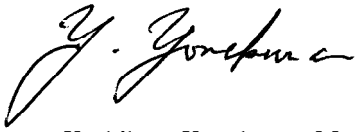
Preface

The National Institute of Radiological Sciences (NIRS) has pursued comprehensive research in science and technology related to radiation and human health since its initial establishment in 1957. We reorganized the structure of the institution and started its second 5-year plan in April 2006. This annual report summarizes the outline of our research activities during the past year.

All living creatures on the earth have been exposed to radiation for billions of years. In addition to this natural radiation, the discovery of X-rays in the end of the 19th century introduced a new era. The use of radiation and radioactive materials has completely changed the way of life, and it is now an essential tool in many areas from medical practice to energy production. The mission of NIRS, advancing radiological science and technology for human health, clearly meets the needs of modern society.

The objectives of the 5-year plan involve the promotion of research and development in radiation-related life science, radiation safety and emergency medical preparedness. In order to achieve our mission effectively and efficiently, we reorganized our research facilities into 4 research centers, Research Center for Charged Particle Therapy, Molecular Imaging Center, Research Center for Radiation Protection and Research Center for Radiation Emergency Medicine, as well as Fundamental Technology Center. We are also encouraging collaborative activities in a multidisciplinary approach among these research centers and also with other institutions. These efforts are particularly important not only for planning the future direction of NIRS but also for establishing the road map of research themes in radiological science.

We continue our efforts in contributing to the national and international projects for radiation safety and regulation. However, the facilities and specialists to conduct studies in basic radiation biology, radiation physics, radiation oncology, and regulatory science will not be sufficient for future advancement, and collaboration and networking could be one solution to solve this problem. We pursue our activities to contribute as one of the international core centers in radiological science, and we sincerely ask for your continuing support to NIRS and welcome any suggestions or critiques.



Yoshiharu Yonekura, M. D., Ph. D.
President