

A new method to open a medical clinic

An option to choose real estate investment funds (Part I)

The “Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic” supervised by clinic director Dr. Satoru Kariya, specializing in hip joint surgery, equipped with 19 beds, and the “Tokyo Medical Imaging Clinic” supervised by Director Shunichiro Ikeda, specializing in imaging examination and diagnosis, opened in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, on August 1. Facing a main street, the two-tone black and white five-story building soars above the first-class district of Setagaya Ward. These clinics are equipped with state-of-the-art operation rooms and imaging examination apparatus, which will far exceed the financial abilities of doctors in private practice.

It was their decision to utilize the power of real estate investment funds that enabled them to be equipped so well. The funds are managed by “SPARX Asset Trust & Management” in Minato Ward, Tokyo with President Tetsufumi Isayama. It is a subsidiary company of the SPARX Group, an independent investment management company directed by President Shuhei Abe.



**The clinics are located
in the first-class district
of Setagaya, Tokyo.**

President Abe of the SPARX Group launched a strategic policy to reinforce the medical field. Following the policy, SPARX Asset Trust & Management Co., Ltd.(SATM) began to aim its future major investments at buildings accommodating clinics and nursing homes. Consequently, SATM decided to invest in the development of these clinics. SATM plans to expand its investment hereafter not only towards building new hospitals and clinics, but also renovating and providing seismic retrofit to existing buildings.

SPARX Asset Trust & Management Co.,Ltd.

- **In the case of opening a clinic on my own by borrowing money from banks, a clinic without beds would have been the best I could afford.**

The total cost for the building accommodating two clinics exceeded 2 billion yen. The Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic is an orthopedic clinic, specializing in artificial hip joint replacement surgery, equipped with two operation rooms, an inpatients' ward, and a rehabilitation facility. On the 1st floor of the same building is the Tokyo Medical Imaging Clinic, specializing in imaging examination and diagnosis, equipped with the latest 1.5 Tesla MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), which is equivalent to the apparatus equipped in university hospitals, and the newest version of the 320-row area detector CT (computerized tomography).



Dr. Kariya (47) at the Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic graduated from Kanazawa Medical University and accumulated experience at the Department of Orthopedic Surgery in Showa University Hospital and others. He modeled his clinic after one in Virginia (U.S.) which conducted over 1,000 cases of artificial hip joint replacement surgery per year. He witnessed the clinic specialize only in surgery, and patients go through rehabilitation by staying in the clinic after undertaking surgery.

Director Kariya says, “I can concentrate on medical care.”

Dr. Kariya was inspired to introduce this American model to Japan, but immediately faced his limitations in financial capability. It was in such a situation that he found real estate investment funds. Dr. Kariya says, “If I had had to open a clinic by myself by obtaining loans from banks, a clinic without beds would have been the best I could afford. However, I decided to utilize external fund investment, which enabled me to prepare sufficient equipment, and concentrate on providing medical care.”

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Every inpatient can apply for medical insurance for artificial hip joint replacement surgery. The Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic, registered as an insured medical institution at the Bureau of Health and Welfare, plans to provide those suffering from long-term hip joint pain with artificial hip joint replacement surgery by applying for insured treatment.

Dr. Kariya spends three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, to diagnose outpatients, and the other three days, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, to perform surgery. Although he would be able to operate at a maximum of approximately 500 patients per year, he plans to keep the number of operations at around 300 per year for the time being. Two operation rooms equipped in the Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic will help him increase the number of operations.

The artificial hip joint replacement surgery at the Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic aims at patient discharge within 10 days of surgery. To enable such a quick discharge, rehabilitation will start on the following day after surgery in the rehabilitation facility equipped in the building. In addition, in order to promote rehabilitation efficacy, once the decision is made for surgery, an experienced physical therapist will conduct counseling, measure the patient's muscular strength, and commence a program to enhance the muscles before surgery. These measures will accelerate patients' postoperative recovery and lead to early release from the hospital.

In order to inform all neighbors that his clinic specializes in artificial hip joint replacement surgery, and to reinforce the medical link in the district, Dr. Kariya joined the 9th Division of the Setagaya Medical Association, a local doctors' association in his area, before opening the clinic. He paid a personal visit to orthopedic clinics in his neighboring areas, and also visited hospitals equipped with rehabilitation wards to ask for their cooperation so that his patients in convalescence would be accepted after discharge from his clinic.

In addition, in order to take in those suffering from unidentified causes of hip joint pain he also visited bonesetters' clinics in the neighborhood and introduced his clinic specializing in artificial hip joint surgery.



Two operation rooms will enable efficient practice.

- **Working in collaboration with the clinic on the 1st floor, which specializes in imaging examination and diagnosis**



Dr. Ikeda manages his clinic in close collaboration with Dr. Kariya.

Dr. Ikeda of the Tokyo Medical Imaging Clinic on the 1st floor decided to work in collaboration with Dr. Kariya of the Tokyo Hip Joint Clinic to promote artificial hip joint surgery. Director Ikeda graduated from Saga University, worked at the Department of Radiology in Kagoshima University Hospital, and accumulated experiences as a radio diagnostician.

All apparatus used by radio diagnosticians for imaging examination cost hundreds of millions of yen, making it impossible for a doctor to open a clinic privately. Dr. Ikeda took made the decision to utilize real estate investment funds that enabled him to open his own clinic and enjoy independence.

In ordinary practice, he conducts MRIs or CT scans for patients introduced by nearby clinics. Hereafter, he is going to diagnose images of patients with hip joint pain examined by Dr. Kariya. He also plans to start a new program called the “hip joint dry-dock” for complete clinical survey of the hip joint.

Dr. Ikeda says, “This clinic is equipped with apparatus, equivalent to those in general hospitals or core hospitals. They will provide me with great flexibility in conducting medical examinations. I can handle preoperative diagnosis for patients of Dr. Kariya as well as promptly satisfy the needs for expansive imaging diagnosis, which Dr. Kariya regards as necessary.”

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