

Family caregivers' psychosocial factors associated with elderly abuse in Japan

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Purpose:

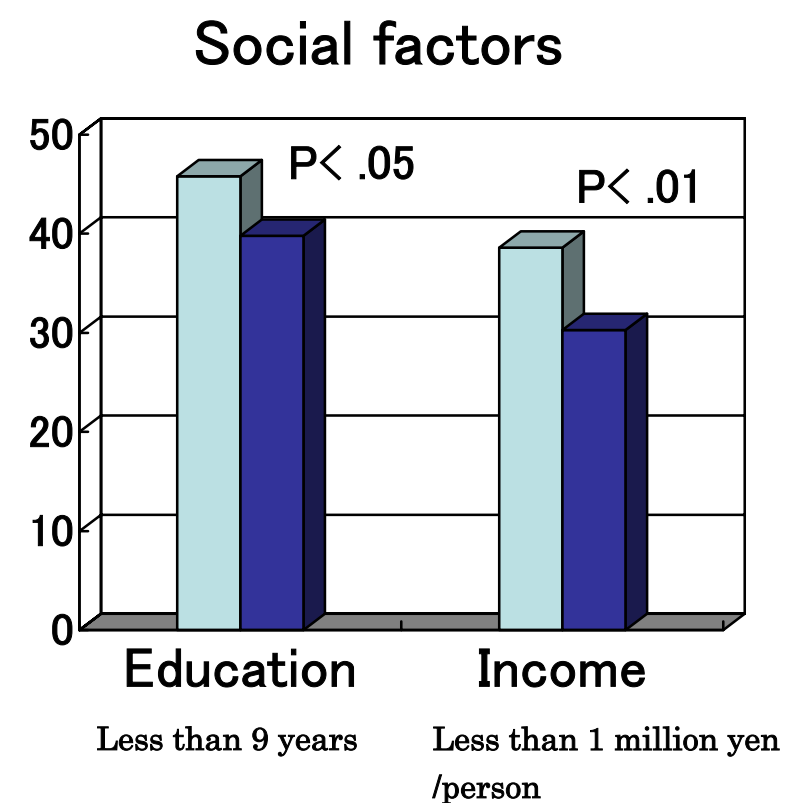
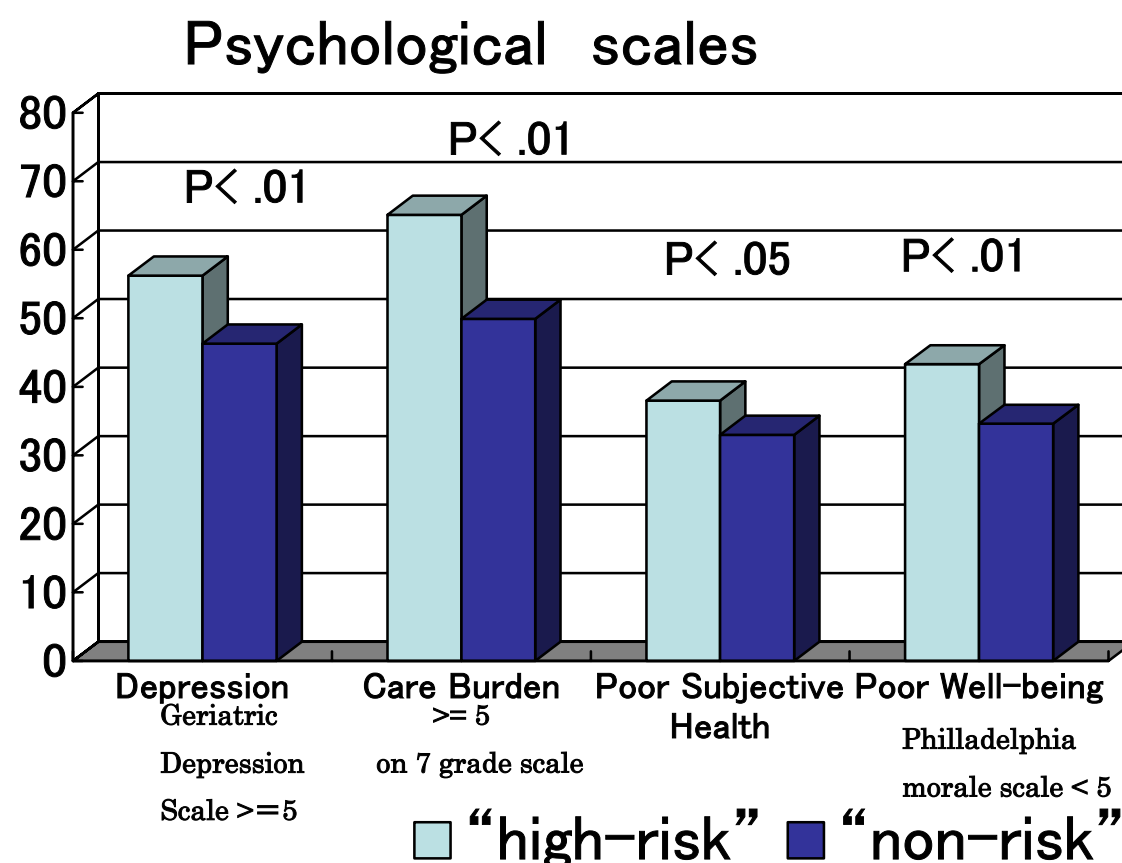
To examine the psychosocial factors of family caregivers associated with abuse among community-dwelling elderly with disabilities.

Method:

We conducted a community survey in ten municipalities as a part of AGES (Aichi Gerontological Evaluation Study) project in Aichi prefecture, Japan. Subjects were community-dwelling elderly who used personal social services at home under the public long-term care insurance (n = 7271). Care managers in charge assessed the care-giving status, including the capacity of family caregivers, neglect, and physical, psychological, and economical abuse. Caregivers were asked to answer a questionnaire. We compared psychosocial factors between a “high-risk” group, who were suspected by the care manager to be caregivers at a “high-risk” of committing abuse (n = 636), and a “non-risk” group (n = 2887).

Results:

We found that high-risk group shows significantly ($p < 0.05$) poorer psychosocial status than the non-risk group. For example, the high-risk group showed higher care burdens (5 or more) on a 7-grade scale (65.1% vs 49.9%). A greater number of those with lower household incomes (less than 1 million yen / person) were observed more in the “high-risk” group than the non-risk group (51.7% vs 45.8%). A larger proportion (45.8%) of the high-risk group had received a shorter education (< 10 years) compared with the non-risk group (39.8%).



Conclusions:

These results suggest that caregivers at high-risk of committing abuse suffered from care-giving stress and depressive states. Not only those elderly abused but also the caregivers should be supported. A lower socio-economic status among family caregivers may be one underlying cause of their committing abuse.

Reference:

1)Karl Pillemer and David Finkelhor :The Prevalence of Elder Abuse: A Random Sample Survey. The Gerontological Society of America 28(1): 51-57. (1988)
2)Mark S. Lachs et al:Risk Factors for Reported Elder Abuse and Neglect: A Nine-Year Observational Cohort Study. J The Gerontologist 37(4):469-474. (1997)

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