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Factors associated with participation in volunteer disaster response activities

Toshiyuki Ojima, Chiyo Murata, Shinya Hayasaka, Tomoko Haraoka, Yousuke Shibata, Tatsuya Noda, Machiko Miwa (Hamamatsu University School of Medicine)

Introduction: Historically, Japan has experienced many earthquakes and floods. For the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, an estimated 14 million non-professional volunteers participated in disaster response activities. After this earthquake, many volunteers have participated in disaster response or preparation activities in Japan.

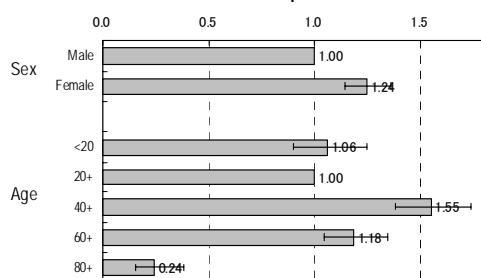
Objectives: To reveal factors related to participation in such activities.

Methods: Micro data of the Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities conducted in 2001 was used, which was provided by the Research Centre for Information and Statistics of Social Science, Institute of Economic Research, Hitotsubashi University with the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Subjects of the survey were aged 10 years or older randomly selected from all over Japan. Number of respondents was 146,065. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed and collected by home visit of official investigators. Multiple logistic regression analyses were conducted to adjust for sex and age groups.

Results: Participation rates of volunteer disaster response or preparation activities were 1.3% and 1.5% for male and female, respectively. Participation rates by age groups were 1.2%, 1.8%, 1.4% and 0.3% for aged under 20, 20+, 40+, 60+, and 80+, respectively. Odds ratios (OR) (95% confidence interval) for participating in such activities adjusting for sex and age groups were as follows. When housewives and persons without jobs were set as a reference, respective ORs were 1.291 (1.141-1.461) and 1.345 (1.163-1.556) for full- and part-time workers. When not married group was a reference, such ORs were 1.284 (1.097-1.504) and 1.030 (0.824-1.287) for married and widowed or divorced groups. We conducted analyses by education level and income as well. When less than high school education group was a reference, respective ORs were 1.288 (1.147-1.448) and 1.859 (1.628-2.122) for high school and college or higher education groups. When a group with annual income less than 2 million Japanese yen was a reference, respective ORs were 1.304 (1.101-1.544), 1.466 (1.229-1.748), and 1.970 (1.634-2.375) for 2+ million yen, 6+ million yen, and 10+ million yen groups.

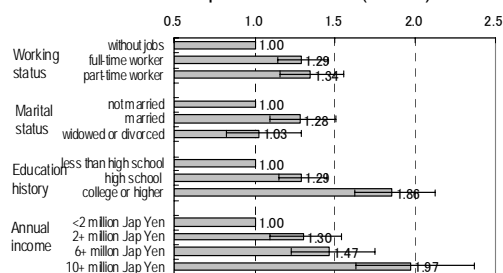
Conclusion: Middle aged high income workers were more likely to participate in volunteer disaster response or preparation activities in Japan.

Fig 1 Odds ratios of participation of volunteer disaster response activities



Odds ratio and 95% confidence interval; sex and age were in the model

Fig 2 Odds ratios of participation of volunteer disaster response activities (cont'd)



Odds ratio and 95% confidence interval; sex and age were adjusted respectively.