

The associations of mental health with family nursing caregiving and socioeconomic/sociodemographic factors: findings from a six-year panel survey in Japan\*

July 2014

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**Abstract**

*It is widely known that the mental health of middle-aged adults is closely associated with involvement in family caregiving, as well as socioeconomic and sociodemographic factors. However, most studies focusing on mental health in adulthood have not fully controlled for time-invariant factors. Moreover, the relative importance of factors associated with mental health has remained largely understudied. In the current study, we employed fixed-effects regression models to examine the manner in which middle-aged adults' mental health is associated with involvement in family caregiving and socioeconomic and sociodemographic factors, after controlling for time-invariant factors. Using data from a population-based, six-year panel survey in Japan, we focused on the evolution of the Kessler 6 (K6) scores (range: 0–24) for 26,522 individuals (12,646 men and 13,876 women) aged 50–59 years in 2005 over the subsequent five years. We found that men and women experienced 0.54 (95% CI 0.44–0.64) and 0.57 (95% CI 0.49–0.66) unit increases in their K6 scores, respectively, when they became involved in care provision for any family member. This magnitude of distress exceeded that associated with any socioeconomic or sociodemographic factor examined in this study. Furthermore, we found that care provision to a mother-in-law had an additional, negative association with mental health for female caregivers, as opposed to men. These findings suggest that more panel studies are needed to examine the correlates of mental health among middle-aged adults.*

**Keywords**

Japan; family caregiving; mental health; psychological distress; sociodemographic factors; socioeconomic factors

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\* Presented at the 20th International Panel Data Conference (Tokyo, 9-10 July 2014). Preliminary and comments are welcome.