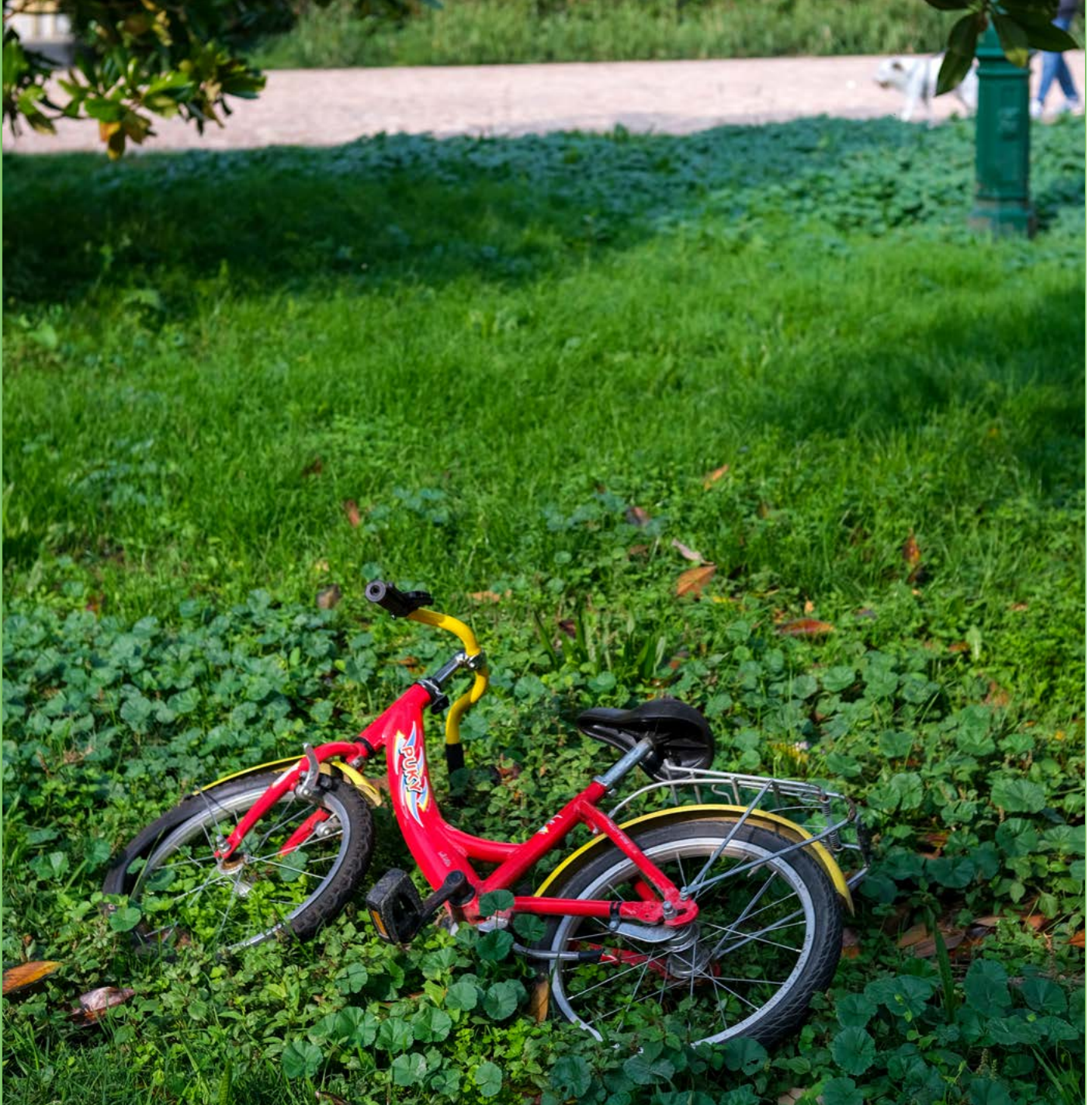


THE NEWZ

English Ver.

