

A Survey on Care Managers' Perception and Support for Foreign Residents Using Long-term Care Insurance in Japan

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to clarify the current situation and the usage of the long-term care insurance by foreign nationals residing in Japan. This study provides the details and baseline data on health and welfare issues of the elderly in Japan, which leads to the further discussion of internationalization and multiculturalization of the society.

Methods

Paper based survey was conducted among Care Managers (CM) working in 'in-home care centers' in Japan. WAMNET database was used for probability proportionate sampling and simple random sampling, extracting two thousands of centers.

Results

Responses from 709 CMs were analyzed. 144 CMs had experience managing the case of foreign residents. Korea / South Korea was the largest ethnic group of users by 204 cases (72.3%), followed by China (35, 12.4%), Taiwan (13, 4.6%), Brazil (9, 3.2%), Others (19, 6.7%). Most frequently used service was home-visit care. 20 CMs (23.3%) had difficulty in dealing with the cases of foreign residents such as 'unstable condition due to dementia', 'personality problem of the user', and 'different lifestyle and culture'. CMs were trying to manage those cases by consulting with colleagues or other staffs in the local care center.

Discussion

Over twenty percent of CMs had experienced the cases with foreign residents from various countries of origin. One out of four CMs expressed that they have difficulty in dealing with the problematic cases of foreign residents most of which arise from personality traits and cultural backgrounds. With growing population of the elderly of foreign nationals in Japan, their use of in-home care is increasing. Internationalization of the health care system in Japan, standardized organizational structures for foreign residents and the support system for CMs are needed.

Key words : foreign residents in Japan ; long-term care insurance ; in-home service ; multicultural coexistence society

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Introduction

At the end of June 2014, the total number of foreign residents residing in Japan was 2,086,603. Among those 131,270 were aged over 65, which was the highest number ever reported¹⁾. The nationalities (birthplaces) of foreign residents spanned approximately 90 countries. As the number of elder foreign residents increases the number of the elderly who requires long-term care is predicted to increase. However, the governmental statistics on their usage of long-term care (LTC) insurance remains unclear.

The elderly from North and South Korea make up the most of the total number of foreign elderly at 80 %. Followed by Chinese elderly, which doubled the number in the past 20 years. The history of migrants from the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan during the former colonization era spans over 100 years. Along with the long-term settlement, those migrants of the first-generation and the second-generation are subsequently entering old age, and issues of the elderly care arise.

On the other hand, the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act led to a rapid increase in the number of South Americans of Japanese descent, Chinese returnees, Indo-Chinese refugees, and foreign spouses of Japanese citizens. Those migrants tend to settle longer due to their acquisition of permanent residency, and approximately a half of the foreign residents currently holds qualification to stay permanently in Japan. It is said that 'internal globalization' will progress in the near future, which leads to the increased diversity of nationalities and multiculturalization of the foreignelderly in Japan.

Japanese government launched the LTC insurance system as a new scheme that supports and resolves issues for the elderly. The system was commenced in April 2000 as a new system of social security, and foreign elderly are required to have municipality registration and to meet certain requirements to

utilize the system.

Registration of foreign residents in Japan is based on the residency management system. Due to the inaccessibility to the system and resident cards that all qualifying residents hold, it is difficult to conduct a survey of the current condition of long-term care for foreign elderly. As such, studies addressing issues on care for foreign elderly are limited ; data can only be obtained from the registries under the jurisdiction of different ethnic groups, such as interviews, questionnaire survey, session reports of non-profit organizations (NPOs) related to LTC⁴⁾, and individual case reports⁵⁾.

Among the group of foreign residents in Japan, LTC issues pertaining to Korean elderly are becoming prominent as emblematic issues. Issues on long-term care insurance service usage that have been raised are as follows : 1) Financial issues due to the lack of pension, 2) Difficulties in accessing information due to the low literacy rate, 3) Difficulties in communication due to trouble with hearing, dysarthria, and regression to one's native language, and 4) Differences in lifestyle and values as well as differences in cultural background arising from regression to the culture of one's country of origin^{6) 7)}.

