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Social Capital and Health Promoting Behavior among Older Japanese Population in the Community

Panel: Social Capital and Well-being in Okinawa and Japan from the Perspectives of the Life Course (Session 1)

This study attempts to examine the effect of cognitive levels of social capital on health behaviors, specifically participation in annual health check-up in the community. It was argued that one of the strategies to achieve world longest life expectancy was health check-up system in Japan (Tatara et al. 1991). Although all Japanese aged ≥ 40 are entitled to attend annual health check-up, participation rate varies based on regions. This study tries to explore factors associated with participation of health check-ups in the community. Examined participants were 103,621 (55,941 male, 47,680 female) aged ≥ 65 , physically and cognitively independent.

Poisson regression with robust variance estimator was used to see the association between social capital and the health check-up participation, and further analysis were conducted with propensity score matching techniques. After controlling for socio-demographic and other health-related factors, result indicated that higher levels of social capital were associated with participation in health check-up services, suggesting protective roles of social capital on health behaviors.