

表 1 2 転倒者と非転倒者（2000年）の過去の測定・調査項目（1997年）の比較

(身体、体力測定項目；1997年)		転倒者群(n=40) 平均 ± 標準偏差		非転倒者群 (n=247) 平均 ± 標準偏差		検定
年齢	歳	72.9 ± 6.5		71.6 ± 6.1		n.s.
BMI	Kg/m <sup>2</sup>	23.3 ± 3.5		24.0 ± 3.3		n.s.
握力	kg	17.1 ± 4.4		18.8 ± 4.6		p<0.05
通常歩行；速度	m/秒	1.02 ± 0.27		1.06 ± 0.22		n.s.
通常歩行；歩幅	cm	52.8 ± 9.0		55.8 ± 7.6		p<0.1
最大歩行；速度	m/秒	1.41 ± 0.33		1.42 ± 0.30		n.s.
最大歩行；歩幅	cm	59.8 ± 11.3		61.4 ± 8.3		n.s.
開眼片足立ち	秒	30.5 ± 22.6		30.8 ± 23.5		n.s.
(聞き取り調査項目；1997年)		人	%	人	%	
高血圧症既往	あり	20	50.0%	87	35.2%	p<0.1
糖尿病既往	あり	4	10.0%	9	3.6%	p<0.1
散歩・体操	している	13	32.5%	86	34.8%	n.s.
定期的な運動	している	27	69.2%	158	64.2%	n.s.
健康度自己評価	よい	21	52.5%	175	70.9%	p<0.05
過去1年間の転倒	あり	11	27.5%	29	11.7%	p<0.05

表 1 3 転倒者と非転倒者（2000年）の転倒アセスメント項目（2000年）の比較

(転倒アセスメント項目)	カテゴリー	転倒者 (n=48)		非転倒者 (n=344)		検定
		人	%	人	%	
青信号の間に渡りきる	いいえ	1	2.1%	7	2.0%	n.s.
1 kmをぐらいを続けて歩く	いいえ	5	10.4%	63	18.3%	n.s.
片足で立ったまま靴下をはく	いいえ	22	45.8%	159	46.2%	n.s.
濡れたタオルをきつく絞る	いいえ	1	2.1%	6	1.7%	n.s.
過去1年間に入院	はい	5	10.4%	20	5.8%	n.s.
立ちくらみをする	はい	18	37.5%	71	20.6%	p<0.05
脳卒中の既往	はい	2	4.2%	9	2.6%	n.s.
糖尿病の既往	はい	2	4.2%	21	6.1%	n.s.
睡眠薬、降圧剤など服用	はい	25	52.1%	157	45.6%	n.s.
サンダル、スリッパの使用	はい	41	85.4%	307	89.2%	n.s.
視力（ふつう）	いいえ	1	2.1%	12	3.5%	n.s.
聴力（ふつう）	いいえ	6	12.5%	20	5.8%	p<0.1
家の中でよくつまずく、滑る	はい	6	12.5%	14	4.1%	p<0.05
転倒に対する不安が大きい	はい	23	47.9%	84	24.4%	p<0.01

## 地域の高齢者における転倒と骨量の関連性の検討

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研究要旨：骨折の主要な2大リスク要因である「転倒」と「低骨量」の両者を併せ持つ「骨折のMultiple Risk Factor群」の特徴を断面的に検討した。年齢調整した転倒者の検討では、骨量非低下群と比較して、骨量低下群では痩せ、筋力低下、体力低下、活動能力低下、他者との交流頻度低下、転倒時の傷害が重い等が特徴的であった。今後、転倒/骨量と筋力・体力・活動能力などとの関連の検討が一層重要と考えられる。

### A. 研究目的

高齢化社会を迎え、高齢者の快適社会を形成支援していくためには、疾病の予防、中でもQOLを著しく損なう骨折を予防していくことが重要である。

今回の検討では、骨折の主要なリスク要因である「転倒」と「骨量」をそれぞれ独立した因子と捉え、両者を併せ持つ高齢者群（骨折のMultiple Risk Factor群）とその他の高齢者群との特徴の差異を明らかにすることを目的とした。昨年度の村櫛フィールドにおける結果をふまえ、三本木フィールドで多項目にわたって詳細に断面的検討を行った。骨折リスクの重積する高危険群の特徴を把握することで、将来の骨折に対する適切なリスクアセスメントが可能となり、さらには効果的な予防が可能である。

### B. 研究方法

#### [1] 村櫛町の検討

平成10年8月に、静岡県浜松市村櫛町において、転倒調査および骨量測定をした65歳以上の在宅高齢者410名を対象として、1年後の平成11年に郵便法による転倒に関するアンケート調査を行った。そのうち有効回答が得られた343名を本検討の対象とした。骨量測定は踵骨超音波法（AOS100、アロカ社）にて施行し、音響的骨評価値の%T-score値（若年時骨量を100とする）90未満を骨量低値、90以上を骨量非低値と定義した。今回、転倒の有無/骨量低下の有無の4群別に、体力指標である握力を評価した。