02

December 2022



Differences Between **Japanese** And **Foreign** Healthcare Systems

From The Perspective Of University Students Studying Abroad

THE NEWZ

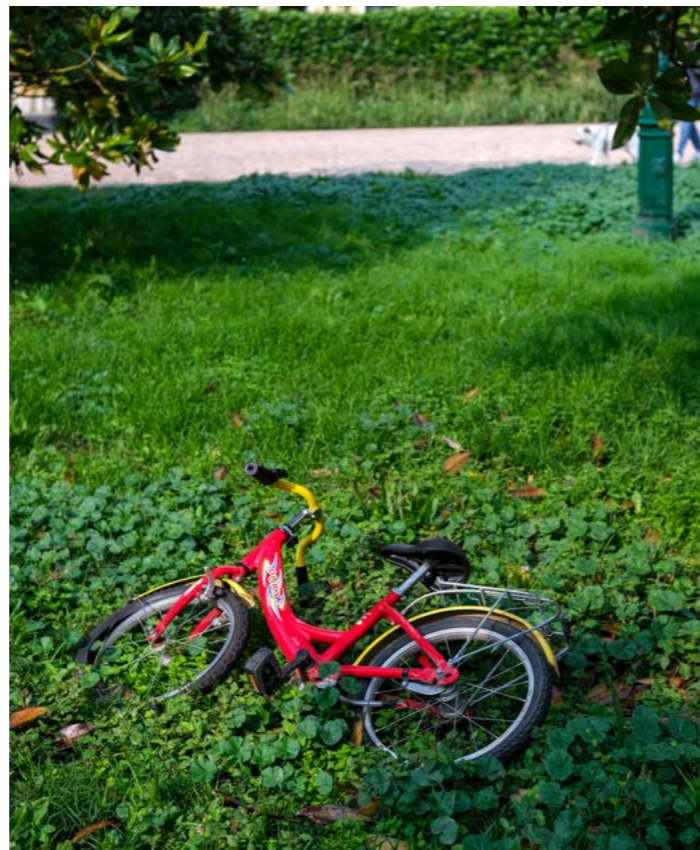
DECEMBER 2022 VOL.2

English Ver.

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About The NewZ

The Japanese have had opportunities to enjoy medical care under the universal health insurance system. However, with the declining birthrate and aging population, the burden of social security costs on the younger generation is expected to increase, and the corona disaster has revealed the weak points of Japan's healthcare system. Therefore, there is a growing need to review it. In addition, the voices of patients are less likely to be reflected in healthcare policies and the number of young people who desire to participate in the design of the healthcare system is increasing.

Considering the current situation, Institute for New Era Strategy (INES) and Japan Counselors (JC) have decided to publish a monthly report to provide an opportunity for young people to think about the future of the social security, medical insurance system, and the healthcare system.

Students studying abroad will gather information on episodes that symbolize the differences between the local healthcare system and the Japanese healthcare system, and write reports in both Japanese and English.

The title, "The NewZ," was created with the "Generation Z" in mind. The NewZ is a newsletter whose entire process, from project launch to writing and editing, has been performed by "Generation Z" college students.

We hope that you will have an interest in the healthcare system of your generation and the future.



Japanese Ver.

Differences Between **Japanese** And **Foreign** Healthcare Systems

From The Perspective Of University Students Studying Abroad

Natsuki Kanaya

University of Minnesota, United States



Hi! My name is Natsuki, and I'm a fourth-year psychology student at the University of Minnesota. I moved to the U.S. when I was 16 and have spent more than 5 years here, one year in Michigan and 4 years in Minnesota. Minnesota is known as refrigerator because of the freezing temperature in winter. It goes below -30 degrees Celsius, and believe it or not, it gets colder than Antarctica sometimes! (Winter in the northern hemisphere is summer in the southern hemisphere, so that's why too.) So, if you can survive in Minnesota, you can live anywhere in the world, so I take pride in the fact that I've survived 5 winters here! All jokes aside, I would like to talk about the differences between American healthcare systems and that of Japan in terms of insurance coverage, accessibility to mental healthcare, and the responsibilities of medical care workers.

