need for hospital services will increase—especially for men.

KEISTINEN TIMO, SAYNJAKANGAS PIPIO, HONKANEN PEKKA O, TUUPONEN TULLI
Department of Public Health Science and General Practice,
University of Oulu, Aapistie 1, FIN-90220 Oulu, Finland

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Are new medical students interested in the introduction of public long-term care insurance in Japan?

SIR—In April 2000, mainly as a result of a consensus on the need for more long-term care resources for the rapidly ageing society and dissatisfaction with the current system, a public long-term care insurance programme will be introduced in Japan [1].

To assess their level of interest and knowledge of this area, I asked first-year medical students at Nagoya University to complete a questionnaire. The questions were: (i) ‘Do you know about the introduction of a public long-term care insurance system in the year 2000?’, (ii) ‘Do you know about the care managers in the system?’, (iii) ‘Have you experienced the care of older members of your family?’ and (iv) ‘Are you interested in the care system for elderly people?’. Students selected ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for each.

Out of 100 students, 90 (70 male and 20 female) responded. Twenty (22.2%) knew about the introduction of long-term care insurance. Eighteen (20%) knew about the care managers. Only nine (10%) had experienced the care of members of their family. Finally, 31 (44.3%) of the male students and 15 (75%) of the female students [in total 46 students (51.1%)] expressed an interest in the care system of the elderly people, indicating that female students show more interest than male students in this area (95% CI 0.08–0.53, \( P<0.05 \)).

I was rather disappointed to find that even fresh (and in particular male) medical students had little interest in the elderly care system in Japan. I hope that their attitudes will change during their 6 years of student life.

MICHTAKA NAITO
Department of Geriatrics,
Nagoya University School of Medicine,
Nagoya 466–8550, Japan