



## ***The Mission of a Renal and Dialysis Clinic***

Sasaki Clinic specializes in nephrology and dialysis. More than 13 million people suffer from chronic renal failure in Japan, and numbers are increasing because of the aging population and other factors. However, there is a nationwide shortage of kidney specialists, which also affects major cities like Osaka.

In consultations with kidney patients seeking second opinions or other advice, I have seen many cases where dialysis was started sooner than necessary or, conversely, treatment was not started despite signs of sudden deterioration and a need for prompt dialysis. It is better to delay dialysis if it is not required, yet we must avoid situations where patients are hospitalized due to sudden deterioration and become unable to work. At Sasaki Clinic, we incorporate the latest research results to develop effective treatment plans that minimize patient burden, for example by optimizing the frequency and duration of dialysis. We also tailor treatments to patient lifestyles, offering options including twice-weekly and overnight dialysis to help patients to work and enjoy family life in the same way they did before beginning dialysis.



## ***A Clinic for Your Own Family***

In addition to my medical studies, teamwork is a vital to offering high-quality treatment. Around 30 people work in our clinic, including nurses, lab technicians, nutritionists and cooks, and clerical workers. Our staff are always guided by a "patient-first" ethos.

For example, during dialysis patients frequently tell nurses that they are feeling unwell. Often this is nothing serious, but since there is some reason for them expressing discomfort, we must not ignore them. Sometimes dangerous circumstances can arise during dialysis because changes were overlooked. Moreover, a thorough investigation of causes sometimes reveals other disorders such as heart conditions, infections, or cancer. A patient's condition changes from one day to the next, so we should always deal with each patient as if they were a new patient.



I always say to my staff, "would you send your own family members to this clinic?" If you think of patients as your own loved ones, you will not treat them in a perfunctory manner. By thinking simply, you will see the treatment you should aim for in each individual case. Leadership requires the leader to take the initiative in creating the ideal organization and motivating people. I need to embody the "patient-first" ideal and model it for others. If I appear to find it bothersome when nurses report changes in patient condition, sooner or later the nurses will turn a blind eye to patients' complaints. Even if the report is erroneous, it is important to thank the nurses for keeping an eye on patients. Such attentive care should also be evaluated as part of performance assessments and salary reviews. Advising and guiding staff can sometimes be difficult. When you notice problematic behavior, in some cases it is best to address it directly on the spot, while in others it is better to address it later through the manager the staff member reports to, or to instruct everyone. I always consider what method will communicate the message most effectively.

I am still on the path to creating the ideal organization. To enable considerate treatment of patients I am looking at improving the nurse-patient ratio and building systems for collaborating with cardiovascular and dermatological specialists to offer on-the-spot treatment to elderly patients visiting for dialysis. This will be more challenging in terms of costs and management, but progressively I want to take every step I can and should to achieve my top priority of creating the best possible clinic for patients.



## Koichi Sasaki

Director

Sasaki Clinic

Koichi Sasaki was born in Osaka Prefecture. After graduating from the Fukuoka University School of Medicine, he joined a medical office of the nephrology department in the Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University. He then pursued his studies of renal treatment and dialysis at Rinku General Medicine Center and Japan Community Healthcare Organization Osaka Hospital. Following the death of his father, he took over Sasaki Clinic in Tsurumi-ku, Osaka, where he specializes in renal treatment and dialysis.