Insurance Coverage and Its Expenses

In the U.S., people are expected to be enrolled in health insurance on their own, whereas Japan provides very affordable/almost free healthcare to everyone. Here, many people purchase the health insurance of their choice or many times, their workplaces provide one for the workers. The quality of the health care you can get highly depends on your financial ability and surroundings because high-quality health care is expensive, and many poor neighborhoods do not have medical institutions with cutting-edge technology. I have an acquaintance who got into a car accident and is struggling financially due to the insurance system in the U.S. He is 22 years old, and the accident happened when a pickup truck hit him when he was driving a green light. He is now in a coma due to a brain injury, with a slim chance of recovery. His family decided to send him to a

hospital with a good reputation for neurology in Colorado. However, his insurance company does not cover any of the expenses for the treatment he needs at the new hospital. Now, his family is raising money on Go Fund Me with a goal of \$150,000. When I saw the post of Go Fund Me on my friend's Instagram story, I learned how people's socioeconomic status affects their health in this country, because of the healthcare expenses which are not affordable for everyone. Furthermore, I have noticed that people in the U.S. focus more on preventative medicine compared to people in Japan. When I go grocery shopping, I can find many healthy food options such as organic food and low-fat and sugar food. In Japan, I do not see those options. Also, I know some friends who have become vegetarian and vegan for health reasons, as WHO warns that consuming too much red

meat increases one's risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancer, and consuming plant-based meat is a good alternative for meat, despite some controversy. I understand that not everyone has access to healthy options due to financial struggles, however, expensive medical bills might make people think of their health

more, as I have felt that the upper middle class and upper class in the U.S. are more health conscious than people who are in those classes in Japan, as easy access to medical treatments makes people care less about their health.

Accessibility to Mental Health Resources

Ever since I came to the U.S., I have felt that mental health problems are more recognized here compared to my home country, Japan. Growing up, I had not been educated on mental health illnesses or their resources, where talking about mental issues and disabilities is not common or acceptable. When I came here for the first time, I was surprised by how people talk about mental health with friends and go to therapy. At the University of Minnesota, students can go to therapy 6 times a semester for free with student insurance. I have not gone to therapy before, but it's good to know that help is always available whenever I need it.

Also, many students submit letters of accommodation for class, which explains why the students need some accommodation for class or exams. The letters allow students to get the accommodation needed such as extended periods for exams. In Japan, mental health illnesses are more stigmatized, and it's hard to get accommodation as it could be seen as laziness and not trying hard enough. As we live in a highly stressful and fast-paced society, I hope that there is more mental health awareness in Japan and that society becomes inclusive and acceptable to everyone.

Responsibilities of Health Care Workers

Speaking of the responsibilities and rights of healthcare workers, I've learned that American healthcare workers have more specific roles assigned to them whereas Japanese healthcare workers' responsibilities are broad. For example, there are many healthcare professions here that do not exist in Japan, such as physician assistants and patient transporters. In Japan, doctors and nurses usually cover the work instead. When I got my COVID vaccine in the U.S., the process was very easy and quick; I walked into a clinic, and a nurse gave me a shot. In Japan, many medical doctors still give shots to patients, although it's legal for nurses to do

so. Furthermore, it is required for medical doctors to do medical consultations before in contrast. I think the way the U.S. healthcare system divides responsibilities is very efficient and prevents a lack of specialized workers. Raising health care workers, especially doctors, is very expensive, so it's more cost-efficient to raise physician assistants and have them cover some of the responsibilities of medical doctors. Japan is facing a declining birthrate and aging population, so shortly, it is inevitable for the country to suffer from a lack of specialized healthcare workers such as medical doctors and nurses.



Hi, my name is Takumi Ota, I am majoring in Psychology at a university in Vancouver, Canada. Vancouver is known for multiple cultures as well as a lot of Japanese students studying. It is such a great opportunity to be able to spend my days in a world full of diversity and fulfillment.