#### [2] 三本木町の検討

平成12年8月、宮城県三本木町（人口約9千人）の75歳以上で、要介護状態でない在宅高齢者のうち、転倒調査を含む健康調査の参加高齢者551名中、骨量データの利用できる287名（男性189名、女性318）を対象とした。なお骨量は浜松市と同様に踵骨超音波法（アロカ AOS100）による音響的骨評価値（OSI）の%Tscoreを用いた。なお本検討では、骨量は50percentile=73で2群に分けた。

転倒調査の項目は、質問紙による面接調査および視力、握力、大腿周囲径、下腿周囲径、長座位体前屈、歩行機能（10m歩行時間・歩数）、片足立ち（開眼）等である。質問紙の調査項目は、過去1年間の

転倒の有無、日時、回数及び転倒時の状況（転倒した場所、履き物、動作、原因、怪我、怪我部位、入院の有無等）、主観的健康観、生活満足度、動作に対する自己効力感、既往歴（脳卒中、心臓病、高血圧等）、聴力、視力、物忘れ、老健式活動能力指標、Motor Fitness Scale、他者との交流頻度などである。

まず「過去1年間の転倒の有/無」と「骨量低下/非低下」の組み合わせで4群に分類し、各群毎に調査項目の頻度の割合を検討した。

次に、詳細に検討するため、4群のうち過去1年間の転倒者75名（男24名、女51名）のみを対象とした検討を行った。「転倒有り+骨量低下」群と「転倒有り+骨量非低下」群の2群で関連要因の検討を行った。骨量低下/非低下が、転倒者において、そのprofileに差異を生み出すのか否か検討した。ここでは年齢の交絡を補正するため、対象者を年齢の50percentileの80歳で2群に層別化し、カテゴリ変数に対してはMantel-Haenszel法にて年齢補正を行った。また連続変数に対しては年齢を含めた2元配置ANOVA（交互作用を含めたモデル）により解析した。

### C. 研究結果

#### [1] 村櫛村の検討（表1）

1年間の転倒の有無と骨量と間に明らかな関連を認めなかった。（ $\chi^2$ 検定、 $p=0.378$ ）年齢調整はしていないが、転倒した高齢者では、baselineの骨量が低値である者の方が、握力（右）が低い傾向を認めた。また「骨量低値かつ転倒あり」の群は「骨量非低値かつ転倒なし」の群より有意に右握力が低下していた。（ANOVA, Tukey法）

#### [2] 三本木町の検討

図1～6に、4群の各群毎に調査項目の頻度の割合を、図3-Dグラフで図示した。

また、転倒者における骨量低下/非低下別の2群の検討では、図7（詳細）、8（屋内・屋外）に転倒場所、図9に履き物、図10に転倒直前の動作を示した。表2に、Body Mass Index (BMI,  $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ )、体脂肪率、前屈度、大腿周囲径、下腿周囲径、歩数などの連続変数の平均値（標準偏差）を示した。年齢を補正し

ても、BMI、前屈度、大腿周囲径、下腿周囲径において骨量低下の方が非低下に比べ有意に低値となった。  
( $p < 0.05$ )

表 3-1 及び 3-2 に、骨量低下/非低下別の調査項目頻度を示した。年齢補正の上で、骨量低下群において significant / suggestive を示した項目は、「買い物自信ない」、「骨粗鬆症既往多い」、「耳聞こえ悪い」、「目悪い」、「請求書支払い出来ない」、「新聞読まない」、「近所づきあい少ない」、「袋 10kg を持てない」、「倒れた自転車を起こせない」、「転倒場所は玄関多い」、「転倒時靴はいている」、「転倒後の処置は通院多く、放置少ない」等であった。

#### D. 考察

大腿骨頸部を代表部位とする骨折の主要なリスク要因として転倒と骨量（低）が知られる。この両者は転倒予防クリニックで同時に評価されることが多いものの、同時に両者に着目して関連要因を検討した研究は少ない。両者を併せ持つ骨折のハイリスク群、すなわち Multiple Risk Factor 群の特徴を把握することで、将来の骨折に対する適切で効果的な予防対策が可能である。

転倒者の検討では、骨量低下群（Multiple Risk Factor 群）は、非低下群に比べ、年齢調整後、以下の項目において特徴的な結果が得られた。

- 痩せ
- 筋力低下
- 体力低下
- 活動能力低下
- 他者との交流頻度低下
- 転倒時の傷害が重い

等である。今後、転倒/骨量と筋力・体力・活動能力などとの関連の検討が一層重要と考えられる。<sup>1,2)</sup>

#### E. 結論

本研究は断面研究であるが、骨折の Multiple Risk Factor 群の特徴がある程度把握できた。今後、転倒/骨量と筋力・体力・活動能力などとの関連の検討をさらに深めていくことが肝要である。

#### F. 論文・発表

1. 新野直明, 杉森裕樹, 他. 都市部高齢者を対象とした転倒調査. 日老医誌. 2000; 37(suppl):135.
2. 田中利明, 杉森裕樹, 他. 超音波骨画像検査装置 (UBIS3000) による踵骨骨量測定的基本的検討. 日衛誌. 2000; 55(1):446.

