

[Short Report]

Use of In-Home Services of the Public Long-Term Care Insurance System by Elderly Foreign Residents in Osaka City: Care Managers' Perception

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Abstract

Objectives

This study investigated the use of In-home services of the Public Long-Term Care (LTC) Insurance System by foreign residents in Osaka city to serve this population better.

Methods

Using information from the WAMNET database, questionnaires were sent to 1,800 care managers (CMs) affiliated with 1,106 In-home Care Support Office and Community General Support Centers in Osaka city (1-4 CMs/site), and collected between February and early March 2011. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively, focusing on descriptive statistics. And fisher's exact tests were used to evaluate the relationship between the Japanese communication skills and age, sex, and family structure.

Results

We obtained answers from 460 CMs (collection rate 25.6%). The total number of foreign residents covered under the service by CMs was 590, and we analyzed the valid data of 312 foreign user's information.

Home-Visit LTC and Day Care for LTC were most frequently used. 34.3% of CMs had difficulty communicating in Japanese, there was a higher proportion of people who had difficulty in communication with older age group ($p < 0.05$), and noticed that nearly 60% faced economic hardship.

Conclusion

Our results suggest that careful communication is required with older age groups. This indicates that there may be difficulties in communication and understanding the clients' needs, which are necessary to create care plan and to ensure optimal utilization of the services. And it is possible to reduce the service required user charge due to the insufficient economic status. The support system should be strengthened to address communication and economic difficulties faced by foreign users of In-home services, from the standpoint of the service fairness.

Keywords: In-home services, long-term care insurance, elderly, foreign residents, care manager

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I. Introduction

By 2015, 6.9% of registered foreign residents in Japan were 65 years or older¹⁾. In relation to this, the number of elderly individuals who require care services will continue to increase. Since 2012, Long-term care (LTC) insurance [Kaigo-Hoken] has been offered to legal foreign residents living in Japan for more than 3 months²⁾. Meanwhile, aging has exacerbated the severity of care problems of Koreans in Japan³⁾. At the same time, LTC insurance statistics within this group are limited to the covered foreign residents⁴⁾.

Osaka city has the largest population of foreign residents over the age 65 years in Japan. In this study, “Foreign resident in Japan” was defined as a person with a nationality other than Japanese who have maintained a residence in Japan, and who was subject to the Basic Resident Registration Act. The LTC Insurance System has In-home and Facility services, In-home service [Kyotaku Services] refers to receiving visiting care at home. We investigated the utilization of In-home services using information from the care managers (CMs) in Osaka city.

II. Methods

From February to March 2011, anonymous self-administered questionnaires were sent to 1,800 CMs in 1,106 In-home Care Support Offices and Community General Support Centers in Osaka city (1-4 CMs/site), identified using the WAMNET database⁵⁾. The questionnaire inquired about 1) experience of having foreign residents as clients and 2) demographic information on foreign resident policyholders, the level of need for LTC, type of In-home services used, reason (disease) for receiving care, primary caregiver, Japanese communication skills, and economic status. The data were analyzed descriptively, and Fisher's exact tests were used to evaluate the relationship between the Japanese communication skills and age, sex, and family structure (IBM SPSS Statistics 19).

This study was approved by the research ethics committee of the institution with which the principal investigator was previously affiliated (Approval 2010-N015).

III. Results

We obtained responses from 460 CMs (collection

rate 25.6%). The total number of foreign residents covered under the service by CMs was 590, and we analyzed the data of 312 foreign users.

In total, 43.2% of the CMs reported providing services to foreign users from seven countries; 291 (93.3%) from Korea and 12 (3.8%) from China. Further, 74.7% of the clients were the elderly individuals aged 75 years or over. Their primary caregiver was an adult child (40.7%). The most family structure was living alone (54.8%) and with a spouse (16.7%). The common services used were Home-visit LTC (70.8%) and Day Care for LTC (45.2%). The most common disease/reason to require care was musculoskeletal complaint (26.8%). And CMs recognized that 57.1% of foreign users were in a “Poor” economic situation (Table 1).

In terms of communicating with clients in Japanese, 34.3% of the CMs reported it was “Difficult”, and there was a higher proportion of people who had difficulty in communication with older age group ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2).

IV. Discussion

The requirements of LTC insurance for foreign residents in Japan were modified in 2011 (the study period of this research) and 2012 (the year when the revised Act of the Basic Resident Resisters was implemented). However, most of the first insured person who are over 65 years old under the LTC insurance are special permanent resident or permanent resident, which means that they already have some living basis in some way. Consequently, there is a less possibility of a big change in this situation.

More than 40% of the surveyed CMs had assisted foreign residents requiring LTC. Due to the rapid aging of Koreans in Japan⁶⁾, the majority of In-home service users were Korean. In this study, there were a higher proportion of people who had difficulty in communication with an older age group. The first generation Korean in Japan who were born in Korea are around 90 years of age. From this perspective, it is considered that communicating with such first generation Koreans is more challenging.

This indicates that there may be difficulties in communication and understanding clients' needs, which are necessary to create care plan and to ensure optimal utilization of the services.

