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Online Medical Examinations from First Visit to Become Permanent

May encourage retention of family doctors, including amongst working-age population

Policy Research Dept.
Miku Ishibashi

Summary

- Online medical examinations from the first visit, which were being allowed for a limited time only, have now become permanent according to new policy. Though the initial examination should in principle be carried out by a family doctor, policy is moving in the direction of also accepting initial examinations by doctors other than a family doctor when the patient's medical information is available.
- However, only 6.5% of all medical institutions (as of the end of April 2021) provide online medical examinations on first-time visits due to low medical fees and other reasons. If the difference in remuneration in comparison to face-to-face medical treatment remains large even after medical fees are revised in FY2022, it will be difficult for medical institutions to introduce online medical examinations, even if the regulation is eased.
- On the other hand, making online medical care from the first visit a permanent feature improves access to medical treatment for the working-age population, and it may become an opportunity to have a family doctor. In order to establish an efficient medical service system, it is desirable that everyone has a family doctor regardless of age.
- If having a family doctor becomes established amongst younger people, it will be easier to reform the medical care delivery system, which is necessary for the post-corona society. To do so, it is essential that people correctly recognize what the family doctor function is and which medical institutions offer that function.

Attention

This report is a summary translation. The official document is only in Japanese.