

A survey into social well-being amongst residents of Toon City aged between 20 and 64

Focused on the individual life satisfaction and social support

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Introduction

It is well established that good mental health is a basic factor for a person to experience enjoyment in their life. Maintaining good mental health involves the following three abilities: (1) honestly expressing individual feelings (psychological well being); (2) appropriate analysis of situations and being able to cope with everyday problems (intellectual well being); and (3) building good relationships with others (social well being).

In particular, recent studies report that it is also important for a person to find out the aim and significance of their own life and that they be able to choose their own life (human well being). Accordingly mental health has a major impact on quality of life.

Some reports¹⁻³⁾ indicate that there are multiple factors which influence mental health, including (1) individual disposition and ability; (2) physical condition; (3) socio-economic conditions such as dwelling, place of work, relationships with others etc. In particular, individual social well being such as life satisfaction is reported to be strongly related to the maintenance of good mental health.

Recent studies⁴⁻⁹⁾ suggest that psychological factors may influence several cardio-vascular disorders such as ischemic heart disease and hypertension. Health

management consists of the following traditional elements (1) adequate exercise; (2) balanced nutritional intake; (3) rest, plus two more recently identified factors (4) dental health and (5) mental health.

It is suggested that smoking and frequent consumption of alcohol are not simply isolated dependencies but have come to be regarded as two examples of symptoms of the broad mental disorder covered by the term addiction, which also encompasses stalking, gambling and overeating. Furthermore, having a sufficient social environment and the opportunity for social activity plays an essential role in maintaining a healthy mind.

The first objective of this survey was to inquire into the residents' current well-being, mental health and the social support resources in Toon City. The second objective of the survey was to provide the foundation for planning new health promotion activities involving social supports focusing on improving life satisfaction in Toon City.

Methods

Ethical considerations in relation to the Act on the Protection of Personal Information.

(1) Disclosure of information from the Toon City

Basic Resident Register and access to this information as digital data stored on portable media.

Our study received permission from Ehime University's Ethical Committee of Etiology to access the electronically stored personal information in the Basic Resident Register maintained by the local government of Toon City.

The second author (Kanao Yamauchi) applied to the local government of Toon City for permission to access electronically stored personal information in the Basic Resident Register maintained by the local government of Toon City for the purpose of delivering our questionnaire based on the dual requirements that the researcher, Kanao Yamauchi, was (1) the recipient of a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Category C) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Project number 21590696,

Kanao Yamauchi, research period 2009 to 2013, "Factors affecting the mental health, ADL and QOL of elderly residents-a cohort study over a 13 year period." and (2) had Research Permission from Ehime University's Ethical Committee of Etiology.

(2) Study Design and Participants

We selected at random 2000 people between the ages of 20 and 64, and provided them with a questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope.

Results

(1) Respondent rate of questionnaire

Table 1 shows a respondent rate of our survey. Men comprised 37.8 percent (453/1200) and women 47.6 percent (381/800) of the Toon survey's respondents –which classified sex-and age-group.

Table 1. Respondent rate

	Men			Women		
	Distribution	Respond	Respondent rate(%)	Distribution	Respond	Respondent rate(%)
20-29	300	86	28.7	200	69	34.5
30-39	300	90	30.0	200	81	40.5
40-49	240	96	40.0	160	77	48.1
50-59	240	104	43.3	160	103	64.4
60-64	120	77	64.8	80	51	63.8
Total	1200	453	37.8	800	381	47.6

(2) Demographic characteristics

Table2 shows that respondents' family members who live together in the same household.

We carried out a questionnaire based survey into trends in family structure in Toon City.

Table 2. Family structure

The each number in horizontal six blanks - from one to six or more in Table 2 - demonstrates that of respondents' family members.