Regression to one's native language is seen particularly among foreign elderly with dementia. Conversation is carried out more with Korean, rather than Japanese, resulting in having difficulties in communicating with their family members as well as caregivers. Exhaustive research conducted with Care Managers (CMs) in Osaka⁸⁾, where the largest concentration of Korean residents in Japan is, showed that over 40% of CMs had experience being in charge of foreign residents. North and South Korean made up the largest group among the foreign residents by 90%, followed by seven other nationalities. CMs perceived 30% of those foreign residents had difficulty in communicating in Japanese, and 60%

was regarded as experiencing financial difficulties. This trend becomes more prominent among the elderly.

However, there has been no nationwide research conducted on the actual circumstances of foreign residents who utilize home-care services, thus, objective ascertainment of the actual conditions has been difficult. This study aimed to reveal the corresponding conditions of foreign residents requiring home LTC, conducting research with CMs across Japan. The findings obtained will present basic data to address the issues pertaining to health care of the elderly in Japanese society, which is experiencing a shift toward internal globalization in the perspective of multiculturalism. This study aims to attain specific and effective indicators that can be utilized in solving problems and making strategies on emerging LTC issues for foreign residents in Japan.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to clarify the current situation and the usage of the LTC insurance by foreign residents in Japan. This study provides the details and baseline data on health and welfare issues of the elderly in Japan, which leads to the further discussion of internationalization and multiculturalization of the society.

Definition of terms

1. Foreign resident in Japan

In this study, foreign residents in Japan is defined as persons who have nationalities (birthplaces) other than Japanese and maintain a residence in Japan, and also satisfying any one of the following conditions on the Basic Resident Registration Act : 1) medium to long-term resident, 2) special permanent resident, 3) a person who has been granted landing permission for temporary refuge or provisional

stay, or 4) a person who may continue to stay transitionally in Japan by birth or loss of Japanese nationality.

2. Korean in Japan

North and South Korean who have those citizenships and reside in Japan with resident qualifications.

3. WAMNET

Welfare And Medical Service Network System (WAMNET) is the internet website which provides comprehensive information related to welfare, health and medical services, operated by Independent Administrative Agency Welfare and Medical Organization WAM.

Methods

1. Study design

Anonymous self-administered questionnaires by mail.

2. Participants / subjects

Two thousand care managers who are the directors of Two thousand In-Home Long-term Care Support Providers nationwide.

3. Selection of participants

- 1) Based on the Ministry of Justice "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (June, 2013), calculated and listed a number of foreign residents aged 65 and above in each prefectures.
- 2) Using the information from the WAMNET database, made a list of In-Home LTC Support Providers in each prefecture.
- 3) Probability proportionate sampling based on population distribution was employed and 2000 In-Home LTC Support Providers were selected.
- 4) Simple random sampling using the table of random numbers was employed to select In-Home LTC Support Providers in each prefecture.

4. Data collection and analysis

Anonymous self-administered questionnaires and a return envelope were sent to the care managers who are the director of the In-Home LTC Support Providers. The participants were asked to answer the following questions: basic attribution of the care managers, general description of foreign residents who the CMs were responsible for, and the current issues of those clients and how CMs deal with it. The data obtained were quantified and analyzed quantitatively, focusing on descriptive epidemiology. Commercially available statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics 22 was used to conduct statistical analysis. The data were collected from November to December 2014.

5. Ethical consideration

This study was conducted with the approval of the respective institutions' research ethics committees.

Results

Seven hundred and nine CMs returned questionnaire. We excluded the ones that were undelivered or the centers that were currently not in operation, and the response rate was 35.8%. One hundred forty-four CMs (20.3%) had experience being in charge of cases of foreign residents, and the total number of

foreign residents as users of the system was 282.

