aims to enhance patient quality of life while curbing the rising financial burden of kidney disease through digital empowerment and integrated, value-based care models.

Advancing Kidney Disease Prevention and Care in China



Dr. Zhang emphasized that China’s rapidly aging population and high metabolic disease burden necessitate a shift from specialized nephrology care toward large-scale, digital-first interventions. By utilizing the China Kidney Disease Network for data-driven policymaking and deploying AI-powered tools, such as intelligent diagnostic toolkits and large language models, China aims to bridge the equity gap and empower primary care providers to manage cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic syndrome at its root.



Addressing Kidney Disease through the National Health Plan 2030



Dr. Oh outlined South Korea's "National Health Plan 2030," which focuses on increasing healthy life expectancy through a robust three-tiered prevention strategy that addresses CKD from primary awareness to tertiary clinical management. Central to this approach is the codification of care via a proposed "CKD Management Act," the implementation of strict quality-control accreditation for dialysis centers, and a transition toward goal-directed care that prioritizes patient autonomy and shared decision-making.

Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Patient Reality



Mr. Victor emphasized that effective kidney care advocacy requires moving beyond clinical data to highlight human-centered success stories, transforming patients from passive subjects of care into active, empowered citizens.

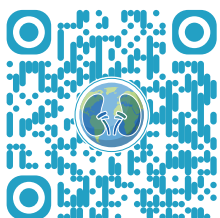
4. FROM LEARNING TO ACTION

The forum underscored the value of learning across countries and health systems. Participants highlighted complementary approaches to prevention, early detection, digital innovation, and patient-centered care, demonstrating how regional exchange can help accelerate progress. Continued collaboration, stronger national strategies for noncommunicable diseases, and sustained patient involvement will be essential to turning shared global kidney health commitments into practical, equitable, and sustainable improvements in kidney care.

5. ACCESS THE RECORDINGS



 [Watch the full-length recording of the Donal O'Donoghue Global Kidney Policy Forum 2026](#)



 Patient testimony "[Kidney health advocacy through the patient lens](#)"
Manvir Victor, [ISN Patient Liaison Advisory Group chair](#)



6. SPEAKERS AND SESSION CHAIRS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE



Marcello Tonelli is a nephrologist and professor of medicine at the University of Calgary. He is the founding director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center on Prevention and Control of Chronic Kidney Disease. Professor Tonelli is the president of the International Society of Nephrology and past president of the Canadian Society of Nephrology. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has been named a highly cited researcher by Thomson Reuters every year since 2015.



Ifeoma I. Ulasi is a professor of medicine at the College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, and has affiliations with two Teaching Hospitals. She is an international adviser at the Royal College of Physicians, London. She is the chair of the ISN Advocacy Working Group. She is also a member of the African Regional Board, iNet, and ACTS committees. She served on the ISN executive committee from 2021-2023.



Yosuke Yamada is a nephrologist and health policy official at the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan. After clinical and academic training at Shinshu University, he worked in nephrology practice before joining the Ministry in 2023. He is currently engaged in national policy development for chronic kidney disease and other chronic diseases in Japan.



Naoki Kashihara obtained his medical degree from Okayama University School of Medicine, Okayama, Japan, in 1982. He is chairman of the Department of Nephrology and Hypertension at Kawasaki Medical School, where he serves as vice president. He was president of the Japanese Society of Nephrology (JSN) from 2016 to 2022. He is currently a member of JSN's executive committee. He founded the non-profit organization Japan Kidney Association (JKA) in 2016 and continues to serve as its president.



Takeshi Shukunobe is the CEO of Power to the People with Chronic Conditions (PPeCC), Inc. He leverages his lived experience of chronic kidney disease and dialysis to drive policy change and bridge the gap between people living with conditions and the healthcare sector. In 2010, he founded Patienthood, a company dedicated to supporting individuals affected by kidney disease and dialysis. This initiative evolved into the general incorporated association PPeCC, established in 2019 to help support people with various chronic conditions.



Yusuke Suzuki is a professor of the Department of Nephrology at the Graduate School of Juntendo University. He is a board member of the Japanese Society of Nephrology (JSN), councilor of the Japanese Society of Internal Medicine, the Japanese Society of Dialysis Therapy, the Japanese Society of Hypertension, the ISN council, a former ISN chair of the North and East Asia Regional Board, and a liaison officer for an ISN Sister Renal Centers partnership between health centers in Japan and Vietnam.



Muhammad Iqbal Abdul Hafid is the ISN Advocacy Working Group deputy chair and head of the Nephrology Unit and Kidney Transplant Program of Universiti Teknologi MARA. He is a committee member of the Malaysian Society of Transplantation (MST). Dr. Iqbal was selected to be the first cohort of the ISN Emerging Leaders Program. He was selected to lead the EU academic project “Organ Donation Innovative Strategy” in South East Asia with the University of Barcelona.



Mai-Szu Wu is the president of Taipei Medical University (TMU) and a professor of internal medicine there. He is a renowned nephrologist and is president of the Taiwan Society of Nephrology. Dr. Wu focuses his research on renal cellular physiology and biology, clinical nephrology, and renal replacement therapy. He leads the integration of medical services and informatics at TMU and its four affiliated hospitals, as well as TMU’s long-term care provision, to help address the needs of Taiwan’s aging population.



Luxia Zhang is the deputy dean of the National Institute of Health Data Science at Peking University and a professor in the Renal Division of Peking University First Hospital. She received her MD from Peking University and MPH from Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Zhang was elected a Fellow of the International Society of Nephrology in 2024. She also serves as deputy editor of Health Data Science, a Science Partner Journal; vice chair of the Kidney Disease Prevention and Control Committee of the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association; and a member of the editorial board of the American Journal of Kidney Diseases.



Kook-Hwan Oh is a professor of the Nephrology Division at Seoul National University Hospital in South Korea. He has authored over 300 articles in international peer-reviewed journals and three book chapters on peritoneal dialysis and chronic kidney disease. He is the director of Raphael International, through which he collaborates with many nephrologists from developing countries such as Mongolia, Myanmar, and Laos to help build capacity in kidney disease management.



Manvir Victor is a former celebrated media personality and chair of the ISN Patient Liaison Advisory Group. He is the founding chairman of Patients for Patient Safety Malaysia and serves on the Malaysia National Patient Safety Council. He is a board member of the WHO Global Advisory Group on Patient and Family Communications and serves on the *British Medical Journal's* Patient Advocacy Panel. He is the host and producer of the podcast “Healthcare Simplified with Manvir Victor,” broadcast in over 15 countries, where he advocates for healthcare providers to prioritize patient engagement, improve systems, and adopt innovative technologies to enhance care delivery.



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