

# **The COVID-19 pandemic and healthcare systems: Direction of hospital reform in Germany**

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## **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on daily life and socioeconomic activities, especially for hospitals that struggled to accommodate severely ill patients. In Germany, where the healthcare system is similar to that of Japan, signs of calm have been observed regarding infection rates three years after the onset of the pandemic. As regulations for infection prevention are eased, rebuilding the hospital system (hospital reform) for the post-pandemic era has become a subject of active discussion. This paper discusses hospital reform in Germany as a reference for Japan's future healthcare policy. First, we characterize the pandemic's effects on hospitals and healthcare professionals to highlight financial and healthcare delivery issues. We then clarify the reasons and direction of the reform based on those findings.

## **Keywords**

COVID-19, hospital reform, DRG, healthcare policy, Germany