As shown in Table 1, North and South Korean made up the most by 204 cases (72.3%), followed by China (35 cases, 12.4%), Taiwan (35, 12.4%), Brazil (7, 3.2%), and other including 8 nationalities (19, 6.7%). The results are also shown in Table 2. The most commonly used services were Home-help service (52 cases), Rental of welfare equipment for long-term care (48 cases), and Daycare services (43 cases).

Eighty-six CMs were currently in charge of foreign residents, and 23.3% expressed difficulty in interacting with them. Table 3 shows their difficulties such as 'Unstable due to dementia, etc' (9 cases), 'Due to the user's personality' (9 cases), and 'Lifestyle and values' (7 cases). The most common coping mechanisms were 'Consulting with care center staff' (17 responses) and 'Consulting with the Community General Support Center' (11 responses).

As part of a Care Plan tailored for foreign beneficiaries, CMs have massively favored and gave positive answers to two items in the list: (1) A better consideration of 'Daily-specific habits and cultural particularities' (67.9%), and (2) A better 'Foreign language support' (46.6%) as shown in Figure 1. At an operational level, CMs have also favored as paramount three items:

Table 1. Nationality (country of origin) of the users of in-home LTC* services by foreign residents in Japan

Nationality	n = 282	%
Korea	204	72.3
China	35	12.4
Taiwan	13	4.6
Brazil	9	3.2
Others (eight countries)	19	6.7
Non-respondent	2	0.7

*LTC=long-term care

Table 2. Use of LTC services by foreign residents in Japan

(multiple answers allowed)

In-home services	n = 86	%
Home-visit nursing	16	18.6
Home-help service	52	60.5
Home-visit bathing service	7	8.1
Home-visit rehabilitation	8	9.3
Day care service	43	50.0
Day rehabilitation service (day care)	15	17.4
Creation of 24-hour regular home visitation and as-needed visitation services	1	1.2
Combined services	1	1.2
Short-stay daily-lifeservice (welfare or medical care-oriented short stay)	10	11.6
Rental of welfare equipment	48	55.8
Sale of specified equipment	14	16.3
Benefits for house alterations	17	19.8

Table 3. Characteristics of the difficult cases of LTC*
service users by foreign residents in Japan

Item	n = 86	%
Family cooperation is not provided	4	4.7
The user's intention and the family's have a gap	2	2.3
Due to the user's personality	9	10.5
Rejection of the service	3	3.5
Unstable due to dementia, etc	9	10.5
Declining the family care support	6	7.0
Economical reasons	5	5.8
Lifestyle and values	7	8.1
Japanese communication	3	3.5
Not understanding LTC insurance services	5	5.8
Others	6	7.0
Non-respondent	4	4.7

