The Role of E-Learning of Continuing Education for Pharmacists in Japan

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The 6-year pharmacy education system will start to apply as of April this year and this reform of the education system seems to prompt more pharmacists their interest in the continuing education than ever. It is needless to say that continuing education for pharmacists is essential to maintain their professional competency because of the continuous introduction of new therapeutic and diagnostic agents. However, the current situation of pharmacy continuing education in Japan is still far from the ideal or desirable stage. In the USA, a minimum of 15hrs/year of continuing education is mandatory to renew the pharmacist’s license, and this may be closely related to the fact that a pharmacist is highly regarded as one of the most reliable profession in the USA. In contrast, there is no pharmacist license renewal system in Japan and this seems to be a significant reason why Japanese pharmacists in general are not eager to take a continuing education program. In this symposium, I will present some data on our e-learning pharmacy continuing education programs which we have been running in the past three years and would like to discuss pros and cons of this system and future possibility among other education methods.