Historical Transition of Precautionary Risk Policy in the Basic Plan for Science and Technology in Japan: Cases of Biotechnology and Nanotechnology

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This study provides an overview of the risk policy in the "*Basic Plan for Science and Technology*" (from the 1st to 6th periods), which defines the science and technology policy in Japan. It also examined and analyzed the historical process of the plan with a focus on the handling of biotechnology and nanotechnology in response to advanced science and technology. The result elucidates that the concept of the "*Precautionary Principle*" regarding the legal control of risks associated with scientific uncertainty was adopted in the communication policy of the Basic Plan for Science and Technology in recent years. Conversely, the "*Prevention Principle*", which requires scientific certainty (scientific causality), tends to be adopted in other policy areas. In addition, several fields of science and technology are not subject to specific legal control. Therefore, the result points out that the "*Basic Act on Science Technology and Innovation*" (2021) and the "*Basic Plan for Science Technology and Innovation*" (2021) should clearly and concretely indicate the contents of the policy on risk response, including scientific uncertainty, from the initial planning stage of the policies.