First of all, the National Health Insurance in Japan is a little more costly than the public insurance in Canada, but it is known for providing high-quality medical care. Medical technology is continually improving, and due to the introduction of universal health insurance and free access to medical services, it has proved to be a marvelous system that enables equal access to medical care at all medical facilities.

Differences between Japanese and Canadian National Health Insurance

The most important feature of Canada's public insurance is that patients do not have to pay for any of their medical expenses. Canada has adopted a national health insurance system called Medicare, allowing insured patients to receive medical care without out-of-pocket expenses.

So, the question is why is medical care in Canada free? People are sometimes envious of the fact that medical care in Canada is free, but what would it be like?

Today, I would like to compare the Japanese and Canadian healthcare systems based on the reality.

In Japan, under the universal health insurance system, you pay 30% of the medical fee after a medical examination. In Canada, however, as I

mentioned, there is no need to pay medical fees. Medical examinations are free of charge and funded through taxes.

However, prescription drugs are not covered by insurance and must be paid for by the patient. Also, since Medicare does not cover odontology and ophthalmology, I would believe many people take care of their eyes and prevent tooth decay daily. International students and working holidaymakers are required to meet certain conditions when purchasing insurance, but as mentioned earlier, they are fully responsible for dental examinations, prescription drugs, and eye examinations. As an international student, I am required to enroll in the MSP (Medical Service Plan), the local public health insurance in Canada.

The problems people face at the medical examinations

One big difference I realized between Canadian and Japanese healthcare systems is the process of when patients see a doctor.

In Japan, a patient can usually go directly to a specialist when they know the symptoms and receive a consultation. In this case, the patient will be examined by a walk-in clinic or a family

doctor, and then, if necessary, by a specialist.

On the other hand, in Canada, it is difficult to see a specialist without a referral from a general doctor.

Even if people can get an appointment, I sometimes hear from my friends that it will be several weeks or months before they can see

a doctor. Speaking from my experience, I was going to see a doctor at a local hospital once when I had a cold. To be honest with you, the medical examination I had was disappointing. At the time, it was wintertime, so I was confident that I had the flu. My fever suddenly rose, and I was suffering from chills and general malaise. I thought that I needed to see a doctor for the first time in Canada, so I decided to go to a hospital. At this point, I wanted to recover as quickly as possible, so

I hoped that I would be able to receive the same services and medical examinations as in Japan. However, at the clinic, the diagnosis took about 10 minutes, compared to 90 minutes of waiting time. The doctor gave me a prescription and I bought the medicine at a local drugstore. I spent a lot of time and energy going to the hospital, but I still vividly remember how indescribable the medical examination was.

Short Summary

To be honest, I no longer think of going to the hospital for a slight physical ailment, and in light of this current situation, I can see how it is better to stay healthy.

Also, in the Canadian medical system, it is common for medical examinations to be postponed if the symptoms are deemed non-urgent. You can only talk to the doctor and would be sent to the ER (Emergency Room) for further examinations. Thus, when you are not feeling well, you are told to go to the ER after waiting for a long time and having a short conversation with the doctor. Considering the

situation, it is not hard to understand why we have to take care of our health daily. I think it is a wonderful thing that everyone can receive equal services in light of the income disparity and social issues behind free medical care. The standard and the level of medical care in Japan is relatively high, but I believe that the lack of medical personnel and long waiting times for medical examinations are problems in the background. On the other hand, I would think the medical problems Canadian people face are the lack of medical personnel and long waiting times for consultation.



(Picture) Long Lines For COVID-19 Vaccines



Hiya! I am studying Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield in the north of England, and I have been living in the UK for more than two years now, having first arrived in September 2020. In this essay, I would like to talk about the differences I have discovered during my time in the UK, mainly in the healthcare system between the UK and Japan, and about pharmacies in the UK.

