

Financial risks posed by unproven stem cell interventions in Japan

April 27 2022



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The research group led by Professor Misao Fujita conducted a study to estimate the total amount the Japanese government would refund if a patient received unproven cell interventions and applied for a medical

expense deduction.

Some regenerative medicines whose safety and efficacy have not been fully confirmed in [clinical trials](#) and other studies are offered as treatments for patients. Some of the unproven treatments are expensive, and it has been pointed out that there is an economic risk to patients in addition to the risk of health problems.

The research team wondered if there might be a financial risk that the government (i.e., the public) would bear part of the costs for the [medical treatment](#) for which [scientific evidence](#) is unclear, through the tax system of refunds based on deductions for medical expenses. Therefore, in this study, they estimated the total amount of refunds paid by the government for unproven cell interventions in Japan, with the aim of presenting [empirical data](#) on the [financial risk](#).

The results of this study provide new insight into the financial risks associated with scientifically unproved regenerative medicine. In other words, regenerative medicine treatments provided outside the public health insurance system has financial risks that go beyond the personal and private relationship between the physician/medical institution and the patient, which is a problem for the society.

The researchers believe it is necessary for the government to take responsibility for guaranteeing the safety and efficacy of regenerative therapies provided outside the public health insurance system, and to further discuss how to respond to the problem by considering a revision of the Act on the Safety of Regenerative Medicine.

The study was published online in *Stem Cell Reports* on April 21, 2022.

More information: Taichi Hatta et al, Financial risks posed by unproven cell interventions: Estimation of refunds from medical expense

deductions in Japan, *Stem Cell Reports* (2022). DOI:
[10.1016/j.stemcr.2022.03.015](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stemcr.2022.03.015)

Provided by Kyoto University

Citation: Financial risks posed by unproven stem cell interventions in Japan (2022, April 27)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-financial-posed-unproven-stem-cell.html>

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