

21 January, 1997

The Editor of Medical Education  
Professor H J Walton  
Blackwell Science Ltd, 23 Ainslie Place  
Edinburgh EH3 6AJ, UK

Dear Professor Walton:

Thank you for your letter concerning our manuscript. We really appreciate your advice and the comments of the reviewers. We have responded to each reviewer's comment indicating the changes that we have made to our manuscript. In addition, we have revised the manuscript to provide a clearer presentation for the readers. We herewith send you our manuscript and the diskette of the file as you indicated.

We hope that you will consider our manuscript favorably and find it acceptable for publication in the Journal. We will appreciate if you could email us to advise of your decision. Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely yours,

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Response to Reviewer 1

1. We understand your comment. However, there are no promulgated data for the definition as we mentioned and the meaning of "rural" may vary in the context used. We have now added further text to indicate that the meaning used in the manuscript is similar to that in other countries.

2. There is no evidence on how the general consensus is formed. Consequently, this expression may not be adequate. Accordingly, we deleted the words "general consensus." We also referred to a rural kernel hospital. A rural kernel hospital may not necessarily be located in the rural areas as defined. However, there should be one or more rural areas near the hospital and the working physicians are required to contribute to rural medicine. Therefore, we regarded the JMS graduates working there as rural doctors.

3. We compared two prefectures as an example. One has the lowest population and the other has an average-sized population. We think that the advice of the reviewer is useful.

4. We agree with the suggestion of the reviewer and revised the title as advised.

#### Response to Reviewer 2

page 3 : We added the relevant text for the comment as follows on page 3.

According to a survey conducted in 1990, for example, the number of full-time physicians per 100,000 head of the rural population was only 77, whereas the number of practicing physicians per 100,000 head of the total population of Japan was 165.

We assume that this difference is sufficient to take account of the subtle difference in the definition.

page 4: We added an explanation for the two-step entrance examination on page 4.

page 6: We deleted Figure 1 and explained as advised.

page 7-1st: We added an explanation of Table 1 in the Results section.

page 7-2nd: We revised this sentence to avoid causing a misunderstanding.