

DP-006

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION IN PHARMACY SCHOOL ABOUT OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Triage and counseling by pharmacists become more important to ensure self-medication with OTC drugs and complementary and alternative medicine. By the investigation in 2005, we pointed out that the OTC medicine education in Japan is insufficient in comparison to foreign countries. Japan changed undergraduate period from 4 years to 6 years in pharmacy education 6 years ago. We investigated how the university education of OTC medicine would have improved. We conducted a questionnaire survey to evaluate the education about OTC drugs offered by 74 Japanese pharmaceutical universities, from August to September 2009. The questionnaire asked whether or not lectures and practical training concerning OTC drugs are given to students, and if so, the number of hours and the school year in which they are given. Questions about future plans were also included. The response rate was 70 %. Eighty percent of respondent universities gave lectures on OTC drugs, and 98 % expected to do so in the future. Lectures on OTC drugs were most commonly given in the fourth year. Fifty percent of universities offered practical training about OTC drugs, and 75 % expected to do so in the future. Compared with our 2005 survey, the number of universities offering lectures increased more than twofold.

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