Differences between the medical system in England and Japan

Unlike Japan, the U.K. has adopted a "General Practice" system. This system is now attracting a lot of attention in Japan. The Covid 19 has caused many problems, such as the inability of local medical facilities to function adequately, which places a heavy burden on general hospitals. According to the Cabinet Office, reforms should be promoted from the public's perspective, including a medical and long-term care delivery system that further emphasizes functional differentiation and coordination, including the development of a system in which the GP can be demonstrated. Medical care in the United Kingdom is provided by

the NHS (National Health Service), a state-run medical health service. All citizens are required to register with their GP and see a general practitioner (GP) at that practice, except in the case of an emergency. If simple treatment is required, the patient will receive it there. If more advanced medical services are needed, such as tests or hospitalization, the patient will be referred to a hospital. Medical care is free of charge, even for international students. If you are referred to a hospital after being diagnosed by your GP, your medical treatment at the hospital will be free of charge, even if you undergo tests or surgery.

How to register as a GP

In my case, when I was unconditionally accepted to the university, the university's portal site provides information on how to register as a GP, and I fill in my personal

information and submit it to the university. My university has its university hospital, so all students are assigned to this hospital.

Advantages and Challenges of the British Health Care System

One of the advantages of the NHS compared to Japan is that many services are provided free of charge. For example, there are medical items such as braces and wigs for cancer patients that are greatly subsidized by the NHS. I also heard that some friends were also

able to get free dental braces. I feel that the NHS reflects the voices of patients more than Japan in these respects. Another advantage of the general healthcare system is that GPs serve as gatekeepers to hospitals and other advanced medical services so that patients with

minor symptoms do not receive treatment at hospitals. This makes consultations smoother and prevents medical crunches.

However, GPs are known for their long waiting times. Recently, these waiting times are reportedly longer than ever due to reduced funding and fewer staff. In addition, longer wait times for a referral to a specialist have also become a problem. I've had a few serious colds myself, but I haven't had to see a GP very

often. Since I pay for study abroad insurance, I go to private hospitals that are covered by my insurance premiums. However, the hospitals covered by my study abroad insurance are long in my area, so I went online to a hospital in London that is covered by my study abroad insurance. Private hospitals have relatively short waiting times and are said to offer a better quality of medical technology and service than GPs.

Pharmacies and Prescriptions in the UK

There is a one-off charge of £9.35 per prescription, per drug, regardless of the quantity. However, people aged 60 or older, people under 16, and low-income families are exempt from paying this fee. In Japan, there are two types of medicines: prescription-only medicines (POM), which are prescribed at hospitals, and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, which can be sold at stores without a pharmacist, such as newsstands, supermarkets, and gasoline stations. To purchase medicines prescribed by your GP, you take your prescription to a pharmacy marked "Pharmacy" such as Boots.

However, one of the biggest culture shocks I have experienced living in the UK is that few people go to a hospital to get a prescription

for something like the flu. When I was living in Japan, I thought it was normal to go to a hospital immediately upon catching a fever or other symptoms of the flu to have it checked out and get a prescription. However, when I went to the hospital when I caught a cold in England, the doctor who examined me said, "You are a university student, aren't you? You were born and raised in Japan, so you may not understand, but it is normal to have a fever or to feel sick when you are having "university life," and I was sent home without a prescription. Therefore, I would say that it is common to purchase over-the-counter (OTC) medicines when one catches a cold or other illnesses.



(Picture) The Pharmacy in UK, Boots.

Arisa Isoya

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan
NEOMA Business School, France

Hello. My name is Arisa Isoya, and I am a student in the International Business Management of NEOMA Business School in France as a part of the double degree program at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Recently, I have been specializing in supply chain and international business development. My recent hobby is singing while taking a shower, as there is no karaoke in France.

The Japanese yen has been depreciating recently, and as it is my main currency, I am feeling the difficulties of living with euros. For example, I buy a baguette almost every day, and the cost of it is expensive. One loaf of French bread costs about 1€, which is about 145 yen. If you buy it every day for a week, it costs about 1,000 yen. I dread looking at my bank balance when I think about having to buy other groceries. Of all the things in such a life, rent is the most frightening to pay. I always watch my bank balance and exchange rate movements on my phone because of the "big monthly payment" and "the yen is getting weaker."

