Editorial

The ten articles included in this special issue of *ORL* represent a small portion of the research results produced by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Research Group over the past 3 years. The contents range from Ménière's disease epidemiology and clinical research to inner ear physiology and biochemistry, regenerative medicine and genetics. This research group was inaugurated in 1974, and has been seeking to discover the cause of Ménière's disease and to establish a treatment.

Despite the multifarious research into Ménière's disease, the cause of this disease remains unknown and no fundamental treatment method has been established. Evidence that medicine and surgery improve long-term prognosis is lacking. Is this state of affairs due to constrained thinking, inadequate analysis methods, or some other unknown factors?

When we retrace past research papers, it is evident how in our assessment of etiology and treatment methods we were like waves merely being pushed around at the mercy of trends. To provide answers for this disease, a reassessment of our research strategy is necessary. Perhaps the ideas of researchers and verification methods are yet to reach full maturity.

Although the essays included in this issue account for only a minute portion of the research being undertaken at present, they are meaningful as records of the current status of medical research, or as steps towards the future.

Masahiro Takahashi