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 lockdown 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 following 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 scholarship 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 potential 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 relevant 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