Sex	Age group	1	2	3	4	5	6 and more	total
Men	20-29	12 (14.0%)	11 (12.8%)	29 (33.7%)	23 (26.7%)	9 (10.5%)	2 (2.3%)	86
	30-39	7 (7.8%)	13 (14.4%)	24 (26.7%)	26 (28.9%)	13 (14.4%)	7 (7.8%)	90
	40-49	2 (2.1%)	11 (11.5%)	19 (19.8%)	35 (36.5%)	16 (16.7%)	13 (13.5%)	96
	50-59	5 (4.8%)	20 (19.2%)	35 (33.7%)	26 (25.0%)	9 (8.7%)	9 (8.7%)	104
	60-65	6 (7.8%)	37 (48.1%)	20 (26.0%)	9 (11.7%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.2%)	77
Women	20-29	9 (13.0%)	10 (14.5%)	19 (27.5%)	15 (21.7%)	9 (13.0%)	7 (10.1%)	69
	30-39	8 (9.9%)	9 (11.1%)	21 (25.9%)	32 (39.5%)	9 (11.1%)	2 (2.5%)	81
	40-49	1 (1.3%)	11 (14.3%)	16 (20.8%)	30 (39.0%)	12 (15.6%)	7 (9.1%)	77
	50-59	5 (4.9%)	39 (38.2%)	29 (28.4%)	21 (20.6%)	4 (3.9%)	4 (3.9%)	102
	60-65	12 (23.5%)	25 (49.0%)	5 (9.8%)	2 (3.9%)	3 (5.9%)	4 (7.8%)	51

(3) Life satisfaction

We calculated individual life satisfaction based on the Life Satisfaction K items developed by Koyano et al¹⁰.

Figure 1 shows the average value of life satisfaction K according to sex and age.

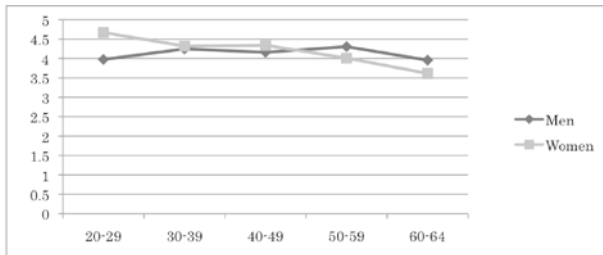


Fig 1. The score of Life satisfaction K

(4) Social support

Figure 2 shows that men's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from either family members

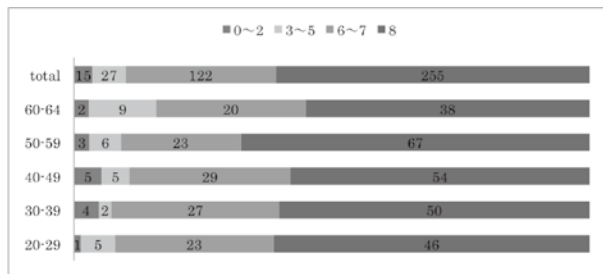


Fig 2. The scores of men's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from either family members (See-Appendix questions of social support developed by Noguchi et al, which scores were distributed from zero to eight point)

Figure 3 shows that men's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from friends

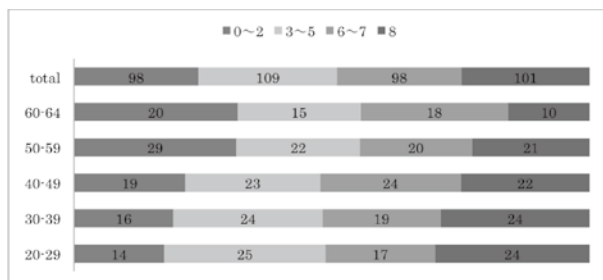


Fig 3. The score of men's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from friends

Figure 4 shows that women's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from either family members