*LTC=long-term care

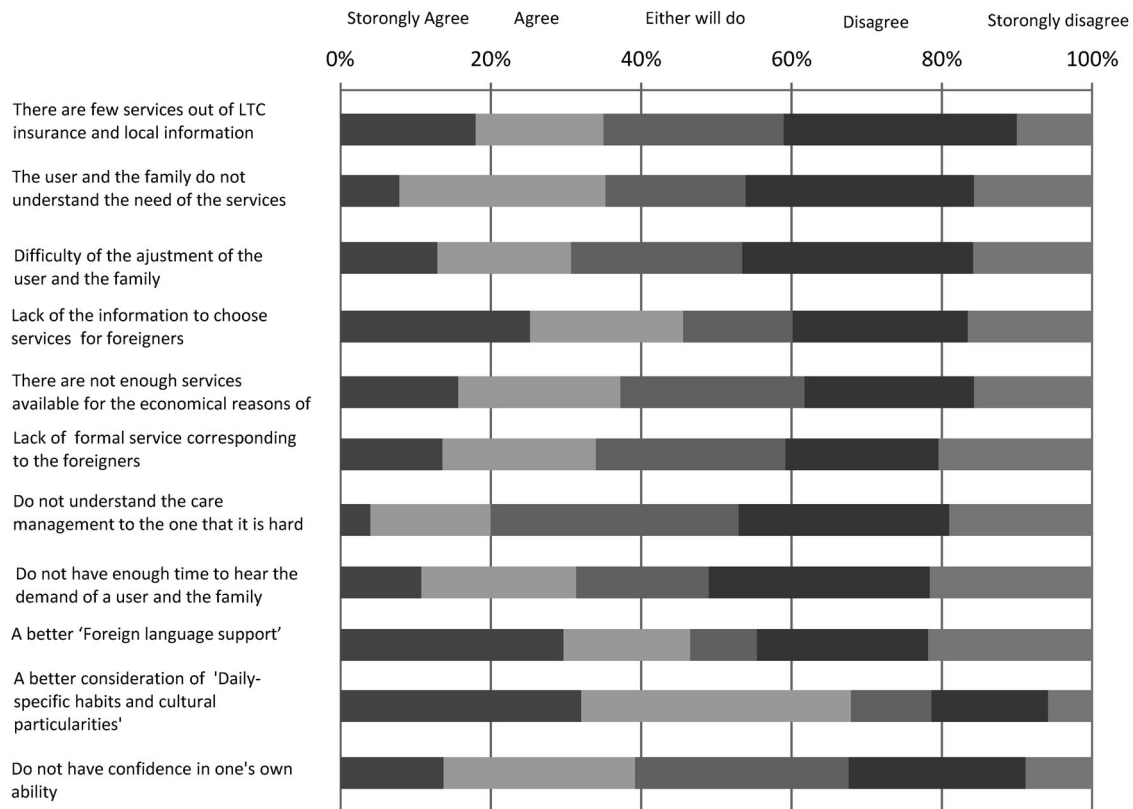


Figure 1. Issues of the making of a Care Plan for foreign residents in Japan

(1) The establishment of consultation service and improvement of one's adequate skills ; (2) An increase in foreign language-translated documentation ; and (3) an increase in medical-, day care-related interpretation service.

Discussion

A survey conducted in Japan has found that one fifth of CMs have experienced dealing with foreigners residents in Japan. At the end of June 2014, the total figures of those aged and above amounted to 32.26 million people. Among them, those who are certified as needing LTC have reached 5.91 million. The total amount of foreign residents in Japan aged 65 and over currently represents 131,000 people, and it merely accounts for 0.4 percent of the total population of the same age of Japanese citizens. However, due to historical migratory and nationality-specific forming

processes, foreigner residents occupation zones are well disseminated all over Japan. As a result of this, according to regions, it has also been found that CMs dealing with foreign residents are far from being rare and are relatively poised to face this situation. Among the CM-handled nationalities (birthplaces), the amount of long-term stay Koreans having taken up residence in Japan in the aftermath of WW2 is of course extremely high ; however, the distribution of nationalities is consistent with the senior citizen nationality-specific structure of the population. These nationalities (birthplaces) cover a total of 12 different countries.

Dementia, living alone, service refusal, differences of opinion within the family, and miscommunication have been highlighted as hindrances in a qualitative survey designed on common characteristic items found in CM-handled difficult cases, and targeting the day care-related NPO's CMs involved in life support activities for Korean senior citizens currently

living in Japan. This survey has revealed that one fourth of the CM have experienced trouble while providing nursing care to foreigners. Beside the case of mentally-ill or dementia-afflicted persons, it can be also noticed that matter of concerns widely originate in the lack of understanding of the values differences, daily life customs or individual singularities. In addition to the problems commonly arising with the Japanese elderlies in need of nursing care, this survey has revealed that foreign people day-care entails its own multi-faceted, specific issues.

As part of the set of measures that could be taken in order to address those difficult cases, two items have been favored the most, namely, (1) consultation with area-located global support center along with same LTC business-involved personnel, which includes the In-home LTC type of work such as CM, and (2) the necessity to compile issue-based analysis of each individual cases in terms of cultural specificities of foreign elderly and their families.

