

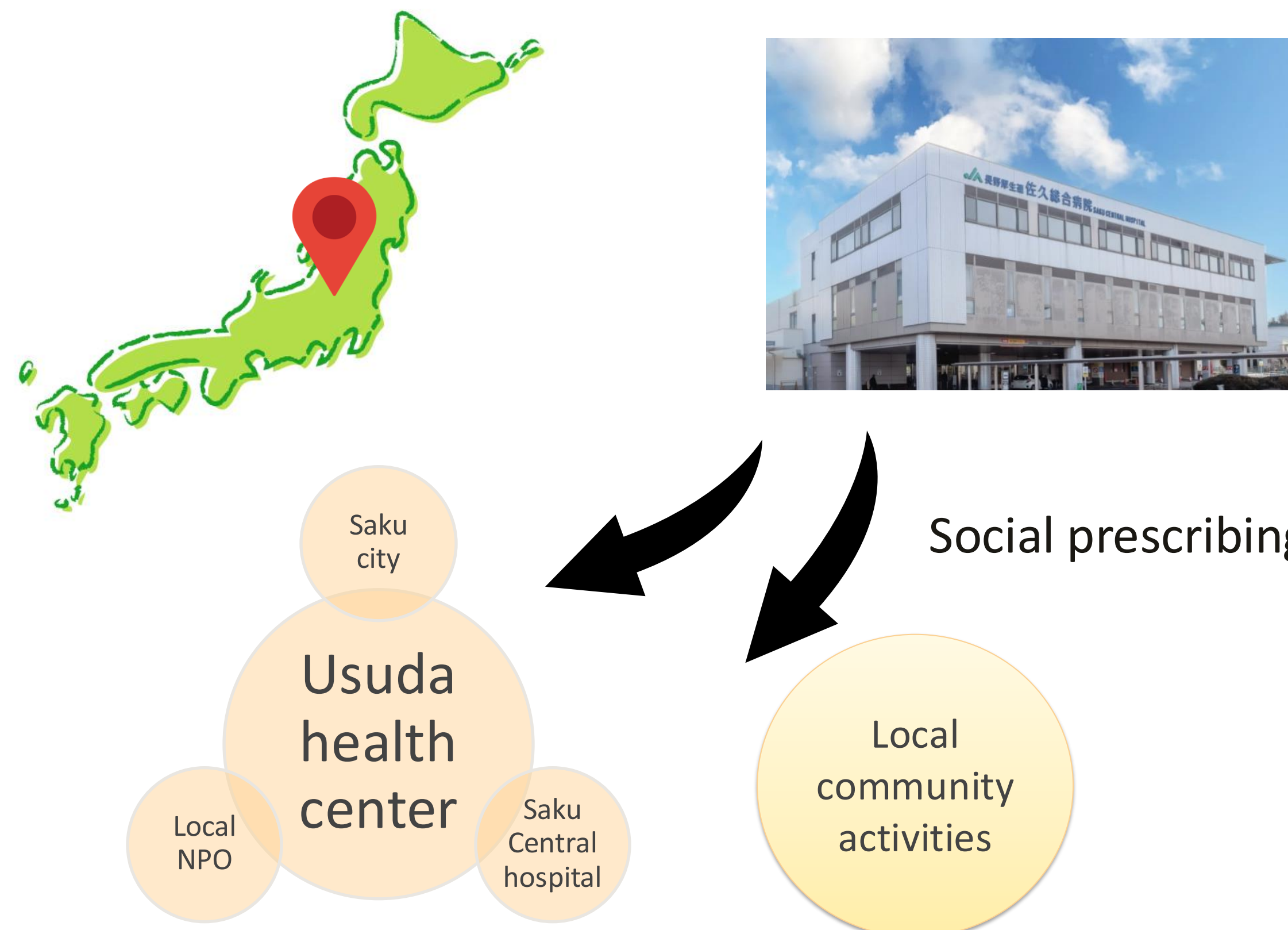
Promoting social prescribing in hospitals : Interprofessional collaboration

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Background

Saku Central Hospital is located in Saku City (population approx. 90,000), Nagano Prefecture, Japan. Since 1944, when we were founded, we have been involved in community activities.

Recently, the hospital has continued to support community activities, and the Usuda Health Center, jointly operated by the city, hospital, and a local nonprofit organization (NPO), serves as a hub for local community activities.



Social prescribing empowers healthcare professionals to refer individuals to various local and non-clinical services. In recent years, Social prescribing has gained attention as a strategy to address isolation.

Despite our hospital's long-standing active involvement in community activities, social prescribing has not yet been widely implemented. To facilitate social prescribing, volunteer teams of healthcare professionals were established within the hospital.

