The Japanese government built the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, sited at Legon. It was inaugurated in 1979. The Japanese donation was in memory and recognition of the research work Dr. Noguchi on Yellow Fever. Dr. Noguchi died as a result of contracting Yellow Fever himself during the research.

At inception, the institute’s aim was to develop into an international centre for medical research covering the entire scope of medical sciences. However, in order to achieve immediate impact on the health and welfare of the people in greatest need, the institute redefined its objectives in 1984 as research into the problems of communicable diseases and nutrition; provision of training opportunities for postgraduate students in medical research; and the provision of specialized laboratory, diagnostic and monitoring services in support of public health programmes.

The first Director of the institute was Professor C. O. Quarcoo, who served from 1980 to 1983.