

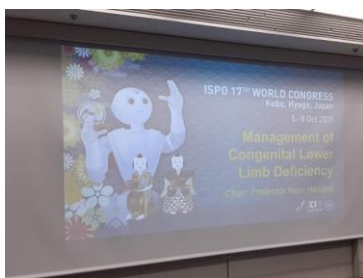
# Basics to Bionics



Thanks to ISPO UK funding and support from my Company, Steeper, I was lucky enough to travel to Japan to attend and present at the 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Kobe, Japan. The conference had been held in the same city 30 years ago, but the area of the Conference buildings has since been rebuilt and become the Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster. There were over 500 students in attendance at the Conference, to reflect the development of the area in becoming the most advanced, innovative medical environment.

The Opening Ceremony introduced us to the Mayor of the City, and various leading members of the Medical Profession and ISPO based in Japan. They were followed by 2 inspirational speakers, talking about their personal experiences of being users, and how they have worked to effect change in their own environments. One, a wheelchair user, and the other overcoming depression post amputation, and turning his life around to become a Paralympic athlete.

The first session after the opening Ceremony, was my opportunity to present along with a team from both the UK and the Netherlands. Our Advanced Instructional course was titled 'Management of Congenital Lower Limb Deficiency – Changes in Practice Secondary to Developments in Prosthetic Technology'. We looked at the changes in rehabilitation, prosthetic componentry, surgical techniques and general attitude towards acceptance of congenital limb difference and associated surgeries.



348 free papers, 24 Symposia, 28 Instructional courses, 129 posters and 2 exhibition halls, meant that there were a large range of opportunities to experience the Conference, but sometimes too many things to choose from. The main subjects I was interested in were; Osseointegration, Upper and lower limb prosthetics, and 3D printing. I found the level of work being carried out in the field of osseointegration quite surprising, as the UK now seems to be far behind other countries in Europe and Australia, in particular, in the acceptance of osseointegration as a valid alternative to socket technology.

Innovation, as always, was on show through new product development, and research. There were also amazing keynote speakers – one of whom was Professor Eiichi Saitoh from the Fujita Health University, presenting work being carried out in Japan to develop assistive robots. One line of development was to aid the ageing population to continue to live independently within their own homes.



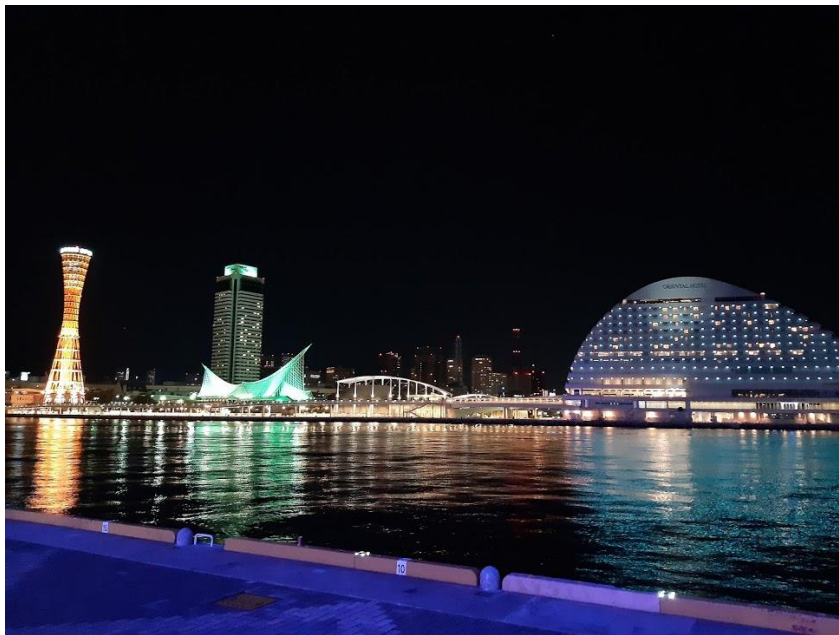
Professor Eiichi Saitoh



Upper limb Osseointegration

Then all too soon, it was time for the closing Ceremony, where Friedbert Kohler introduced us to the head of ISPO Mexico. He brought with him a group of musicians and dancers who entertained the delegates, while reminding us that the next world congress will be in Guadelajara in 2021.

I would again like to thank ISPO, for their valuable assistance to make this most enjoyable, educational and fascinating trip possible.



Kobe harbour at night