

Marital quality and depression among the elderly in Japan (abstract no. 154357)

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ABSTRACT (updated)

Studies indicated that being married has a protective effect on health. However, as for marital quality, such effect is less clear. To investigate the association of marital status/quality with depression among the elderly, we used a cross-sectional data (N=29860, mean age: 73.1 years for men, 73.8 years for women) from fifteen communities in Japan. Those scored higher than 5 in 15-item Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15) were considered being depressed. Percentages of depression were 32.2% and 35.5% for men and women, while such rates were 58.5% and 42.4% for never married men and women, respectively. Logistic regression analyses were employed to investigate the association of marital status with depression. For both men and women, never married elderly had higher odds for depression than married counterparts even after adjustment for age in years, illnesses, higher level of activities of daily living, and educational background. Further analyses indicated that quality of marriage had a stronger association with depression among the married. Those who were dissatisfied with their marriages were more likely to be depressed than widowed/separated/never married elderly with odds ratios of 3.02 ($p<0.01$) and 5.87 ($p<0.001$) for men and women, respectively, even after adjustment for possible confounders. Our results indicate the importance of the quality of marriage for mental health of the elderly. Factors associated with marital dissatisfaction needs to be further investigated to understand the old age depression.

Key words: marital status, marital quality, depression, elderly, Japan