

Examination of Factors Related to Elderly People's Purpose of Life in Japan

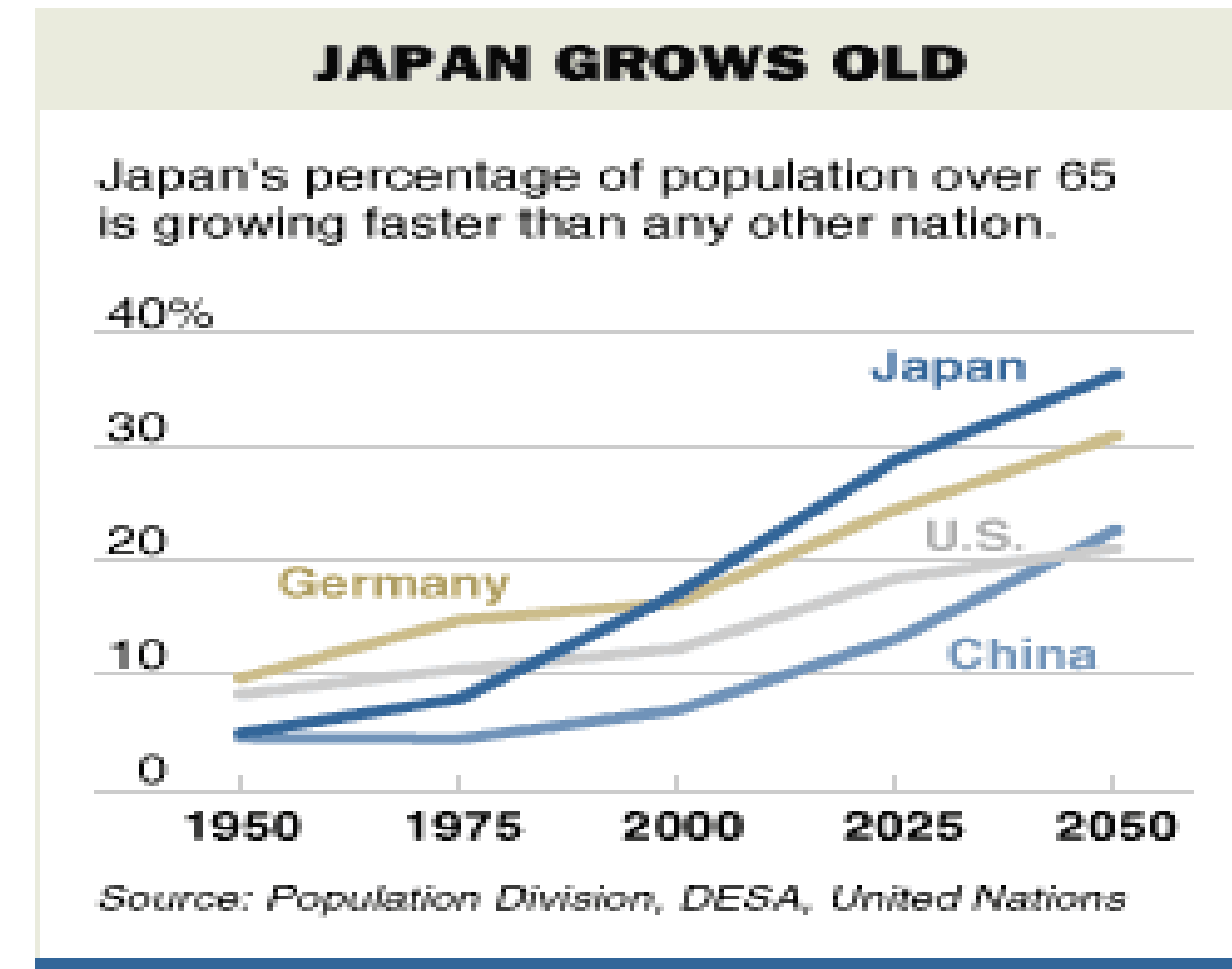
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INTRODUCTION

- Population aging has begun in the whole area of Asia. In 2050, other relatively rich countries in the world.
- Japan's rise of elderly people is especially remarkable.

Improvement in elderly people's healthy life expectancy is required. To do so, the intervention which improves elderly people's Purpose of Life as Primary Health Care is required. However, event leads to elderly people's Purpose of Life and disease is not examined concretely which mental health and ADL



PURPOSE

Older adults' sense of purpose in life has been an important subject in Japan along with their well-being and healthy long life. The purpose of this research is to examine factors related to elderly people's purpose of life in Japan.

RESULTS

Questionnaires were distributed to 250 elderly people and answers were collected from 244. After exclusion of missing values and outliers, data from 234 elderly people (male: 49, female: 185) were used in the analysis. "Attitude toward own aging" had young old higher than the late elderly ($p < 0.05$). "Agitation" was higher to the male than to the female ($p < 0.05$). Number of events leading to purpose of life showed positive correlations with "Agitation"; "Lonely dissatisfaction"; "Attitude toward own aging" ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, it was an occurrence improve sense of purpose in life where "Educational and cultural enrichment activities", "Sports or recreational activities", "Volunteer activities", "Activities for an elderly's club", "Care of grandchildren, and family get-together", "Going for shopping or on a trip". Number of diseases showed negative correlations with sense of purpose in life ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, cardiopathy, fracture, liver disease, and dementia were diseases for which reduce the sense of purpose in life. Purpose of life showed correlation with mental health and ADL ($p < .05$).

Table 1: Difference of purpose of life by age

	The young-old population (N=146)		The old-old population (N=88)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Attitude toward own aging	3.11	1.37	2.65	1.45	2.45	**
Agitation	4.16	1.79	4.05	1.78	0.47	n.s.
Lonely dissatisfaction	4.90	1.42	4.77	1.34	0.66	n.s.
SUM	12.16	3.85	11.47	3.67	1.37	n.s.