As part of a care plan tailored for foreign beneficiaries, CMs have massively favored and gave positive answers to two items in the list : (1) A better consideration of daily-specific habits and cultural particularities ; and (2) A better foreign language support. At an operational level, CMs have also favored as paramount three items : (1) The establishment of consultation service and improvement of one's adequate skills ; (2) An increase in foreign language-translated documentation ; and (3) an increase in medical-, day care-related interpretation service. An overhaul of the counseling and foreign language support has been mainly highlighted. In the attempt to carry out their jobs smoothly, the incapacity to come to a consent with the patients for the CM has proven to be not only a cause of nuisance when trying to cope with addressing the persons' needs, designing care plans or even performing assessments, but also an hindrance to exercising the right to take benefit of a LTC service and to make the appropriate

choice for foreign elderly themselves.

In some localities, a system of dispatched communication auxiliaries is being implemented for LTC given that local foreigners-oriented supporting groups are called into action⁹⁾. In the case of foreign residents currently living in Japan struggling with Japanese reading or unable to receive any help from theirs relatives, a system of registered helpers fluent in foreign languages and aware of the cultural issues has been made available for nursing insurances. However, this system is currently limited to some localities.

Japan is in the wake of becoming an aged population in which multicultural issues are likely to arise. In order for foreign elderly in needs of LTC services to take benefit of it in the smoothest possible way, it is thus of the utmost importance to set up the following host of measures, that is, a system of counseling and support designed for the CM, enhancement of the multilingual interpreter dispatch system, the creation of information tool such as multilingual documentation, and the lasting establishment of consultation service design to facilitate a better mutual understanding.

Conclusion

Over twenty percent of CMs had experienced the cases with foreign residents from various countries of origin. One out of four CMs expressed that they have difficulty in dealing with the problematic cases of foreign residents most of which arise from personality traits and cultural backgrounds. With growing population of the foreign elderly in Japan, their use of in-home care is increasing. Internationalization of the health care system in Japan, standardized organizational structures for foreign residents and the support system for CMs are needed.

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在日外国人の介護保険サービス利用における介護支援専門員の 対応状況に関する調査研究

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要 旨

【目的】

全国の介護支援専門員（CM）を通して、在日外国人の介護保険の居宅サービス利用における対応状況を明らかにすることで、多文化共生社会の観点から、日本社会における高齢者保健福祉問題を講じる上での基礎資料を提示することを目的とした。

【方法】

都道府県別の65歳以上の在日外国人の人口分布に基づき、WAMNETのデータベースを用いて、確率比例抽出法および単純無作為抽出により選定した居宅介護支援事業所2,000か所のCM宛に質問紙調査票を送付した。調査項目は、担当している外国人利用者の居宅サービス利用状況、対応や課題に関する項目であった。得られた回答は、数値化し量的分析を行った。

【結果】

709名のCMより回答を得た（回収率35.8%）。CM144名（20.3%）が外国人の担当経験をもち、担当した外国人利用者総数282名の国籍（出身地）別内訳は、「韓国・朝鮮」204件（72.3%）、「中国」35件（12.4%）、「台湾」13件（4.6%）、「ブラジル」9件（3.2%）の順に多く、「その他」19件（6.7%）には8か国が含まれていた。最も利用されているサービスは訪問介護であった。CMの23.3%が対応困難を感じており、その内容は「認知症等で不安定」、「利用者の性格によるもの」、「生活習慣や価値観」の順に多かった。対応は同事業所職員への相談が最多であった。ケアプラン作成上の課題として肯定的な回答が多かったのは、「生活習慣・文化への対応」、「言語への対応」であった。

【考察】

在日外国人の担当経験があるCMは全国的にも20%を超え、その国籍は多岐にわたっていた。CMの4人に1人が対応に困難を感じ、その内容は認知症等疾患によるものの他に、個人特性や文化的背景の理解に起因するものが多かった。介護保険サービスを利用する在日外国人の多国籍化・多文化化が進展しつつあり、外国人利用者の文化的特性をふまえた個別事例の課題分析を蓄積していくとともに、CMの相談支援体制の充実が求められる。

キーワード：在日外国人、介護保険、居宅サービス、多文化共生

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