

Plenary Session

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 1:10 PM - 2:00 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 4:10 AM - 5:00 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Plenary Session 4] How to Assess and Intervene Hikikomori in the 21st Digitalized Society

Moderator: Antonio Sison (University of the Philippines Philippine General Hospital)

[PS-4]

How to Rescue Hikikomori, Pathological Social Withdrawal, in the Digital Urbanized Society

*Takahiro A. Kato¹ (1. Department of Psychiatry, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine (Japan))

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Keywords : hikikomori、 social isolation、 diagnosis、 psychoanalysis、 digital psychiatry

Hikikomori is a condition in which a person stays at home almost every day for six months or longer without going to school or work. Recently, hikikomori has been spreading not only in Japan but also globally, including Asia, Europe, and the Americas (Kato et al. Lancet 2011; World Psychiatry 2018; Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences 2019). I have been organizing the world's first hikikomori research clinic at a university hospital, proposing hikikomori as a psychiatric condition of pathological social withdrawal, and establishing diagnostic criteria (Kato et al. World Psychiatry 2020). Remarkably, hikikomori has been included in the DSM-5TR (2022). The internet society, which expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to an increase in hikikomori cases. In the post-COVID-19 era, where online classes and remote work have become the norm, hikikomori can be viewed not only as a pathological phenomenon but also as a cutting-edge lifestyle. Persons with hikikomori may represent pioneers in utilizing "technopathy," a psychic ability to interact, communicate, and manipulate technology through the mind. In this lecture, I will introduce the latest psychiatric assessment methods for both pathological and non-pathological (i.e., "happy") hikikomori (Kato et al. Current Opinions in Psychiatry 2024). By showcasing our ongoing hikikomori support system using digital tools such as the metaverse and communication robotics, I will explore the future of hikikomori-like lifestyles in digital urban societies.