#### G. 研究協力者

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#### 参考文献

1. LaCroix AZ, et al. Maintaining mobility in later life.

II. Am J Epidemiol. 1993;137:858-869.

2. Rantanen T, et al. Midlife hand grip strength as a predictor of old age disability. JAMA. 1999; 281(6): 558-560.

表1. 浜松市地域住民における転倒の新規発生および骨量による右握力

カテゴリ	N	右握力
骨量低値かつ転倒あり	62	15.1±7.3kg
骨量低値かつ転倒なし	242	16.9±7.1kg
骨量非低値かつ転倒あり	7	19.6±6.1kg
骨量非低値かつ転倒なし	32	21.0±5.8kg

註) ここでは骨量低値を%Tscore<90 で定義

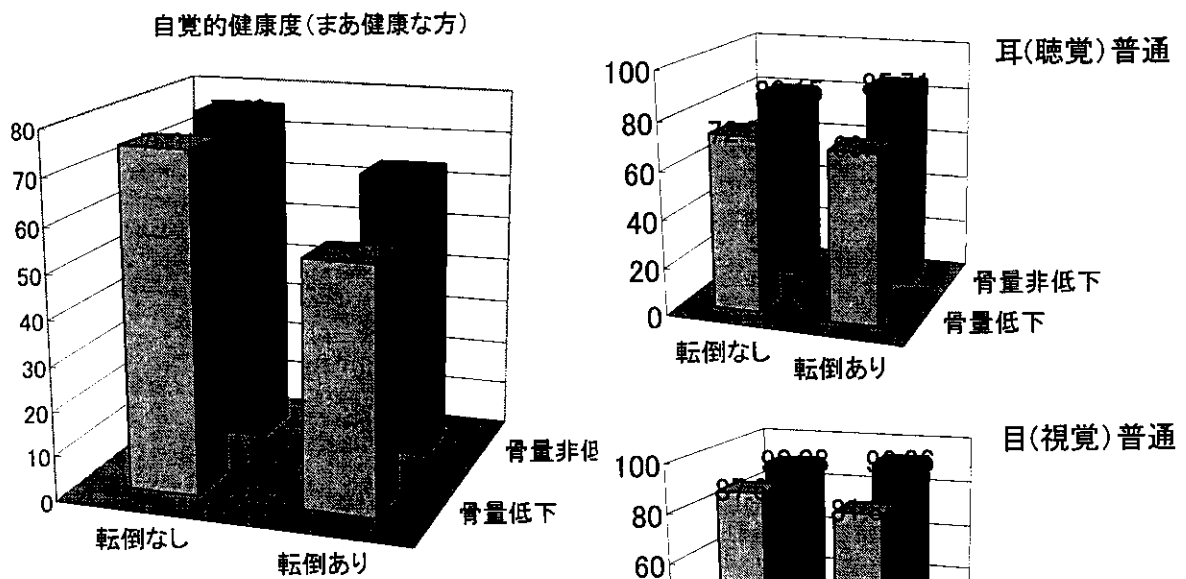


図1. 自覚的健康度

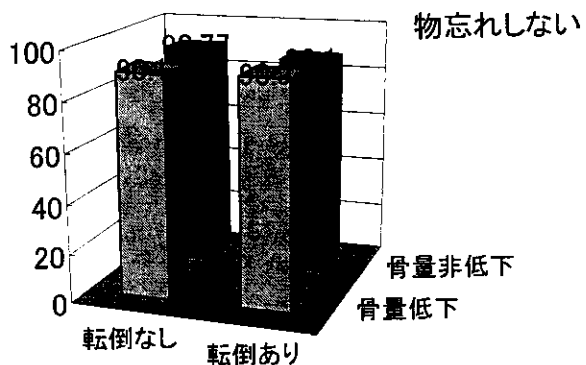


図2. 聴力・視力・物忘れ

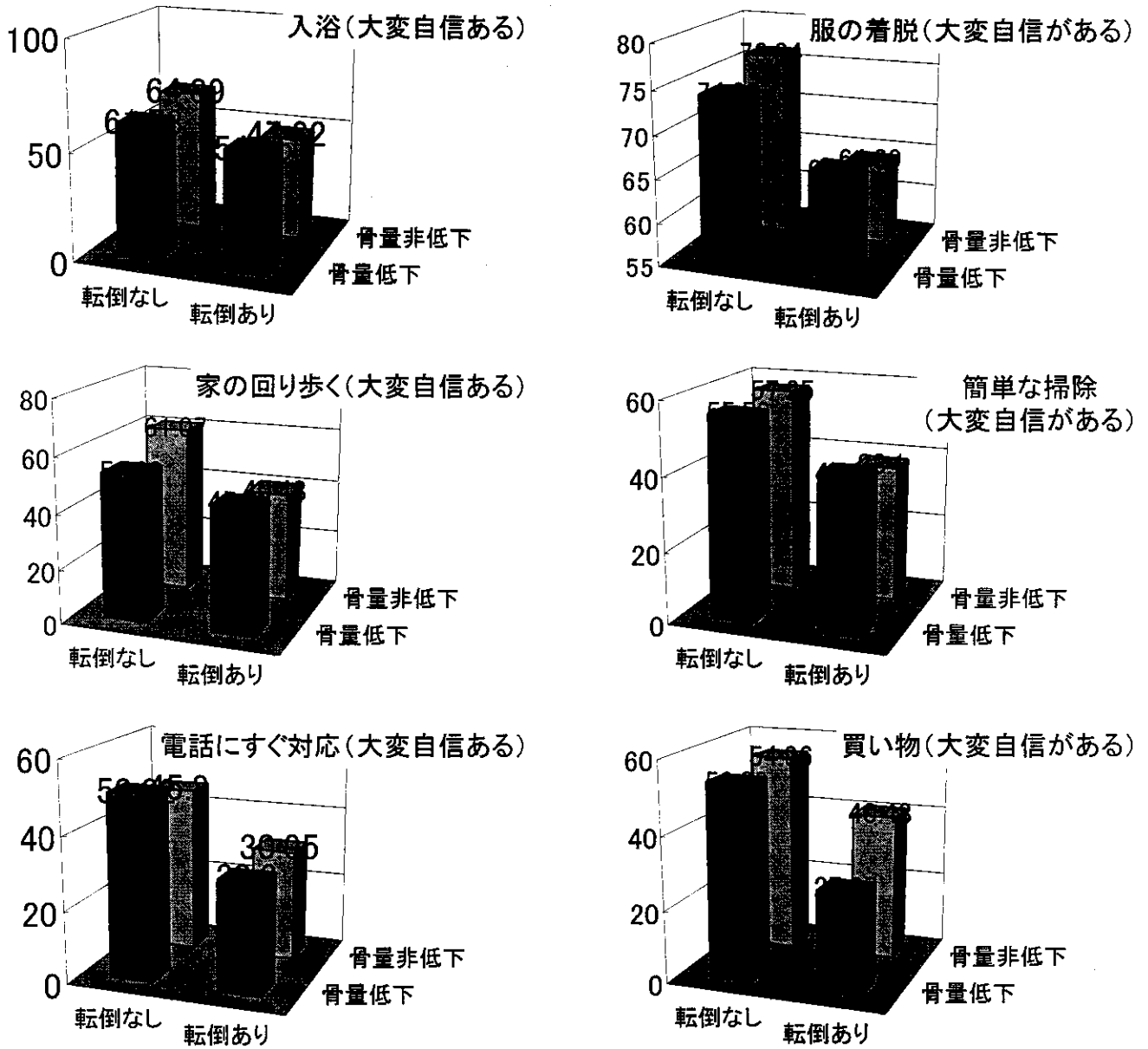


図3. 動作に対する自己効力感

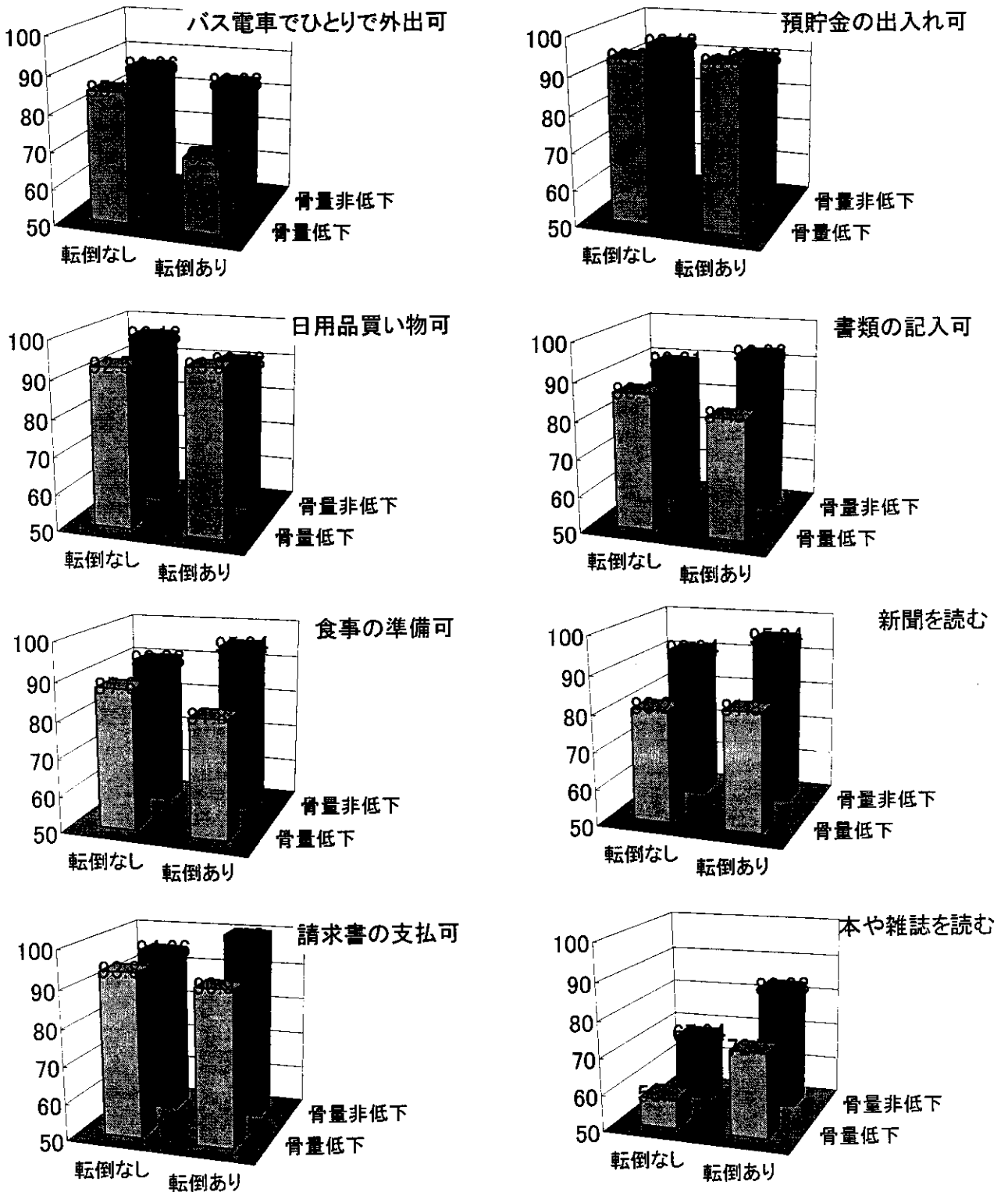


図 4-1. 老研式活動能力指標 (1)

