VIA MEDICA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The current effects of the spread of COVID-19 in learning environments involving Japanese college students: what is the state of those environments elsewhere in the world?

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COVID-19 originated in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province in China in December 2019. In 2020, COVID-19 has shaken the world, resulting in large numbers of infected and dead. Around the world, some countries have encouraged a lock-down or shelter-in-place restrictions due to the effects of the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, Japan has encouraged self-isolation, it has asked various types of businesses to close, and it has recommended that people work from home. Every day, Japan has been dealing with COVID-19 by follow-ing those steps. Schools are out, and a growing number of students are quickly taking classes online.

According to one report [1], an indicator of the situation is the fact that about 8% of college students and junior college students are considering dropping out. Due to the effects of the spread of COVID-19, their "family income has decreased or dropped to 0" or "there are fewer part-time jobs for students, and pay has been cut or is not available". Students are considering steps such as "consulting with the school to postpone tuition payment or to receive a schol-arship from the school", or "applying to receive a student loan from the Japan Student Services Organisation" [2]. However, those steps alone cannot address the potential factors for dropping out due to the effects of the spread of COVID-19. Responses at the school level are obviously needed, but the country needs to clearly identify the po-tential factors for dropping out and specify various ways to address them. Based on national guidelines, prefectures can supplement those approaches or communities can devise their own; these efforts will build upon responses at the school level. The country, communities, and rele-vant bodies need to promptly work together to address these factors. The same or similar factors are becoming a societal problem in different countries around the world. The approaches adopted by those countries can serve as a reference.

REFERENCES

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