In such a life with depreciating yen and rent payments, the French social security system has been a great help to me.

French social security system

While I was spending days worrying about the news of the accelerating depreciation of the yen, I learned at an information session for international students at my school that the government provides financial support for paying rent. The organization that provides this assistance is called CAF (Caisse des Allocations Familiales), which translates directly into English as "Family Allowance Fund". One of the financial aids provided by this organization is APL (les aides personnelles au logement), which is personal housing assistance. This assistance is available to "any nationality, any resident of France, and any person who pays rent" and is available to most people who live in France. This French aid does not have any conditions regarding "parental income" or "grades at school" and is a non-repayable financial aid, so you can apply for it without worrying about the pressure of repayment or your situation. I am currently receiving about 20% of my total rent in the form of this financial aid, which has made my life much easier.

In addition to the rent allowance, this organization also provides financial assistance for "child allowance," "family support allowance," "childbirth/childcare allowance," "education allowance for handicapped children," and "back-to-school allowance.". Comparing financial assistance provided by the Japanese government with that of France, France offers a wider range and a larger amount of assistance. For example, since Japan does not have a rent allowance system, a comparison of child allowances in Japan and France based on data from the Cabinet Office shows that in Japan, "from the first child who is under the fourth grade of elementary school with income limit, which is non-workers and income less than 5,963,000 yen or workers and income less than 7,800,000 yen "; in France, "from the second child who is under 20 years old with no income limit" is applied. At first glance, it may appear that the Japanese child allowance, which starts from the first child, is more generous for children, but compared to France, there is

a stricter income limit, and the French child allowance provides a wider range of support. The monthly allowance in Japan is 5,000 yen per month for the first and second child, while in France it is 115.01€ (about

16,676 yen) per month for the second child, which is more than a 10,000-yen difference. These analyses indicate that France's financial support system for its citizens is more supportive than Japan's.

Low Fertility and Aging Population

According to Data Commons, the fertility rate in Japan is 1.34 per woman, while in France it is 1.83. Having experienced life with the support of housing assistance in France, I felt that the government's subsidy system might be one of the factors changing the "fertility rate". In France, from student age to adult age, financial assistance from the state is readily available. These policies may have reduced the public's anxiety about financial issues, resulting in a higher birth rate than in Japan. About 60% of respondents to a survey in

Japan selected "too much money for child-rearing and education" as the reason for not having the ideal number of children. The declining birth rate has a significant impact on the aging population, which is seen as a problem in Japan. To prevent this declining birthrate and aging population from becoming more serious, we hope that Japan's financial assistance policy will be reviewed to create an environment in which the Japanese people can have a better life.

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平成 16 年版少子化社会白書 (https://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/meeting/promote/se_6/siryop31_p40.html)



(Picture) Residential Area In Reims, France

[Members]



Natsuki Kanaya

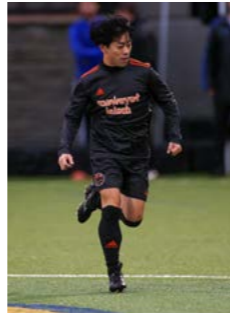
University of Minnesota

I'm happy to be a part of the JC NewsLetter Project! It's already freezing in Minnesota, so I'm planning on traveling somewhere warmer for the winter break!

Takumi Ota

University of British Columbia

I'd like to help someone would grab the opportunity to do something, with this newsletter we publish.



Miyu Miura

University of Sheffield, UK

I hope that through this newsletter, many people will become interested in the differences in the healthcare system and healthcare issues in Japan.



Arisa Isoya

NEOMA Business School (France)

This is my first time writing an article. I would like to write articles that are enjoyable and easy to read. I hope you will enjoy reading them



[Editors]

Moe Okagawa

Hakodate University

I am pleased to be involved in The NewZ project as an editorial staff member. I hope this newsletter will spark your interest in the healthcare system in Japan and around the world.



Yamazaki Kanna

Working in London(Gap year from Kanazawa university)

I did the layout and cover photo for this month's issue as well. Thank you for reading!

