

変わる時代の確かな視点

News Release

《The University of Tokyo & NLI Research Institute Joint Research Project》

Social Capital and Mental Health Among Nuclear Disaster Evacuees from Futaba, Fukushima

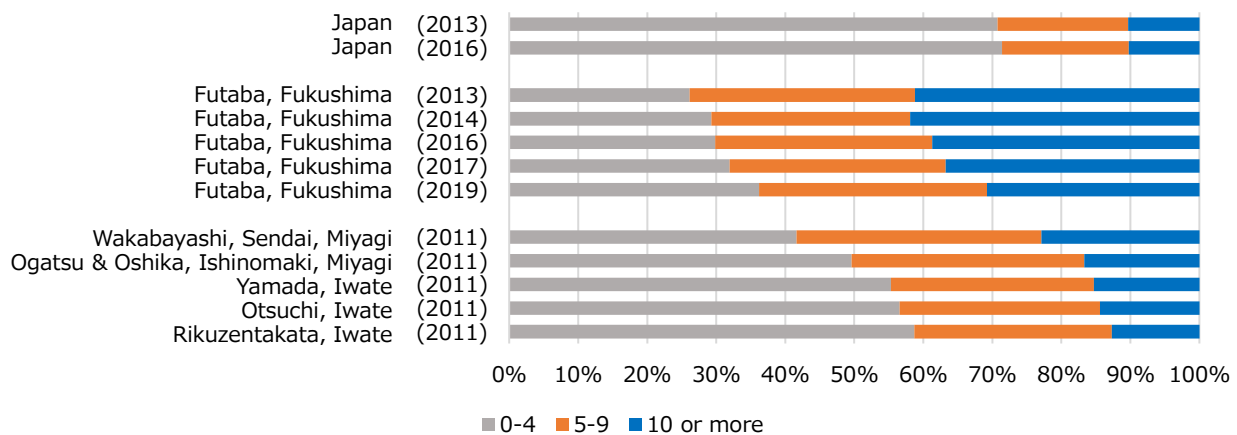
— Continuous Survey Research Results —

March 11, 2020

NLI Research Institute (CEO: Tsuneaki Teshima) hereby releases the continuous survey research results conducted by Yasuyuki Sawada (Professor, Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo) and Keiko Iwasaki (Researcher, NLI Research Institute). The surveys targeted all household heads of Futaba in Fukushima prefecture, where all residents were forced to evacuate due to the nuclear power plant accident caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Starting in 2013, surveys were conducted in July 2013, December 2014, July 2016, December 2017 and July 2019. The five rounds of surveys revealed the following findings.

(1) As shown by the figure below, Futaba residents could be under more serious psychological distress than those in other disaster affected areas. More than eight years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, and their mental health status has been gradually improving, but recovery may take much longer.

Figure: Distribution Psychological Distress (K6) Levels in Japan, Futaba, and Other Disaster Affected Areas

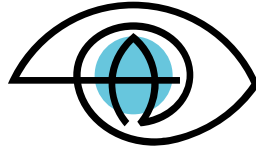


(Note) K6 score indicates the level of psychological distress, and the higher the value, the higher the level of stress.

(Source) Futaba: Surveys conducted by the University of Tokyo's "International comparison of reconstruction of living infrastructure from disasters" project. Japan: Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (2013, 2016). Other regions: Survey on the Health of Great East Japan Earthquake Victims (Research Representative: Kenji Hayashi) 2012



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- (2) In particular, there was a possibility that the mental health of those who had lived in temporary shelters for a long time was in a serious condition. However, currently, even after many of the residents have already moved from temporary shelters to public reconstruction housing, the mental health of residents in public reconstruction housing tends to be in a more serious condition, and continuous support is important.
- (3) As to changes in income and health conditions caused by the disaster, we find that the greater the extent of decrease or deterioration is, the greater the degree of decline in individual well-being tends to be. This implies the necessity of sufficient compensation so that the original state of the survivors' well-being can be recovered.
- (4) The disaster has weakened the social capital of Futaba residents, and recovery may take a very long time.
- (5) Keeping in touch with friends from pre-disaster times as well as participating in hobbies and volunteer activities after the disaster may help people maintain good mental health.
- (6) Though relationship building with the residents of the evacuation destinations shows some gradual progress, the progress is subtle, and it is still thought to be an important challenge that evacuees are facing.
- (7) Aggravated present bias (procrastination tendencies) due to disasters can lead to a decline in mental health conditions, but policies that promote interaction among residents and encourage good health behaviors can prevent such a decline.

Our survey results are based on aggregates and analyses of responses from approximately 20% of the households of Futaba and do not represent all Futaba residents. Since the survey was conducted after a major disaster, the characteristics of respondents may be very different from general surveys and there is a possibility of an overestimation in our results due to the deterioration of physical and mental health conditions. Therefore, special caution is required in interpreting the results, and any definitive judgments based solely on these findings should be avoided.

- See our reports below for the details of the results.
 - July 2019 Survey (English: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63949?site=nli>)
(Japanese: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63614?site=nli>)
 - Dec. 2017 Survey (English: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63974?site=nli>)
(Japanese: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63613?site=nli>)
 - July 2016 Survey (English: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=64024?site=nli>)
(Japanese: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63612?site=nli>)
 - Dec. 2014 Survey (English: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=64069?site=nli>)
(Japanese: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63611?site=nli>)
 - July 2013 Survey (English: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=64107?site=nli>)
(Japanese: <https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=63610?site=nli>)

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