

Cognitive Function and Coping Behavior in the Elderly: A Population-Based Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract : Introduction: In Japan, the most aged country in the world, it is important to explore predictive factors of cognitive function among the elderly. Coping behavior relieves chronic stress and improves lifestyle, and consequently may reduce the risk of cognitive impairment. One of the most widely investigated frameworks evaluated in previous studies is approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented coping strategies. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between cognitive function and coping strategies among elderly residents in urban areas of Japan. Method: This is a part of the cross-sectional Arakawa geriatric cohort study for 1,099 residents (aged 65 to 86 years; mean [SD] = 72.9 [5.2]). Participants were assessed for cognitive function using the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and diagnosed by psychiatrists in face-to-face interviews. They were then investigated for their each coping behaviors and coping strategies (approach- and avoidance-oriented coping) using stress and coping inventory. A multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between MMSE score and each coping strategy. Results: Of the 1,099 patients, the mean MMSE score of the study participants was 27.2 (SD = 2.7), and the numbers of the diagnosis of normal, mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and dementia were 815 (74.2%), 248 (22.6%), and 14 (1.3%), respectively. Approach-oriented coping score was significantly associated with MMSE score (B [partial regression coefficient] = 0.12, 95% confidence interval = 0.05 to 0.19) after adjusting for confounding factors including age, sex, and education. Avoidance-oriented coping did not show a significant association with MMSE score (B [partial regression coefficient] = -0.02, 95% confidence interval = -0.09 to 0.06). Conclusion: Approach-oriented coping was clearly associated with neurocognitive function in the Japanese population. A future longitudinal trial is warranted to investigate the protective effects of coping behavior on cognitive function.

Keywords : approach-oriented coping, cognitive impairment, coping behavior, dementia

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