



Experiences of Assistive Products Use among Older People in Japan

Lead Research Institution: The University of Tokyo

Principal Investigator (PI): Dr Misato Nihei, Lecturer, Graduate School of Frontier Sciences

Budget: US\$ 100,000

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Overview and Aim

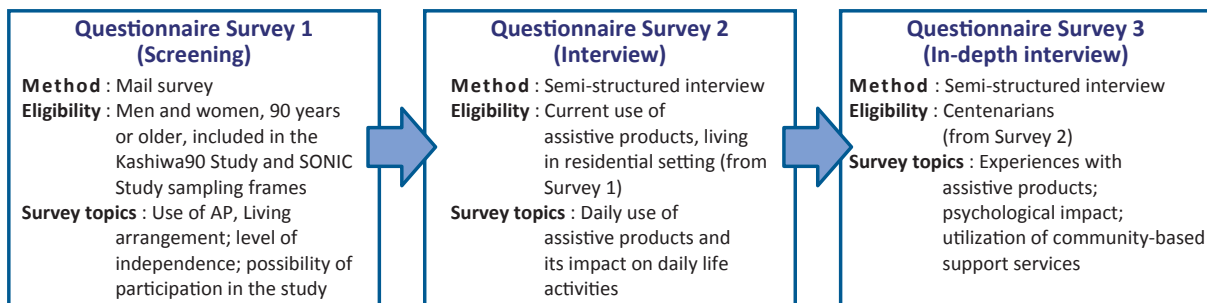
The use of assistive products can reduce the effects of several types of impairment, allowing older people to live more comfortably at home and remain active and engaged members of society. The very old population of Japan offers a unique source of information about the use of assistive products in later life. In this study, we will conduct a survey of non-institutionalized individuals, 90 years old and above, about their experiences with assistive products. The aim is to provide important insights to service providers in Japan and globally about strategies for the optimal provision of assistive products to older populations.

Background

Improvements in healthcare and lifestyles have allowed more people to live longer than ever. Japan, for example, has approximately 67 000 centenarians – more than in any other country in the world. Increasing age, however, is associated with increases in frailty, cognitive decline, chronic illness and other impairments, and the use of assistive products becomes essential to live comfortably and autonomously in one's home. With the number of older people worldwide forecast to increase substantially, the global demand for assistive technology is sure to increase.

Methods

The study participants will be Japanese, 90 years old and above, and current users of an assistive product, who are living in residential settings. The sample will be selected from residents of Kashiwa City, Chiba prefecture (site of the Kashiwa90 Study) and participants of the ongoing Septuagenarian, Octogenarian, Nonagenarian Investigation with Centenarian, Japan (SONIC) Study. The research will involve (1) a mail survey to assess assistive product use in the target population and to screen for eligibility for subsequent interviews, (2) a semi-structured interview with eligible participants on their use of assistive products and the impact on their daily living activities, and (3) a semi-structured, in-depth interview with a sub-set of the participants about the psychological effects of using assistive products and the utilization of community services to support the use of assistive products.



Research Objectives

1. Identify the age at which different types of assistive products are commonly used.
2. Identify what types of assistive products tend to commonly be used together.
3. Explore how assistive product use influences the daily living activities of users.
4. Identify users' experience of factors that facilitate or inhibit their use of assistive products.
5. Explore users' experience of and views about the services available to support their use of assistive products in the community.
6. Document older people's insights about their use of assistive products, including self-perceptions, feelings of stigma and empowerment.

Research Team Members

Lead Institution: The University of Tokyo

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