Table 1 Characteristics of the users of In-Home LTC Services by foreign residents in Osaka City

Characteristics	n=312	%
Nationality		
Korea	291	93.3
China	12	3.8
Taiwan	4	1.3
Other (four countries)	5	1.6
Sex		
Male	72	23.1
Female	235	75.3
Non-respondent	5	1.6
Age		
65-74	76	25.3
75-84	121	38.9
≥85	113	35.8
Non-respondent	2	1.6
Levels of certified care (support)		
Support level 1	22	7.2
Support level 2	31	10.2
Care level 1	68	22.3
Care level 2	78	25.6
Care level 3	47	15.4
Care level 4	43	14.1
Care level 5	16	5.2
Non-respondent	7	2.2
Family structure		
Living alone	171	54.8
Living with a spouse	52	16.7
Others	89	28.5
Primary caregiver		
Partner	46	14.7
Son or daughter-in-law	24	7.7
Child	127	40.7
Other than family member	87	27.9
Non-respondent	28	9.0
Reason(s) for long-term care (multiple answers allowed)		
Stroke	78	21.4
Old age	80	21.9
Dementia	75	20.5
Musculoskeletal complaint	98	26.8
Heart disease	34	9.3
Household economic level		
Poor	178	57.1
Standard	86	27.6
Good	42	13.0
Non-respondent	6	1.9
Japanese communication skills		
Difficult	107	34.3
No problems	203	65.1
Others	2	0.6
Use of services (multiple answers allowed)		
Home-Visit Nursing Care	24	7.7
Home-Visit LTC (Home help services)	221	70.8
Home-Visit Bathing Service	6	1.9
Home-Visit Rehabilitation	4	1.3
Day Care for LTC (Day services)	141	45.2
Day Care Rehabilitation	22	7.1
Short-term Institutionalization (Short-term Stay for LTC and Recuperative care)	25	8.0
Rental of Assistive Equipment	137	43.9

*LTC: Long-Term Care

Table 2 Relationships between age and Japanese communication skills

Item		Difficult n (%)	No problems n (%)	p-value
Sex (n=293)	Male	23 (22.8%)	48 (24.5%)	n.s
	Female	78 (77.2%)	144 (73.5%)	
Age (years) (n=295)	65-74	19 (19.0%)	52 (26.7%)	*
	75-84	31 (31.0%)	85 (43.6%)	
	≥85	50 (50.0%)	58 (29.7%)	
Family structure (n=297)	Living alone	54 (53.5%)	109 (55.6%)	n.s
	Living with a spouse	17 (16.8%)	31 (15.8%)	
	Others	30 (29.7%)	56 (28.6%)	

Fisher's exact test, * $p < 0.05$

However, some cities in the Osaka Prefecture provide foreign language interpretation by the name of Communication Supporter⁷⁾. In addition to informal support, a formal support system consistent with the current situation of foreign elderly requiring care support is needed in the future.

The CMs reported that 60% of the foreign clients had economic difficulties. This may be influenced by the lack of pension as reported in a previous study⁸⁾. It is possible to reduce the service with user charge due to the insufficient economic status.

Our results suggest that the support system should be strengthened to address communication and economic difficulties faced by foreign users of In-home services, from the standpoint of the service fairness.

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[短報]

介護支援専門員がとらえる大阪市における在日外国人の 高齢者の介護保険サービス利用状況に関する調査研究

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要 旨

目的

在日外国人の介護保険における居宅サービスの利用状況について明らかにすることを目的とした。

方法

福祉・保健・医療の総合情報サイト WAMNET のデータベースを用いて、大阪市に所在する全ての居宅介護支援事業所および地域包括支援センター 1,106 か所に所属する介護支援専門員 1,800 名（1 事業所につき 1～4 名所属）を対象に、無記名自記式質問紙調査を実施した。回答結果は数値化し、記述統計を主体とした量的データ分析を行った。また、日本語によるコミュニケーション能力と性・年齢・家族構成との関連性について、Fisher の直接確率検定により検証した。

結果

460 名の介護支援専門員より回答が得られ（回収率 25.6%）、590 件の在日外国人利用者情報を得た。その内、有効回答の 312 件を分析対象とした。利用が多いサービスは、訪問介護および通所介護であった。介護支援専門員の 34.3% が、在日外国人利用者に対し、日本語によるコミュニケーションが困難ととらえており、コミュニケーションが難しいグループの高齢者の年齢層が高かった（ $p<0.05$ ）。また、経済状態について困難と判断された利用者は約 60% におよんだ。

結論

年齢層が高い外国人利用者ほど日本語によるコミュニケーションが困難な現状があり、ケアプラン作成やサービス利用に伴う意思疎通やニーズの把握において、支障をきたす可能性がある。また、経済状況の厳しい外国人利用者が多く、一割の利用者負担のために、必要なサービスの制限する可能性もある。サービス提供における公平性の確保の観点からも、在日外国人の居宅サービス利用における、コミュニケーションおよび経済面への支援体制の充実が課題として示された。

キーワード：居宅サービス、介護保険、高齢者、在日外国人、介護支援専門員