Stress for Caring Frail Elderly

Han-Suk Jung* · Jyoung-Hyun Ham Ed.D** · Chang-Hee Ryou*** · Min-Soo Kim**** · Een-Su Lee*****

Abstract

Society has focused on the needs of the elderly rather than orienting family members to the needs of the elderly. The public focused on the elderly’s physical and emotional status, their living arrangements, and the kind and quality of the care they receive. In this article, we used data from a regional survey on stress and daily life difficulties on the five point perception scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree) among primary caregiving children who care the handicapped elderly parents in Korea and Japan. The comparison of family groups reveals important observations. Among others, there are different effects of problems on burden of caregivers depending on family relationship. For spouses, agitation, aggression, depression and activities of daily living are found as important variables affecting burden. Depression, however, is a more serious burden on children, and memory loss on daughters-in-law. Based on these results, this paper suggests that the support programs for dementia family should be developed to reflect the different needs according to different family relationship.

Keywords : living arrangement, burden of caregivers, nursing homes, family care, activities of daily living

* Chiropractic Doctor, Association Of CHD, Vancouver, Canada
** Adjunct Professor, Education Department, Bridge Port University, Connecticut, U.S.A.
*** Director, Legal Foundation of Eden Care House, Korea
**** General Manager, Asiana Cabin Service Association, Seoul, Korea
***** Associate, Retirement Residence Investment Trust, Ontario, Canada
I. Growing Old and Caring Them in Aging Society

This study has been performed to analyze adult children’s general emotional stress and difficulties in daily lives caring the elderly parents at home. Until a few decades ago, the majority of the Korean population didn’t live to be 60. In the 1990’s, the average life expectancy of the Koreans has increased to 71.6 years, well above the age of 60.*

The life expectancy will continuously increase upto 77.7 years in 2005, and more than 80 in 2020. Moreover, medical experts predict that maximum life span may go up to 120 in a few years.** Particularly, Korean society has been experiencing so called «Condensed Aging Society», where rate of those 65 or older has jumped from 7% to 14% within 22 years while other developed countries spent twice the period***. Second, the rapid economic development and the accompanying transformations in the family structure and life-styles affected the status of the elderly in Korea. Traditionally, the social status of the elderly was enviably high; however, new ideas and technologies undermined traditional values and attitudes. Based on the above-mentioned changes and continuity in Korea, the elderly now experience many problems.

As for other developed countries, the elderly account for an increasing percentage of the U.S. population as a result of nationwide improvements in health care, nutrition, education, and general living standards. In 1997, one in eight Americans were elderly (age 65 and over). By 2030, one in five could be elderly. As the Baby Boom generation reaches age 65 (between 2010 and 2030), this trend towards an elderly population explosion poses a variety of challenges to U.S. policy makers.

The elderly population is extremely diverse in its social, economic, and health status. Most people age 65 to 74 are healthy, active and independent. The oldest-old, however, are more likely to face the problems of failing health, widowhood and loss of independence. Korean tradition have dictated that the elderly are to be taken cared of by their children. Recently, there is growing recognition in Korea that the majority