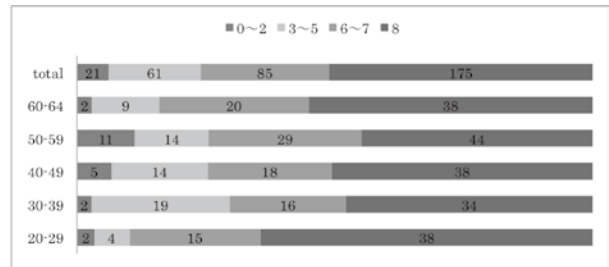


Fig 4. The score of women's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from either family members

Figure 5 shows that women's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from friends

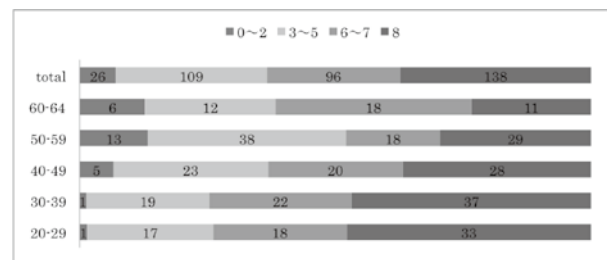


Fig 5. The score of women's social supports (psychological assistance and practical assistance) from friends.

Figure 6-9 show the men's average value of psychological assistance and practical assistance according to sex and age.

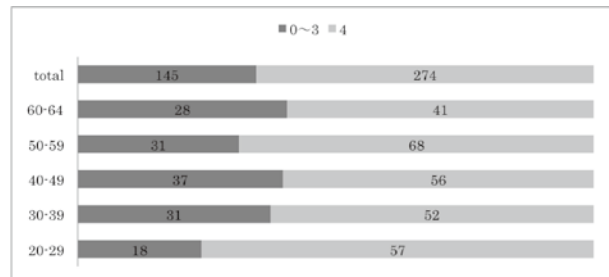


Fig 6. The score of men's practical assistance (one of social supports) from either family members

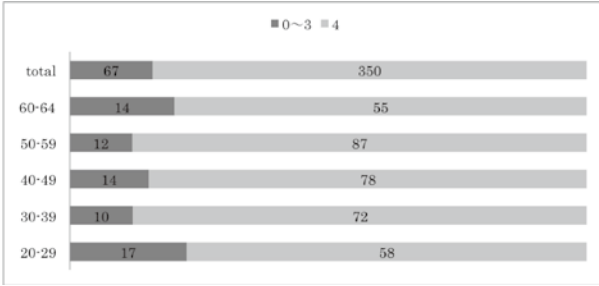


Fig 7. The score of men's psychological assistance (one of social supports) from either family members

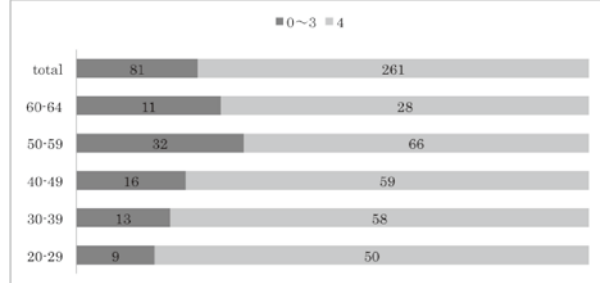


Fig 11. The score of women's psychological assistance (one of social supports) from either family members

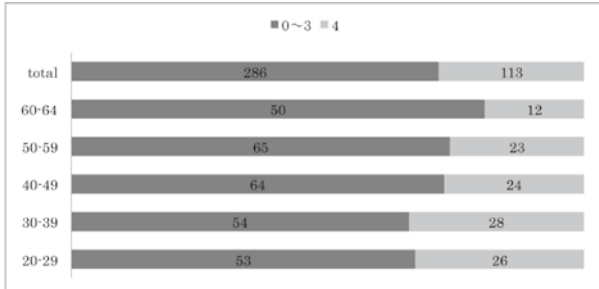


Fig 8. The score of men's practical assistance (one of social supports) from friends.