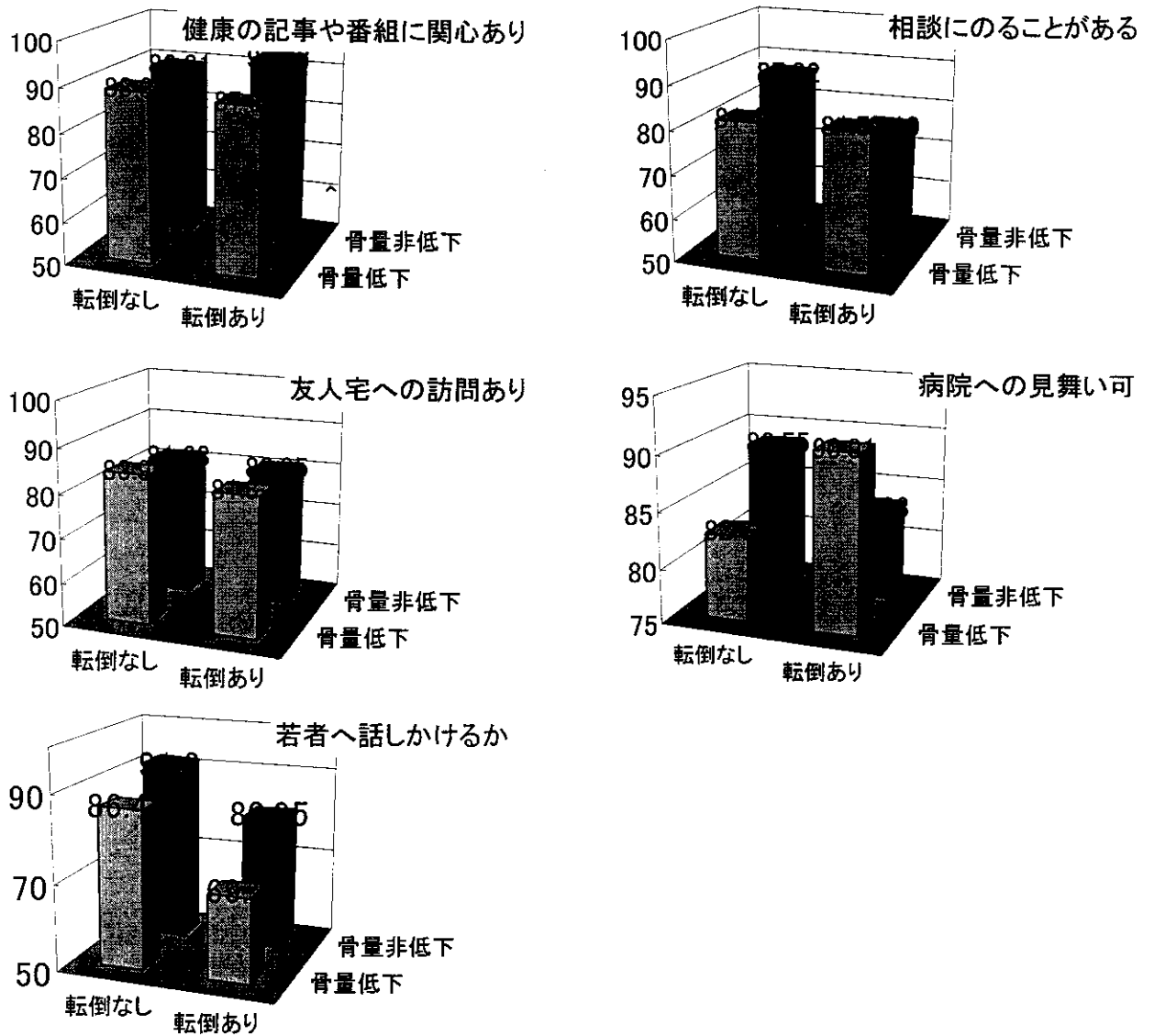


図4-2. 老研式活動能力指標（2）

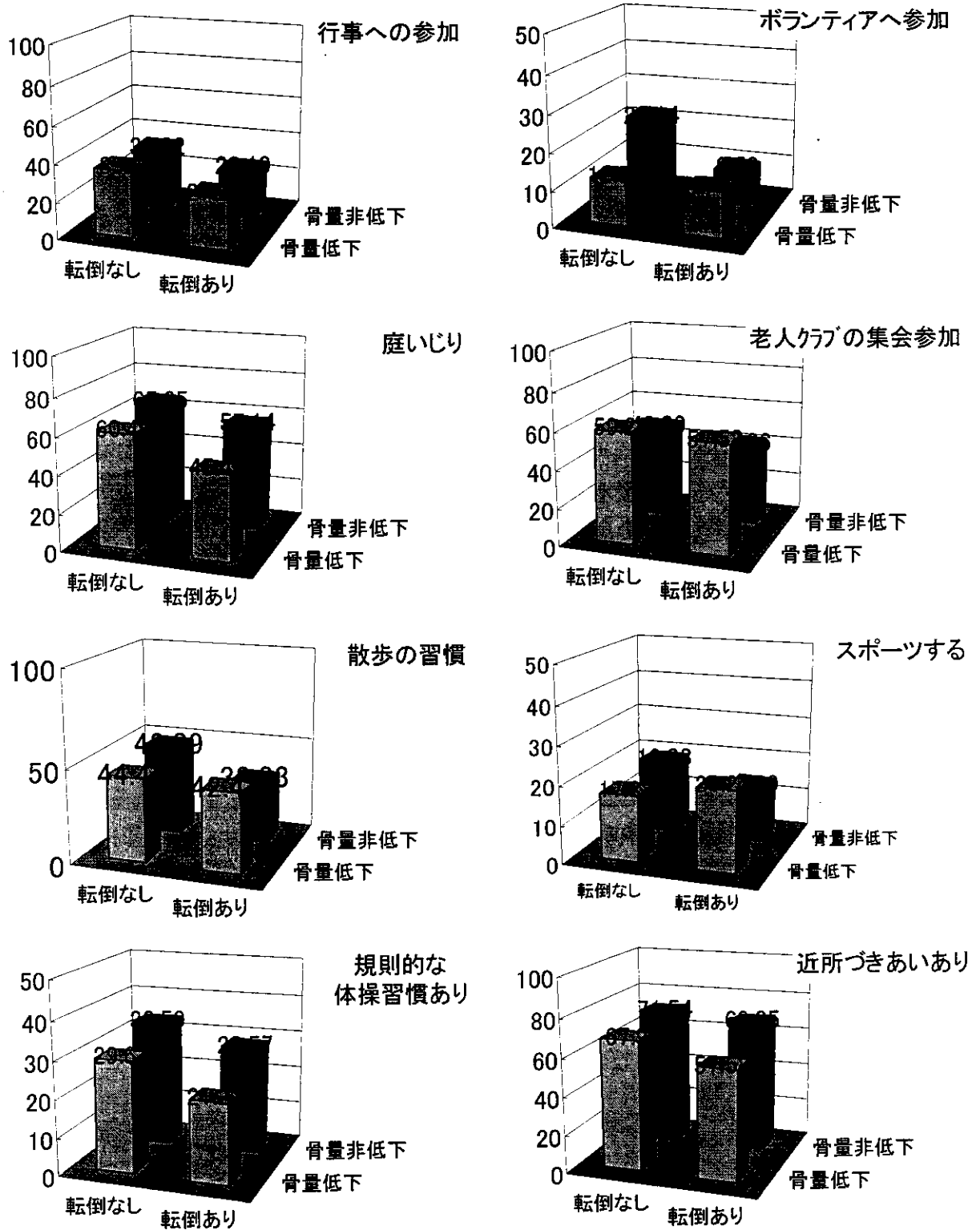


図5. 他者との交流頻度



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 「地域の高齢者における転倒・骨折の発生と予防に関する疫学的研究」分担研究報告書

