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**Jun Kurihara***The Canon Institute for Global Studies, Japan***The significance of robot safety standards for the development of life support robots**

Japan is the forerunner in the world in terms of aging population. Under these circumstances, life support robots are promising tools to lead to a higher Quality Of Life (QOL) for the elderly along with physically challenged people; both young and old. However, there has been a jumble of ideas and prototypes, leading to a cul-de-sac with respect to the future development of caregiver and self-reliance support robots. This presentation proposes a promising approach to this cul-de-sac. This impasse has been caused by three factors. First, robots are extremely expensive, unaffordable for caregivers and patients. Second, robot markets are extremely compartmentalized and isolated. Third, the primary cause of compartmentalized market has been a confusing patchwork of standards. Thus far, the cul-de-sac has brought about a lackadaisical growth of life support robots, compared with the case of industrial robots that are experiencing a galloping growth, especially in East Asia. Accordingly, the time has come to draw up a new road map toward a higher speed of robot diffusion. The most effective approach would be the establishment of globally encompassing and trustworthy safety standards. They could provide a firm foundation for a globalized and integrated market of life support robots. Individual markets, thanks to universally applicable safety standards, would be loosely interconnected; those markets would include not only the market for elderly care, but also medical, educational, business and military services as well as industrial robots, leading to a larger pool of components and related technologies. The resulting larger pool could reduce the prices of life support robots and accelerate their diffusion. The establishment of globally encompassing safety standards requires an institutional framework which could play a leadership role. Japan has a robot safety center (RSC); only one in the world to systematically propose safety standards and guidelines for life support robots.

Biography

Jun Kurihara is a Research Director of The Canon Institute for Global Studies (CIGS), a Tokyo-based think tank (2009 to till date). He also serves as a Corporate Director of a Japanese company (Ono Pharmaceutical, 2013 to till date) and teaches as a Visiting Professor at Kwansei Gakuin University located in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan (2006 to till date). Between 2003 and 2012, he was a Senior Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, Ash Center and the Center of Business and Government (CBG). Currently he is working on Japanese companies' innovation strategies including service robotics and artificial intelligence. He has served as a Chairman and Member of various committees established by the government and business organizations including a Senior Member of the Japan Statistics Council for the Government of Japan. He has earned an MS from the Graduate School Agriculture of Kyoto University.

Kurihara.Jun@canon-igs.org**Notes:**