

Issues of Safety Confirmation for Community-Dwelling Older Adults: Experience of a Flood Disaster in Kumamoto, Japan

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Abstract

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Abstract

Objective: Prompt safety confirmations before and after a disaster are key to reducing risks in disasters among older adults. This study aims to reveal issues in contacting fragile older adults once flood disaster strikes to ensure a sustainable safety net.

Methods: Focus group interviews were conducted in three municipalities of Kumamoto, Japan, which experienced a flood disaster in July 2020, with nine care managers, nurses, and center directors of community-based integrated support centers in August 2023.

Results: Communication records of support and lists of older adults requiring support in regular operations were useful, and the safety of those on the lists was first confirmed immediately after the disaster struck. However, confirmation of safety of those who did not rely regularly on public services, those who lived alone, and older couples, was delayed and their safety was determined by their neighbors' reports.

Conclusions: Prompt safety confirmation system in the event of a disaster is required for, in particular, fragile older adults who do not rely on public services, which lead to early support intervention.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.226>.