

EntryNo6. Yuri Sasaki

Let's reduce Japan's public medical and pharmaceutical costs!

Striving for a happy and prosperous society for everyone

1

I am Yuri Sasaki, a second-year student at Kyoto Municipal Horikawa High School.

2

This might be sudden, but have you ever wondered about this?

You go to the pharmacy after a hospital visit, and the pharmacist asks you about the same symptoms you just explained to the doctor, so you have to explain it all over again.

3

Then, you hear the same explanation about the medicine that you already heard at the hospital, one more time from the pharmacist, before you can buy it.

4

Why?

5

Pharmacists in Japan study medicine and clinical practice for six years at university and possess skills that are among the highest in the world. They have far more advanced knowledge and skills regarding medicine than doctors, so why is their main job just checking prescriptions?

This business idea started with that question.

6

As I researched, I found something out.

Due to imbalances in the medical system created by the historical separation of medical and pharmaceutical practices, there are very few workplaces in Japan today that utilize the top-level skills of pharmacists.

Furthermore, there is a concern that the tasks pharmacists currently perform will decrease in the future due to advances in AI.

For a minor illness like a cold, or when you just need a refill of your usual medicine, if you could buy it just by consulting a pharmacist, it would utilize their skills and be more convenient for us...

7

That system actually exists in Japan!

The system that allows you to buy medical drugs with just a consultation from a pharmacist, without a prescription, is called "Reibai."

8

The medical drugs available for purchase through Reibai are...

9

...a subset of drugs usually prescribed by a doctor.

10

They are drugs of moderate efficacy, such as cold medicine, compresses, and allergy medicine. Most of the drugs you would normally get with a prescription from a doctor can be purchased without going to the hospital.

11

And if the use of Reibai increases, it can reduce the nation's public medical and pharmaceutical expenses.

12

The first reason is that there is no doctor's consultation, so the public medical expenses associated with it are not incurred.

13

Also, since the drugs are not covered by insurance and are paid for entirely out-of-pocket, no public pharmaceutical expenses are incurred by the nation.

14

There are many other reasons as well, such as the fact that Reibai services can be used at night, which can help reduce the number of emergency room patients.

15

Reibai seems to have only benefits, but since it's not covered by insurance, the cost is entirely out-of-pocket. So, I looked for a demand from people who think, "I want the medicine right now, even if it's expensive."

16

This is a survey conducted with elderly individuals.

When you were living in a nursing home and needed a long-term medication or had a minor illness, which would you choose?

Wait for consultation hours, go to the hospital, and then go to the pharmacy to buy the medicine.

Have a consultation with a pharmacist or nurse at the facility, and if it's not an emergency, buy the medicine on the spot at your own expense.

17

The results were that 38 out of 42 people chose "Reibai."

The reason was that hospital visits and waiting times were too burdensome.

18

Just like the elderly, there is also a demand from foreign tourists who are willing to pay the full price for medicine. For them, it is much more convenient to buy medicine after a consultation with a pharmacist who speaks their

language at their hotel, rather than navigating an unfamiliar Japanese hospital.

19

This business model is to conduct Reibai services within the facilities of these two sectors.

20

There are three main effects when this business becomes widespread.

The first is the improvement of medical quality, peace of mind, and convenience for the elderly and tourists.

Japan won't change just by criticizing, "The elderly go to the hospital too much! They should bear more medical costs!"

This business provides peace of mind to the elderly while allowing them, by their own choice, to refrain from hospital visits and pay for their own medicine, which leads to a reduction in public medical and pharmaceutical expenses.

It also helps acquire foreign currency while increasing convenience for tourists.

21

Second, it can provide pharmacists with fulfilling workplaces and employment.

I believe that by creating jobs and workplaces where the underutilized skills of pharmacists can be fully demonstrated, we can also stimulate the economy.

22

Furthermore, we can also reduce the excessive burden on medical professionals.

This is because we can reduce unnecessary consultations and emergency medical services.

I aspire to be a doctor, and when I do hospital tours or work experience, I see that the reality of the medical field is unimaginably harsh for patients and is sustained by the mental and physical burden on healthcare workers.

In addition to the imbalances in the medical system, the progression of an aging society is pushing Japanese healthcare to its limits.

By spreading the use of Reibai, we can reduce the burden on medical professionals, allow patients to receive more thorough care, and make Japanese healthcare sustainable.

23

Through these efforts, we can reduce the nation's burden of public medical and pharmaceutical costs and acquire foreign currency.

24

This will lessen the burden on the current working generation, help put a brake on the declining birthrate, and lead to economic revitalization.

25

With the revision of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law in May of this year, Reibai became prohibited in principle, and is now only permitted in exceptional cases.

Within those exceptions, here is the operational structure that complies with the law.

The management of the stores will be handled by each facility, while our company will handle the supply of

pharmaceuticals, the dispatch of pharmacists, and operational support.

s 26, 27, 28, 29

Here are the projected sales and profits for each facility.

This business can expect stable revenue even as AI and the aging population advance in the future.

30

As the company grows, we can change Japan into a society where everyone is happy and prosperous.

Thank you for your attention!