World Congress on Psychiatric Genetics (WCPG) has been taken place in San Diego, California, USA, October 3-8, 2009. Dr. Shinkai, Dr. Sakata, and I participated in this congress this year. We have presented 5 association studies of candidate genes for nicotine dependence by poster presentation. I have presented “The Association of Neuronal Nicotine Acetylcholine Receptor α4 and β2 Gene Polymorphisms with Nicotine Dependence in Japanese Male workers”. Dr. Shinkai presented “Association of polymorphism in the human μ-opioid receptor OPRM1 gene with nicotine dependence in Japanese Workers”, while Dr. Sakata presented ”Association between the NMNDA receptor subunit 2B gene (GRIN2B) and nicotine dependence in a sample of Japanese workers”. Although Dr. Utsunomiya and Dr. Yamada were not able to go with us, they reported “Possible Association between the Ala72Ser Polymorphism of the Catechol-O-methyl Transferase Gene (COMT) and Nicotine Dependence in a Sample of Japanese Workers” and “Association between the BDNF Val66Met polymorphism and nicotine dependence in a sample of Japanese worker”, respectively.

During the conference, we met Dr. Ming Tsuang, Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Diego (UCSD), who is a friend of our former professor Abe. We have said professor Abe’s greeting to him. Given that he is originally from Taiwan and is now such a famous professor in the field of psychiatric genetics, it was an excited moment for me to have a conversation with him. We have also seen a lot of people we met last year at WCPG2008 in Osaka including Dr. James L. Kennedy, Dr. Cathy Barr and several colleagues from University of Toronto. During the congress, Dr. Shinkai invited Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Barr to give speeches in the Japanese Society of Biological Psychiatry next year in Kitakyushu, which our department will be the host facilities for. I am looking forward to hear their talk next year again!

In the poster discussion time, Dr. Vincenzo De Luca, a former colleague of Dr. Shinkai and now an Associate Professor at University of Toronto, came up and read my poster and gave me some useful suggestion on statistics. I have also had chance to view various kinds of posters of other study groups from all over the world. The hot studies are still focused on either genome-wide association studies or epigenetic studies. Every time when I go to international conferences, I realized that there is so much work we should work on. We will keep on examining other gene polymorphisms on nicotine dependence research and try to increase our sample size. Besides, I would like to improve my statistical ability to cope with the gene-gene interaction to improve our research. I wish I could improve myself as well as the academic carrier, although little by little, through communicating and interacting with those foreign researchers from either WCPG members or other international conferences. I would like to thank Professor Nakamura and colleagues of department of psychiatry for giving me the opportunity to attend the WCPG2009 meeting which I believe gave me an implication for future research as well as a lifetime memory.