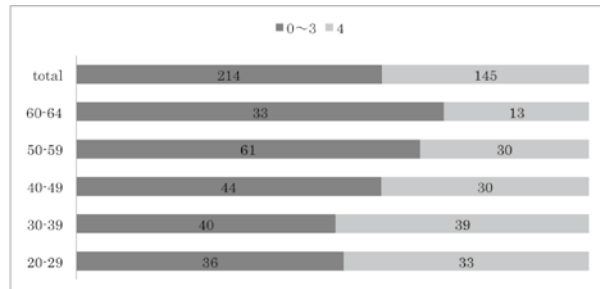


Fig 12. The score of women's practical assistance (one of social supports) from friends.

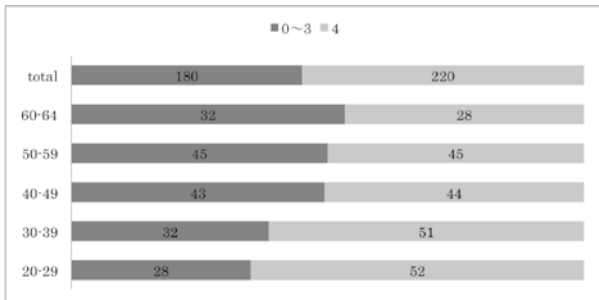


Fig 9. The score of men's psychological assistance (one of social supports) from friends.

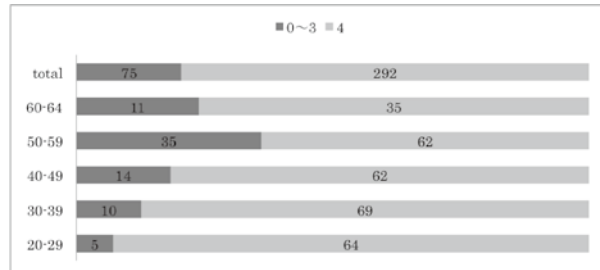


Fig 13. The score of women's psychological assistance (one of social supports) from friends.

Fig 10-13 show the women's average value of psychological assistance and practical assistance according to sex and age.

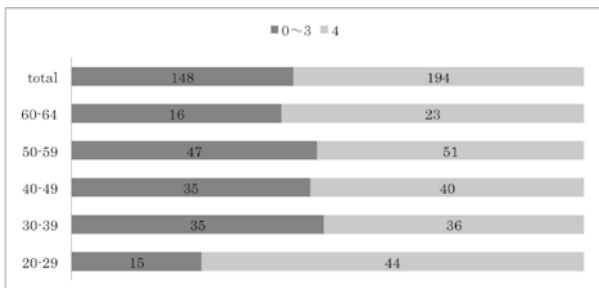


Fig 10. The score of women's practical assistance (one of social supports) from either family members

Approximately 60 percent of men and 70 percent of women have various kinds of social support resources in the form of family members they live with. If we look at the figures which separate psychological assistance and practical assistance it shows that men and women receive a great deal of psychological assistance from family members.

Discussion

It is well known that there is a close relationship between individual life satisfaction and social support-which also related to stress. The influence stress has on an individual is alleviated by support

structures such as spouse, family members, friends, place of work and neighborhood. Accordingly, although it is important for individuals to obtain the understanding and cooperation of those around them, local government can also play an important role in managing the social support systems which answer the needs of people suffering from stress. When the amount of stress can be kept within manageable limits, individuals can avoid the worst effects of stress.

For men, the average value of life satisfaction K increases with age, peaking in their fifties. However, the value K begins decreasing between the ages of 60 and 64, returning to the same levels as men in their twenties.

It is our view that as men in their twenties have only just started work they will encounter a number of unfamiliar circumstances. In their thirties and forties men have families and have achieved a level of stability in their jobs, and as a result their level of life satisfaction K increases. A large number of men in their fifties have achieved a level of success and social status however between 60 and 64 years old, as a result of retirement, men's level of life satisfaction K drops.

