





# Changes in university classes as COVID-19 continues and new findings regarding future university instruction methods: from the perspective of Japan and Semey, Republic of Kazakhstan

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As of September 17, 2020, there have been approx. 29.76 million cumulative cases of COVID-19 and approx. 940,000 deaths worldwide [1]. The respective numbers of COVID-19 cumulative cases and cumulative deaths include the following data per country: USA, ~6.63 million and ~200,000; India, ~5.02 million and ~800,000; Brazil, ~4.42 million and ~130,000; Russia, ~1.08 million and ~20,000, and Peru, ~740,000 and ~30,000 [1].

As of September 17, 2020, Japan has had ~80,000 cumulative cases and ~1,500 cumulative deaths [2]. Kazakhstan has had ~110,000 cumulative cases and ~1,600 cumulative deaths as of September 15, 2020 [3].

Concerned about the spread of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) at the end of January 2020. The number of COVID-19 cases continued to increase worldwide, and on March 11, 2020 the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Lifestyles have changed in countries where COVID-19 is prevalent. Changes have also occurred in approaches to education.

At universities in both Japan and Semey, Republic of Kazakhstan (e.g., Semey Medical University), university classes were taught in-person prior to COVID-19. The first-term classes at universities, junior colleges, and technical colleges in Japan (the Japanese school year starts in April) have been 'suspended (to be resumed at some later date)' or converted to 'online (remote classes)' that are expected

to 'continue online' or 'continue as a combination of online and in-person classes'. As one description has indicated, classes in the second term (starting in September or October) are scheduled to be 'conducted both online and in person' (80.1%) or 'fully in-person' (19.3%) [4].

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Semey Medical University has provided only online classes. Students have both positive and negative opinions regarding online classes. The continuation of COVID-19 is likely to affect students' mental state. Online classes provide markedly fewer or zero chances to attend school; this can lead to isolation and mental fatigue. A multi-faceted follow-up is needed for university students, to help them maintain a healthy mental state and enthusiasm for their education. Educational approaches are changing because of the situation related to COVID-19. Current educational approaches will be drawn upon and may be changed in this new global setting, but they must allow students to continue learning.

## REFERENCES

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