

# London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

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## Clinical Trials Unit

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LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
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MEDICINE



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Prime Minister Shinzō Abe

2-3-1 Nagata-cho,

Chiyoda-ku 100-8968

Tokyo, Japan

Dear Prime Minister Abe

I was saddened to hear about the stabbings today in Kawasaki. My wife is Japanese and the stabbing took place in her home town, in the school she attended as a child. The headmaster who acted so bravely to save the children in his care is a family friend. The purpose of this letter is to raise with you a serious concern about the emergency care of bleeding trauma victims in Japan.

Tranexamic acid is a drug that safely reduces bleeding. It was invented by the Japanese scientists Shosuke and Utako Okamoto in the 1960s. It was mainly used for minor bleeding until 2010 when a large international clinical trial conducted by my team at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine showed that early administration of tranexamic acid to bleeding trauma victims reduces the risk of bleeding to death by a third. We also showed that treatment is most effective when given soon after injury. For this reason, in the UK, tranexamic acid is given by paramedics at the scene of the injury. **This is not the situation in Japan where Ministry of Health rules do not allow paramedics to give tranexamic acid.** This is regrettable since tranexamic acid is the only drug proven to reduce mortality in bleeding trauma victims.

I have been working with Japanese medical colleagues to make the Japanese Ministry of Health aware of the scientific evidence of the lifesaving benefits of tranexamic acid so that they can change this policy but so far with little success. If any good can come from the awful tragedy today in Kawasaki, it would be a review of the Ministry of Health rules that prevent tranexamic acid being used to save lives in situations like this.

I would be grateful if you could bring this matter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Yours sincerely

Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health

Co-Director, LSHTM Clinical Trials Unit



World Health Organization  
Collaborating Centre for Research and Training  
in Injury and Violence Prevention