Table 2: Difference of purpose of life by gender

	male (N=49)		female (N=185)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Attitude toward own aging	3.06	1.42	2.90	1.41	.697	n.s.
Agitation	4.71	1.70	3.96	1.77	2.681	**
Lonely dissatisfaction	4.98	1.28	4.82	1.42	.731	n.s.
SUM	12.76	3.60	11.68	3.81	1.782	*

** : $p < .01$ n.s. : non significant

Table3: Relation of diseases number, Events leading to purpose of life, GHQ and ADL

	Number of diseases	Number of events leading to life purpose	Attitude toward own aging	Agitation	Lonely dissatisfaction	Sum	GHQ	IADL
Number of diseases								
events leading to life purpose		-.079						
Attitude toward own aging			-.314**	.303**				
Agitation				-.151*	.140*	.436**		
Lonely dissatisfaction				-.169**	.319**	.565**	.570**	
Sum				-.251**	.296**	.786**	.842**	.846**
GHQ				-.195**	-.249**	-.524**	-.581**	-.575**
IADL				.017	.186**	.210**	.021	.158*
								-.095

METHODS

[Subjects] Older adults (N = 250) aged 60 and over gathering in the Kakogawa public hall in Japan were asked to participate.

[Evaluation index]

Personal factors associated with purpose of life in the elderly: Age, family structure, maintenance of healthy condition, circumstance of living arrangements, economic stability, and presence or absence of inter-generational exchange are inquired.

Events leading to purpose of life: Based on the study by Hasegawa et al. (2001), 19 items are examined: (1) Working; (2) Educational and cultural enrichment activities; (3) Sports or recreational activities; (4) Hobby activities; (5) Volunteer activities; (6) Activities for an elderly's club; (7) Interaction with neighbors, friends, and acquaintances; (8) Care of grandchildren, and family get-together; (9) Going for shopping or on a trip; (10) Activities in a community association; (11) Knowledge and skills acquired so far; (12) Spouse; (13) Children; (14) Grandchildren; (15) Health; (16) Pet; (17) Role at home; (18) Role in the society; (19) Others.

Measurement of purpose of life: It is measured by the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale: "Agitation"; "Lonely dissatisfaction"; "Attitude toward own aging".

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Measurement of mental health: It is measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12).

Measurement of activities of daily living: It is measured by the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Scale.

Table 4: Relation of Events Leading to Life Purpose and Sense of Purpose in Life (multivariate logistic regression)

RESULTS

	(1) Working (N=24)		(2) Educational and cultural enrichment activities (N=79)		(3) Sports or recreational activities (N=73)		(4) Hobby activities (N=114)		(5) Volunteer activities (N=26)		(6) Activities for an elderly's club (N=37)							
	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval						
Attitude toward own aging	1.06	0.73	1.54	1.30**	1.02	1.66	1.18	0.93	1.50	0.99	0.79	1.23	1.61*	1.13	2.29	0.81	0.61	1.07
Agitation	1.10	0.80	1.50	0.98	0.81	1.19	0.82*	0.68	1.00	1.08	0.90	1.29	1.14	0.86	1.52	1.03	0.83	1.29
Lonely dissatisfaction	1.23	0.76	2.00	1.00	0.76	1.32	1.52**	1.13	2.05	1.18	0.91	1.53	1.26	0.78	2.03	1.40	1.00	1.97
	(7) Interaction with neighbors, friends, and acquaintances (N=49)		(8) Care of grandchildren, and family get-together (N=104)		(9) Going for shopping or on a trip (N=38)		(10) Activities in a community association (N=24)		(11) Knowledge and skills acquired so far (N=12)		(12) Spouse (N=34)							
	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval						
Attitude toward own aging	1.13	0.90	1.42	1.48*	1.06	2.06	1.11	0.89	1.40	0.93	0.64	1.34	1.30	0.77	2.19	0.98	0.71	1.35
Agitation	1.07	0.89	1.28	0.92	0.71	1.17	0.87	0.72	1.04	1.09	0.80	1.47	0.94	0.63	1.40	0.83	0.65	1.06
Lonely dissatisfaction	1.13	0.86	1.47	1.32	0.86	2.02	1.35*	1.03	1.75	1.15	0.74	1.79	0.99	0.54	1.81	1.43*	0.97	2.10
	(13) Children (N=34)		(14) Grandchildren (N=73)		(15) Health (N=54)		(16) Pet (N=18)		(17) Role at home (N=34)		(18) Role in the society (N=6)							
	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval	odd	95% Confidence Interval						
Attitude toward own aging	1.46*	1.02	2.09	1.20	0.94	1.54	1.33*	1.01	1.75	1.00	0.65	1.52	1.28	0.93	1.75	1.43	0.65	3.17
Agitation	0.78*	0.60	1.01	0.96	0.79	1.16	0.87	0.70	1.07	0.84	0.61	1.15	0.95	0.74	1.21	0.91	0.52	1.62
Lonely dissatisfaction	2.03**	1.20	3.45	1.31	0.97	1.78	1.13	0.82	1.55	1.57	0.91	2.71	1.07	0.74	1.55	1.68	0.53	5.36

* $p < .05$ ** : $p < .01$

CONCLUSION

In order to improve elderly people's sense of purpose in life, it is important to intervene to a disease and not to increase the number of diseases. Moreover, it proved that study and activity raise elderly people's sense of purpose in life. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt contents, such as prevention of a disease, and study and activity of elderly people, by the contents of the intervention program which raises elderly people's sense of purpose in life.