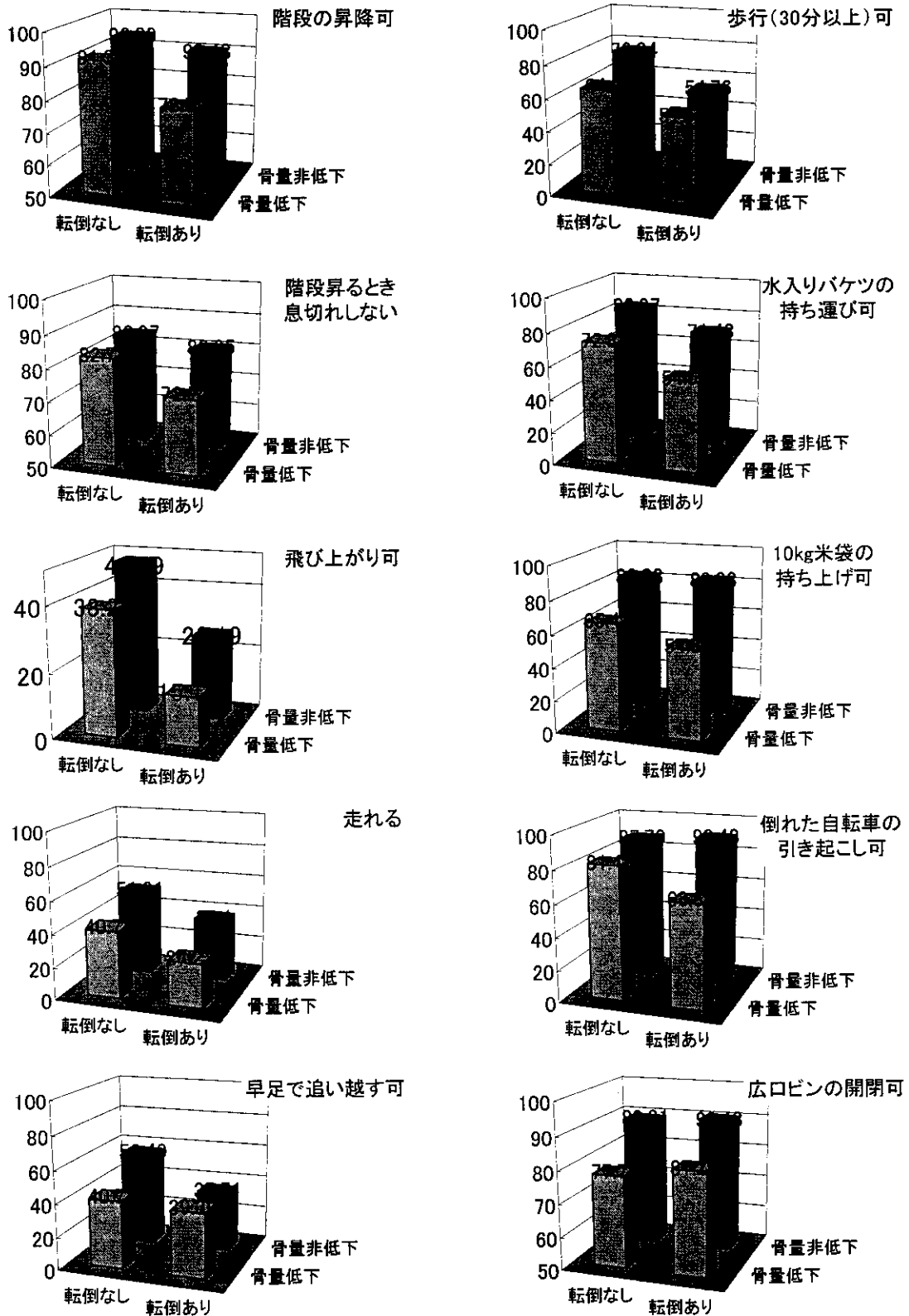


図6-1. Motor Fitness Scale (1)

