

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

— The 7th Survey Research Results: The First Survey since the Start of Return\* —

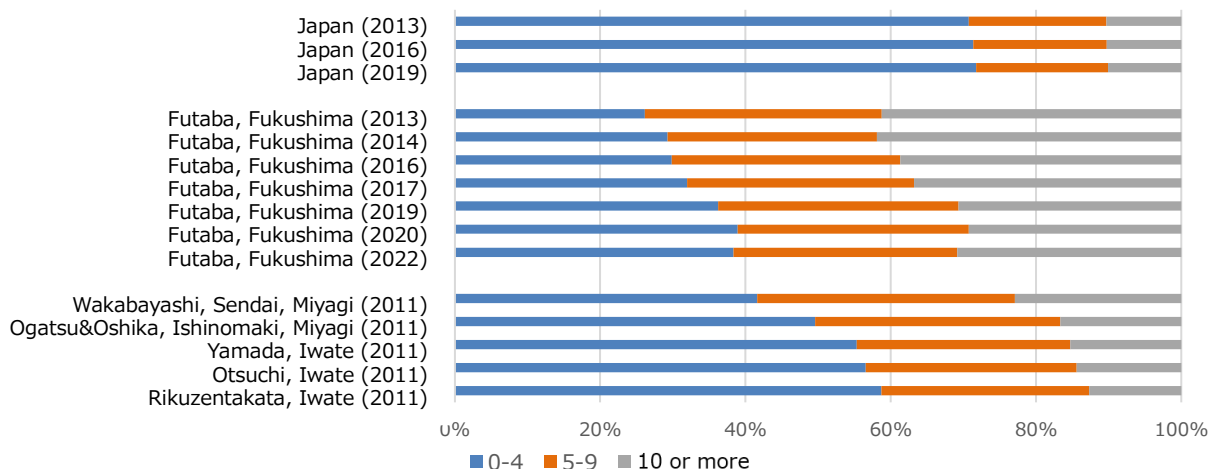
March 1, 2023

NLI Research Institute (CEO: Tsuneaki Teshima) release a survey research results conducted by Yasuyuki Sawada (Professor, Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo) and Keiko Iwasaki (Researcher, NLI Research Institute). This is the seventh survey conducted in October 2022, targeted to 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. The previous rounds of surveys were conducted in July 2013, December 2014, July 2016, December 2017, July 2019 and December 2020. Since evacuation order of a part of the town of Futaba was lifted on August 30<sup>th</sup>, this is the first survey conducted after Futaba residents started to return to home among the past seven rounds of surveys.

The seven rounds of surveys revealed the following findings.

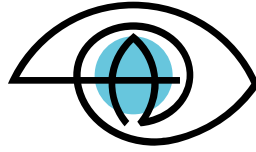
- (1) As shown in a figure below, Futaba residents can be facing more serious psychological distress than those in other disaster affected areas. More than 11 years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, and their mental health status had been gradually improving in the long term, but the recovery trend has stopped between 2020 and 2022. These show that recovery may take much longer time.

Figure. Distribution of K6 score for Japan, Futaba and other disaster affected areas



\* The seventh survey was the first survey conducted after the start of the return of the residents of Futaba Town in this continuous survey research targeting the residents of Futaba Town.





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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, 2019). Other regions: Survey on the Health of Great East Japan Earthquake Victims (Research Representative: Kenji Hayashi) 2012

- (2) In particular, there was a possibility that mental health of those who had lived in temporary shelters for long time was in a serious condition. However, currently, even after many of the residents have already moved from temporary shelters to public reconstruction housings, mental health of residents in public reconstruction housings and those who live in post-disaster public-funded rental accommodation is in a serious condition, and continuous mental health support is necessary.
- (3) As to changes in income and health condition 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 to recover the original state of survivors' well-being.
- (4) The disaster has weakened social capital of Futaba residents, and recovery may take very long time.
- (5) Keeping in touch with people who had been friends from pre-disaster time and 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 show some progress little by little, the progress is subtle, and it is still an important challenge evacuees are facing.
- (7) Aggravated present bias (procrastination tendency) due to disasters can lead a decline in mental health condition, but policies that promote interaction among residents and encourage good health behaviors can prevent such a decline.

Participants of our surveys are approximately 20% of households of Futaba and the results 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 that our data do not show the overall Futaba trend without any bias. Therefore, we need a special caution 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.  
English (<https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=74020?site=nli>)  
Japanese (<https://www.nli-research.co.jp/report/detail/id=74018?site=nli>)
- ※ See a book below (in Japanese) for the details of the results for first to fifth survey.  
岩崎敬子『福島原発事故とこころの健康 実証経済学で探る減災・復興の鍵』（日本評論社）2021年3月  
(Keiko Iwasaki (2021) *Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and Mental health*, NIPPON HYORON SHA CO.,LTD.)

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