

## **A large-scale interdisciplinary longitudinal study on mental health in the middle-aged and elderly persons - development of strategy for prevention**

**Hiroshi Shimokata**

( National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Department of Epidemiology, Director )

### **【Outline of survey】**

Aging of Japanese society is rapidly progressing, and the number of elderly people with dementia or in need nursing care is also increasing. In addition, social burden is increasing. Many middle-aged and elderly persons cannot deal with these changes and become depressive. Annual number of suicide is more than 30,000 in Japan. Subjects of this study are community living people aged 40 to 79 years at the baseline. They are followed up every two years from 1997. Everyday, seven participants visit the examination center to be examined for medical status, exercise physiology, body composition, nutrition, and psychology. Using these data, the condition of mental health, especially depression, self-esteem, and cognitive impairment are evaluated. The association with life-style factors, disease, family relations, social and economical factors, and genetic factors are examined to develop a new strategy for prevention of mental problems in the middle-aged and elderly people.

### **【Expected results】**

Risk factors of mental health can be clarified from the detailed background data and genomic analysis. Using these results, a new strategy to identify high-risk groups and to prevent effectively depending on various personal conditions can be developed. The real conditions of mental health in Japanese society are also clarified. These results will be an important basis to maintain good mental health in the middle-aged and elderly people, and to establish affluent Japanese aged society.

### **【References by the principal researcher】**

- Shimokata H, Ando F, Niino N, et al.: Cholecystokinin A receptor gene promoter polymorphism and intelligence. *Ann Epidemiol* 15(3); 196-201, 2005.
- Fukukawa Y, Nakashima C, Shimokata H, et al.: The impact of health problems on depression and activities in middle-aged and older adults: Age and social interactions as moderators. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci* 59B(1); 19-26, 2004.

**【Term of project】** FY2006 - 2010

**【Budget allocation】** 22,300,000 yen

**【Homepage address】**

<http://www.nils.go.jp/department/ep/index.html>