

## Introduction

When I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school I lived in the USA for a while. During my stay, I had a headache. So I went to the hospital. When I got there, I was surprised because there were only children who had serious illnesses. I wondered about this and asked my parents and they taught me this is because of the medical system. At that time I couldn't understand, but when I was sent the invoice, I understood them. It was too expensive. Actually I had insurance so I didn't have to pay. Then I came to be interested in the medical system.

## Procedure

When I researched the medical system in the UK, I found it peculiar. I want to know what people in the UK think about it. So I asked "What do you think about the medical system in the UK?" to people in Cambridge. I also wanted to know what doctors in the UK think of the medical system. So I sent an e-mail to some doctors and found some scholars researching about the medical system. I was introduced to Dr. Irving who used to live in Japan. I thought he could help me, so I sent him an e-mail. Actually we were going to meet during my stay. However because of our schedule we couldn't meet. So I asked some questions to him via e-mail.

## Body

About the Medical System in the UK

In the UK, there are two kinds of hospitals. One of them is a public hospital and the other is a private hospital. In public hospitals, all people who have British nationality can be treated by the National Health Service. The operational cost is from the nation's tax revenue. In most cases they don't have to pay their own expenses except for treatments in dental clinics, ophthalmology and for prescription medicines. Even these devices are provided at a reduced cost.

However when you go to a public hospital, you may have to wait for a long time. Most patients have to go to their GP first, then only patients who need to go to hospital will be admitted. However if the problem is urgent, you can get treatment without any cost or waiting time.

On the other hand, in private hospitals, only people who take out private insurance for medical care can be treated.

Patients can be treated much sooner than in public hospitals, but only 12% of the population of the UK have insurance. I think this is because of the cost of insurance. In Japan an average annual premium is 241,000 yen for men and 182,000yen for women.

## Summary of the Answers I Asked in Cambridge

I asked "what do you think of the medical system in the UK?" to eleven people who are in Cambridge.

There were five British people, one Spanish, Norwegian, Thai, Lithuania and two French.

Two British people said it is great because it is free. One woman who is working as a doctor at NHS said the NHS needs more money. One elderly woman said it got much worse, because recently the standards have been dropping. The other said the medical system in the UK is fantastic, but it needs to be bigger and better.

The Norwegian interviewee said that Norway's is good and the UK's is good, too. The Lithuanian said it is great, but the Thai interviewee said it is really bad because they have to wait for a long time, and that Thailand's system is much better.

## Summary of Talking with Dr. Irving

After talking with people in Cambridge, I had some questions about their answer.

I heard some people said they have to wait for a long time, but it is unbelievable in Japan. So I want to know whether it

is true or not.

I followed my friend asking some questions to a scholar. There, she said "At the GP, doctors use one hour to see a patients" .

I thought because of this, patients have to wait for long time.

So I asked this to the doctor.

Most patients can get a same day appointment if the problem is urgent. However, there can be a delay of several days for routine appointments. Most GPs allocate 10 minutes per patient, on average. Of course, some patients will take much less than this time, some much more. 10 minutes is only an average.

### **Conclusion**

Differences of expectations make differences in medical systems. I think people in the UK don' t consider waiting a long time to be seen for a non life-threatening illness as serious as those in Japan. I think if in Japan, we have to wait a long time before being seen by a doctor, few people would say the medical system is good. We are worried that, when we are waiting, the illness will become worse. But four British people out of five said it is good. In Japan we have to pay some of the cost of treatment, but we use hospitals more often per year. I think this data shows Japanese are too worried, too. However, I thought that the UK has to change its medical system, because late treatment sometimes makes disease worse. Which system do you want to choose? I thought the medical system in Japan is better, because when I went to the hospital, I could be seen by a professional at first. We can see the doctor earlier than in the UK, too. So we don' t have to wait. However in the UK, they would be seen by the NHS if it is urgent, so they don' t have to worry about a situation when the illness becomes serious.