

# GP and preventive medicine in Japan

compared to UK

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# Differences in Preventive Medicine Systems between Japan and the UK

	Japan	UK
<b>governing body</b>	Local governments (municipalities) manage primary prevention activities.	The NHS (National Health Service) provides standardized services nationwide.
<b>service availability</b>	Varies by region, tailored to local population needs.	Uniform services across the country with minimal regional differences.
<b>funding sources</b>	Funded mainly through health insurance premiums and local government taxes.	Funded primarily through general taxation, managed by the NHS.
<b>out-of-pocket costs</b>	Some services (e.g., vaccinations, health check-ups) require partial payment by individuals.	Most services are free, but some (e.g., prescription drugs, dental care) require fixed charges.

# Differences Between Japan and the UK in Primary Care and General Practitioner (GP) Systems

Japan offers a more flexible system where patients have direct access to specialists, while the UK enforces a GP-centered model with mandatory registration and structured referrals.

## Overemphasis on GP Role in UK

- Heavy reliance on GPs for preventive care creates bottlenecks and limits access to specialized preventive services.
- Example: Patients must often go through GPs for simple preventive measures that could be handled directly by nurses or pharmacists.

As Japan's population continues to age, the need for family medicine is increasing due to several key factors:

1. **Rising Chronic Diseases** – Aging leads to a higher prevalence of chronic illnesses, requiring continuous and holistic care.

1. **Integrated and Preventive Care** – Family medicine emphasizes preventive care and early intervention, which helps reduce hospitalizations and healthcare costs.

1. **Shortage of Primary Care Specialists** – With a growing elderly population, ensuring access to primary care doctors can ease the burden on hospitals and specialists.

1. **Continuity of Care** – Family doctors provide long-term, patient-centered care, which is essential for managing multiple conditions in elderly patients.



1. **Community-Based Healthcare** – A strong primary care system helps elderly patients receive medical support at home or in community clinics, reducing dependence on hospital-based care.

These factors highlight the increasing importance of family medicine in ensuring sustainable healthcare for Japan's aging society.

# references

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