

Public Awareness of Dementia and Possible Contributions from Educational Specialists

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Abstract

With the increasing number of patients with dementia, strategies on how to raise the awareness of the general public and effectively reduce stigma against it are gaining high interest. To achieve this, it is primarily important to understand the actual state of people's image, feeling, and relationship regarding patients with dementia. As a nation with the highest elderly population, Japan has been encountering several unprecedented issues regarding dementia, and the situation tends to be exacerbated in rural areas with a higher proportion of elderly individuals. This study highlights Tokushima Prefecture, one of the rural regions in the country where aging is progressing more than 10 years ahead, compared to the entire Japan. The study analyzes public awareness of dementia among community-dwelling adults using a questionnaire survey with 9 items in order to single out possible contributions from educational specialists. The findings reveal that the main concerns among the public included the following: providing correct/accurate knowledge; developing effective means of prevention; determining possible solutions for loneliness of single households; improving the quality of nursing homes; and creating a dementia-friendly community based on local needs. Further investigation will be required to grasp the whole picture on this theme by undertaking a wider-scale survey through various methods.

Keywords: public awareness, dementia, educational specialists