

Topics Fukushima introduces JAEA's activities related to Fukushima.

## Explanation of impact of radiation on health at Hirono Town Junior High School

### Question-and-Answer Session on Radiation and Health



The Question-and-Answer Session on Radiation and Health was held by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) at Hirono Town Junior High School on February 14. It was established to ease significant concern about the effects of radiation on small children such as kindergarten-age pupils by deepening scientific understanding of teachers and parents of children in Fukushima Prefecture. The JAEA has dispatched staff, who have expert knowledge of radiation and dose management, to

such sessions since July 2011. This time, the session was held for the 220th.

Almost all of the approximately 5,500 residents of the town were forced to flee from their homes due to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. However, decontamination of the area has been vigorously pursued since the designation of the Evacuation-Prepared Area in case of Emergency was lifted, and decontamination of the residential area has now been almost completed. Also, classes commenced to be held at the elementary and junior high schools of the town on August 27, 2012. As of the present, approximately 650 of the former residents have returned to the town. Although gradually, the number of returnees is increasing. Since November 2012, the JAEA has held the explanatory meeting in collaboration with the board of education of Hirono Town to provide an opportunity to relieve the anxiety of students and their parents.

This time, focusing on radiation and its impact on health, a staff member of JAEA, Yuko Ikuta, a Doctor of Medicine (see photograph), explained before about 50 students, teachers and parents the impact of radiation on health differs according to the type, amount and dose rate of radiation, and that a slight increase of radiation levels does not increase, proportional to it, the mortality or cancer rate. She answered individually questions submitted in advance by students concerning how to check for radiation, what sort of places radiation tends to be produced and ways that you can protect your body from radioactive materials.

The principal of the school commented that "people are worried because of an overload of information concerning radiation, and I hope the meeting will be an opportunity to allay the people's anxiety."