

Inside this issue

The situation in Japan: cluster model and helicopter money 1

Switzerland's economic measures: start-ups and restaurants 2

Survey on the COVID-19 impact on foreign-affiliated companies 2

A brief history of hand washing: From Dr. Semmelweis to Dr. Pittet 2 + 3

"Unprecedented times call for bold moves" 4

動向

TREND

The situation in Japan: cluster model and helicopter money

Until late March, Japan managed to keep an exceptionally low number of cases (about 3,500). The situation changed slightly with an increase in the number of cases over the last weeks. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare is now reporting about 14,000 cases.

The number of cases is increasing yet remains much lower than what is happening in similar size countries, and even smaller countries, such as Switzerland.

Obviously, it is difficult to compare the number of infections as not every country is testing in the same way, but the number of deaths also remains low (under 400).

Japan has implemented a different approach than a lockdown that is both effective and more sustainable over a longer period.

Professor Kazuto Suzuki, from Hokkaido University, explains the Japanese model in a very interesting [article published in The Diplomat](#).

Professor Suzuki describes the Japanese model as a combination of a cluster-based approach and a focus on the three "Cs" social distancing strategy.

In very short, the cluster-based approach means identifying the individuals that are the most contagious and create a cluster



Mr. KATO Katsunobu, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare

around them. It's a tracing method that allows to recreate the chain of contamination but focusing especially on the people that have the highest potential to infect others.

The three "Cs": closed and crowded places and conversations in close proximity also explains how Japan managed to avoid a full lockdown.

To illustrate the nuance, bars and karaokes are closed, but not public transport, because unlike in bars, people do not talk to each other in trains and metros. In Japan, silence is simply a polite practice in train.

Professor Suzuki explains that from a European perspective where most countries have introduced a lockdown, the Japanese model might sound lax, but it has been very effective to control the spread of the virus so far. Especially considering that Japan was

one of the first countries to be affected by the virus (mid-January).

As a result of the situation, life in Japan is closer to the usual than what we are living here now and should be easier to maintain over a longer period.

In addition, the government continues its effort to support the economy. On top of the economic stimulus package that we covered in last month's edition, the government has decided to provide every resident in Japan with 100,000-yen, cash and tax-free (about 915 francs).

In early April, the government was considering providing lower-income households with 300,000 yen, but eventually went for the per capita gift that is easier to apply and left nobody aside.

Information on [MHLW](#)

Switzerland's economic measures: start-ups and restaurants

動向

TREND

In addition to the economic comprehensive package introduced to cushion the economic impact of the pandemic, the Federal Council introduced two decisions that are especially relevant for the companies we work with.

The economic measures for SMEs were not adequate for start-ups. In their case, the point is not to guarantee a sufficient level of liquidity to carry one for a few months, but to finance their projects over a couple of years. Currently, it is espe-

cially difficult for them to find investors. Therefore, the [Confederation and Cantons will be able to finance those companies up to 150 million](#). Unlike SMEs, start-ups will have to go through a selection process during which experts will evaluate their potential.

On April 29, among many other decisions, the government authorised [restaurants and bars to resume their business on May 11](#). Specific rules will apply. Only four people

maximum per table (or one family) will be allowed and tables must be two meters apart from each other. Answering a question from the press, the delegate from SECO confirmed that temporary working will be available as long as sanitary measures prevent restaurants to operate at full capacity. Therefore, if a restaurant partially resumes its business with only part of its staff, the salaries of those who cannot work will still be covered by the state.

Survey on the COVID-19 impact on foreign-affiliated companies

活動

ACTIVITY

JETRO conducted an [out-of-cycle survey](#) in order to understand the impacts of the COVID-19 on foreign-affiliated companies in Japan, as well as their needs for support. The survey was conducted from April 2nd to 10th and collected answers from 376 companies (including 22 Swiss companies). The summary of the survey results

is as follows.

93.4% of companies expect the COVID-19 to have a negative (62.5%) or slightly negative (30.9%) impact on their business. Companies are also less enthusiastic about expanding their business compared to the last fiscal year. 37.5% of them are focusing on maintaining the current business.

Companies willing to expand their business are exactly the same proportion than those willing to delay it (22.6%). The priority is to secure/increase clients/consumers (51.3%), followed by securing the cash flow (29.5%). Based on their answers, JETRO will now work on helping them the best we can.

A brief history of hand washing: From Dr. Semmelweis to Dr. Pittet

文化

CULTURE

With more than half the world frenetically washing its hands and using great quantities of hand sanitizer, it might be worth mentioning that the practice is relatively recent and pay a tribute to the people behind this simple gesture that saves millions of lives.

Our understanding of disease is

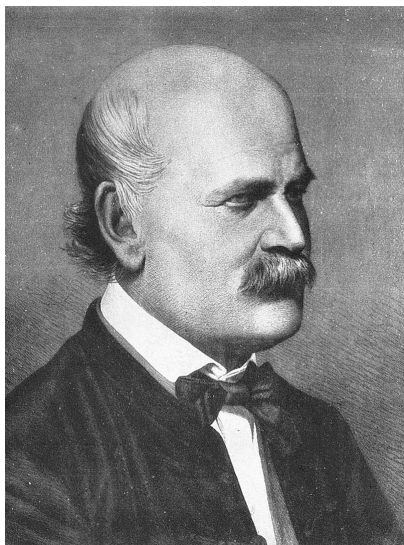
very recent. Bacteria have been identified by Louis Pasteur in the 19th century and viruses have been observed for the first time only in the 20th century, with the invention of the electronic microscope.

Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis was a Hungarian obstetrician working in Vienna. He wanted to reduce the inci-

dence of puerperal fever which took the lives of many young mothers in the day following the birth of their children. At the time, bacteria were still unknown, and the puerperal fever was thought to be caused by the stagnation of air.

(continued on page 3)

A brief history of hand washing: From Dr. Semmelweis to Dr. Pittet



Dr. [Igaz Semmelweis](#), 1860

(Continued from page 2)

Dr. Semmelweis oversaw one clinic of the Vienna General Hospital. He was puzzled because the incidence of puerperal fever was much higher in his clinic than in the second one in the hospital.

For years he sought for every possible difference and found none that could explain why the first clinic suffered twice the incidences of the second one.

In 1847, he had an intuition after the death of one of his colleagues who died after cutting her finger with a scalpel during an autopsy.

His guess was that some germs from the dead body could have infected his colleague.

Most of the practitioners in the clinic he ran were students that regularly had to do autopsies. In the other clinic, care was given by midwives who did not practice autopsies.

He started what will be remembered as being one of the very first

modern scientific experiments. He divided the clinic into two groups and asked the first group to continue as usual and the second one to wash their hands between every treated patient.

The results were astonishing, with a drop in the death rate from nearly 14% to less than 2%.

Dr. Semmelweis had identified the effect of a bacterial infection and the best way to prevent it but could not name it adequately. This happened 12 years before Louis Pasteur's discovery of the properties of bacteria, including the capacity to infect another organism.

Dr. Semmelweis published his discovery in 1861. Unfortunately for him, the importance of his work has only been appreciated after he passed.

For more than a century we know that washing our hands is important. It is especially true for doctors as it has been proven that most of the infections transmitted by doctors are through the hands.

The problem is that often due to time restrictions, doctors are in a hurry and do not sufficiently wash their hands.

Dr. Didier Pittet is a Swiss expert in infectious disease working at the Geneva Hospital. He dedicates part of his professional life to develop what we know today as the Geneva Hand Hygiene Model. Dr. Pittet's team has developed a multimodal approach of hand cleaning that is more efficient, easy to remember, and has become a routine for prac-

tioners all around the world.

The Geneva model is the association of a couple of specific gestures that guarantees to wash all of the hand and not only some parts, and the use of the hand sanitizer most of us are using during this uncommon period.

Dr. Pittet strongly contributed to the popularisation of the hydro-alcoholic solution developed by Dr. Griffith from Fribourg hospitals. The hydro-alcoholic solution has been proven to be more effective than washing hands with soap and water. It is also much easier for doctors that no longer need to go to the sink.

Unfortunately, the price was often too high and therefore Dr. Pittet and his team worked to develop the easiest version possible using only three ingredients and offered the recipe to the WHO so that nobody could patent it.

Today, hand sanitizers are cheap, everywhere, and have contributed to save millions of lives.



Professor [Didier Pittet](#), MD, Director of Infection Control Program

文化

CULTURE

革新

INNOVATION

“Unprecedented times call for bold moves”

The leading biopharmaceutical company, Takeda, forged a global partnership bringing together world-leading plasma companies to focus on developing and delivering a hyperimmune immunoglobulin in the global fight against COVID-19.

Takeda Pharmaceutical is an Osaka based global company founded in 1781 and has about 50,000 employees all around the world.

The company entered the Swiss [market in 1986](#) and strongly developed its presence since then. In addition to the Swiss entity, “Takeda Pharma”, the company has a production site in canton Neuchâtel.

Switzerland also hosts Takeda Pharmaceuticals International SA, Takeda Headquarters' for Europe and Canada.

The alliance is aiming to develop a potential plasma-derived therapy for treating COVID-19. The joint effort should hopefully lead to the development of an unbranded anti-SARS-CoV-2 polyclonal hyperimmune immunoglobulin medicine

with the potential to treat individuals with serious complications from COVID-19.

This alliance is uniting companies from all around the world who are active in this area of expertise. The Swiss company Octapharma, one of the largest human protein manufacturers in the world, is part of the alliance.

Plasma therapy works on a relatively simple principle. People recovering from a disease have developed antibodies that are effective against the virus. Those antibodies are car-

ried by the blood plasma. Therefore, it is possible to use the blood, more specifically the plasma, from recovering patients to cure people that are badly affected by the disease. The blood-compatible transferred antibodies will fight the infection and take over the immune system of the patient that could have lost the battle without this external help. The method is a century-old method that was common during the Spanish flu.

Takeda's [press release](#)



Takeda's building in Zurich.

Copyright Takeda

Agenda

活動

AGENDA

- ✓ Impact Japan event, originally planned on March 12, 2020 in Zurich is officially cancelled due to the coronavirus. We miss you but see you at next Japan country specific event. Please wait for further information.

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

JETRO

Japan External Trade Organization

JETRO Geneva
 80, Rue de Lausanne
 1202 Geneva
 Phone: 022 732 13 04
 Fax: 022 732 07 72
 E-mail: SWG@jetro.go.jp