Methods

●Members

In 2019, we voluntarily initiated the formation of an organization called "Smile Saku Farm" within our hospital. Our team aims to promote social prescribing and enhance interprofessional collaborative practices.



Our team comprised of healthcare professionals both within and outside the hospital. Members include physicians, community nurses, care managers, speech therapists, staff from the Community Comprehensive Support Center, and others.

Additionally, collaborators, such as hospital medical social workers (MSWs), physical therapists, and public health nurses actively participate in our team.



●Our activities

①Awareness activities about social prescribing

To Professional Staff :

We conduct seminars at the hospital focusing on interprofessional collaborative practices and social prescribing. These seminars aim to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and broaden the framework of social prescribing.

Seminar Frequency: Every 1 or 2 months

Recent Topics:

- Social Prescribing
- Home Oxygen Therapy and Social Participation
- Social Resources and Social Coordinators
- Home Visit Nursing in the Local Community

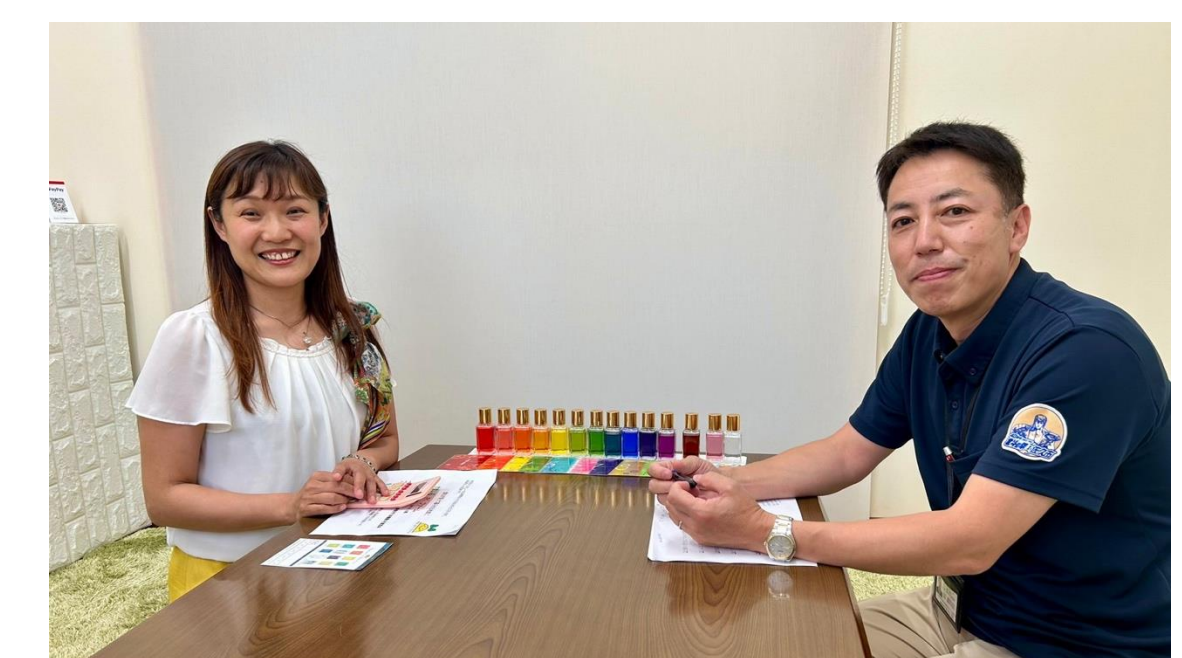
To local people :

We presented a poster on social prescribing and the negative impact of loneliness on health at our hospital festival. This festival, held since 1947, attracts approximately 10,000 visitors annually. We engaged in meaningful communication with local participants.



To local community activities :

We are also implementing cross-sector partnerships with the Community Comprehensive Support Center to understand existing local community activities and to share this information within the hospital. We are working to raise awareness of the concept of social prescribing among community activity organizers and to establish pathways that facilitate easier referrals.



②Implementation of social prescribing

We introduce patients who visit a doctor because of social problems related to local community activities.

Results

Through our seminars, we have strengthened inter-professional collaborative practice and increased awareness of social prescribing frameworks within the hospital, thereby fostering greater interest in social prescribing. Participants of the seminar reported that exchanging opinions made interprofessional collaboration easier. The feedback indicated that they were glad to learn about the concept of social prescribing. Participants have reported that they are now able to think of options for referring people to community activities. The participants have reported that they were now able to think of options for referring people to community activities. Indeed, members of 'Smile Saku Farm' also introduced community activities to patients receiving outpatient care at our hospital.

Conclusion

By strengthening interprofessional collaborative practices both within and outside the hospital, we have been able to enhance awareness of social prescribing within the hospital and translate this awareness into tangible social prescribing activities.