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Characteristics of Occupation and Time Usage among the Housebound Elderly People Living in Communes: A Survey in Tadami Town in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan

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Introduction: Going outside is indispensable for the daily living. Although the housebound elderly people have the ability of going outside, they do only once a week at least.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to clarify the characteristics of occupation and time usage and to examine physical, psychological and social-environmental aspects among high risk housebound elderly people compared to their non-risk counterparts.

Methods: The survey was conducted by individual interviews with home-visiting in Tadami Town in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan. Participants were 60 elderly people in total (17 men and 43 women) who were 65 years old and older, underwent Evaluation of Living Functions (ELF: Japanese Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor) in 2008 and average age was 77.9 ± 5.2 . Data was gathered about age, whether living together with their family members or not and using with Occupational Questionnaire and WHOQOL26. Participants were divided into risk and non-risk groups based on the ELF and then factors related to each question from the risk group was analyzed.

Results: The following three findings were obtained related to the risk group comparing to the non-risk group; 1) there were no statistically significant differences between frequencies and satisfaction degrees towards staying out, 2) the time was longer when participants felt that they couldn't carry out their occupations well and 3) the rest time was longer.

Conclusion: It was suggested that not going outside had a negative influence against the characteristics of daily life and QOL.

Contribution to the practice base of Occupational Therapy: This study provides the necessity of occupational therapy for the housebound elderly people.