In contrast to men, women's life satisfaction K peaks during their twenties, and then the average value decreases with age. Between the ages of 20 and 50 the average value of life satisfaction K for women is higher than that of men, however it is notable that the level of life satisfaction K for men increases during their fifties whilst for women the level drops suddenly. It is believed that the reason for this difference is that men enjoy a rewarding social position in their fifties, while women face menopause and the associated menopausal syndromes.

At any event, it is clear that the value of life satisfaction K is low for both men and women between the ages of 60 and 64.

We defined the concept of social support to consist

of both psychological and practical assistance. Respondents in their twenties who have just entered the workforce depend on family members, especially parents, not only for psychological support but also practical assistance. The percentage of social support received from friends is 30 percent or less. However, the percentage of psychological assistance is 50 percent for men, while it is 80 percent for women. Most women tend to receive a great deal of psychological assistance from friends. In other words, women get psychological assistance from friends rather than from family members.

Whereas women receive psychological assistance from friends as well as family members, men tend to depend only on family members for psychological support from.

Neither men nor women receive practical assistance from friends. Furthermore, the level of social support from friends tends to decrease with age, and the key to conducting health promotion to build up the concrete measure how public health nurses have the elderly to participate in the health and welfare services provided in To-on City

Measurement of the level of life satisfaction K includes asking the following question "Do you look back on your life with a sense of satisfaction?" According to the theory of life-cycle described by Erickson¹¹⁾, the concept of integrity is highly important in the elderly, and people who maintain integrity are more likely to answer positively the question about looking back. People who do not maintain this sense of integrity are apt to respond to the question negatively, and have a low level of life satisfaction. There is a concern that a low level of life satisfaction in people in their sixties has a potential risk of depression and suicide, and that there is a need to shed light on the causes of decreasing levels of life satisfaction in the elderly so as to establish concrete intervention methods of preventing depression.

To this end, local government should aim to

create less stressful socio-economic circumstances, occupational environments, urban environments, and residential environments in order to establish the social framework for a high quality of individual life satisfaction and social supports.

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Appendix

The questionnaire's items of Life Satisfaction K

Q33 Please answer the following questions based on your feelings, without thinking about each question too deeply.

1. Do you think that you have had more opportunities in life than other people?

1.Yes 2.No

2. Do you think that you are as healthy this year as you were last year?

1.Yes 2.No

3. Do you think that you dwell on matters too deeply?

1.Yes 2. No

4. Do you think that you have achieved most of what you wanted to achieve in life?

1.Yes 2.No

5. How often do unhappy events occur in your day to day life?

1.Rarely 2. Sometimes 3.Frequently

6. Do you think that life is very hard?

1.Yes 2.No

7. Do you think that you worry about little, unimportant matters more than you used to?

1.Yes 2.No

8. As a person, do you feel less useful than you once were?

1.Yes 2.No

9. Do you look back on your life with a sense of satisfaction?

1.Yes. 2.tolerably good 3.No

Social supports questionnaire's items developed by Noguchi et al

Q32 Do you have family members or friends who help you when you face the situations described below?

Q32-1. Do you have family members you can talk to when you are worried about something?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends you can talk to when you are worried about something?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-2. Do you have family members who take care of you if you are sick for more than a couple of days?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends who take care of you if you are sick for more than a couple of days?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-3. Do you have family members with whom you have a very good relationship?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends with whom you have a very good relationship?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-4. Do you have family members who are supportive of you?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends who are supportive of you?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-5. Do you have family members who if necessary would lend you a considerable sum of money?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends who if necessary would lend you a considerable sum of money?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-6. Do you have some family members who take it comfortable with you?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends you always feel comfortable spending time with?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-7. Do you have family members who help you at home and look after the house while you are out?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends who help you at home and look after the house while you are out?

1.Yes 2.No

Q32-8. Do you have family members who nurse you and help you with housework when you are sick for an extended period of time ?

1.Yes 2.No

Do you have friends who nurse you and help you with housework when you are sick for an extended period of time ?

1.Yes 2.No