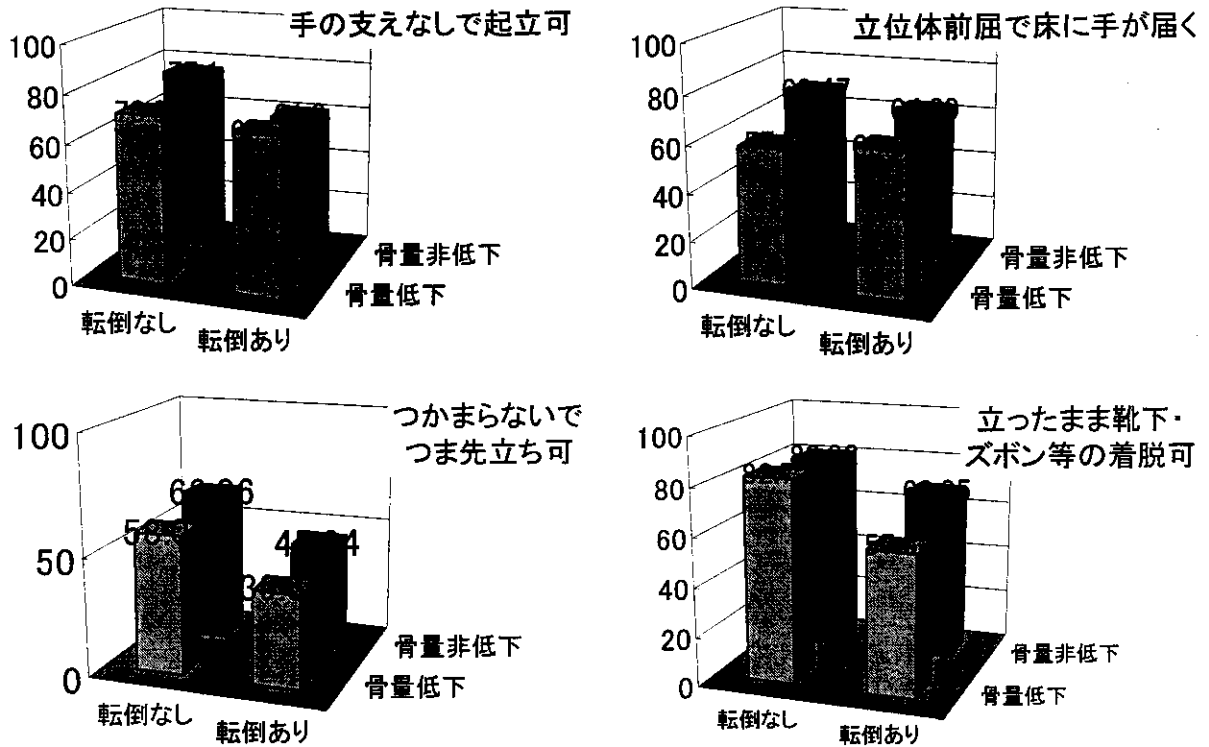


図 6-2. Motor Fitness Scale (2)

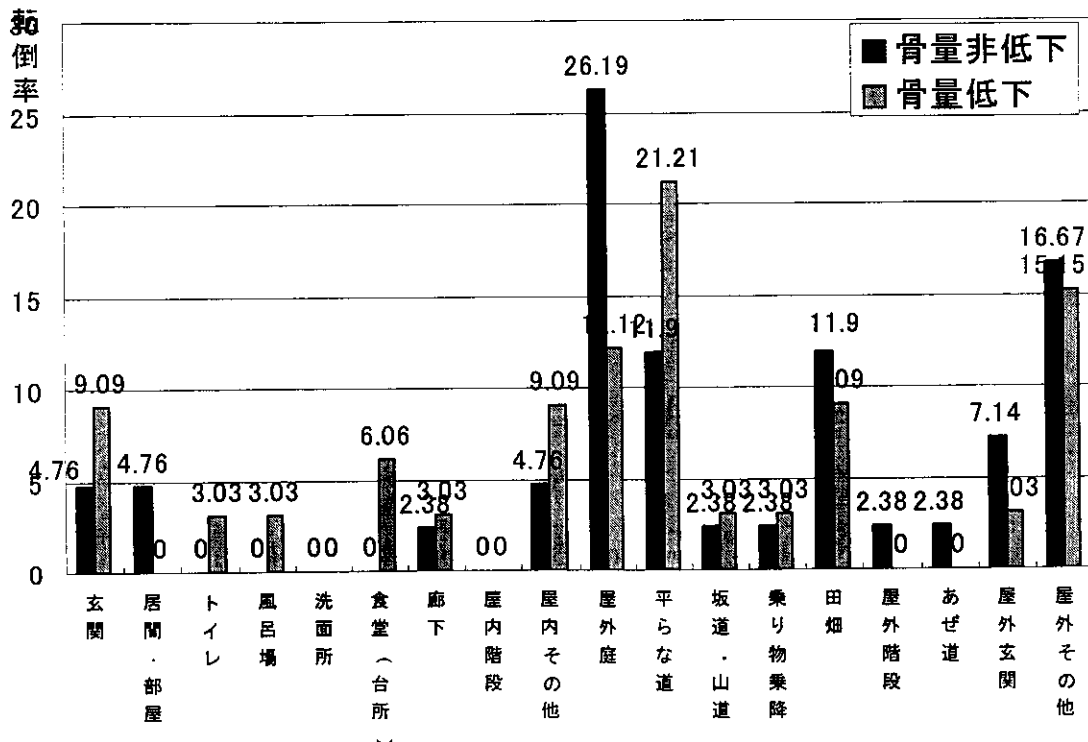


図 7. 転倒者における骨量低下/非低下別の転倒場所

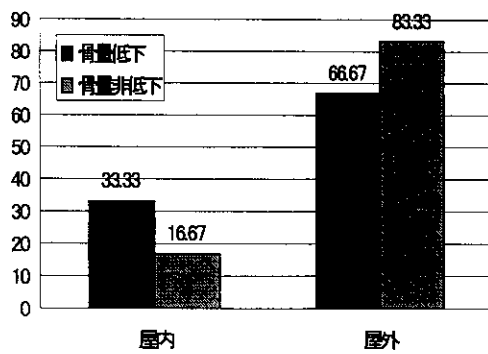


図 8. 転倒者における骨量低下/非低下別の転倒場所（屋内・屋外）

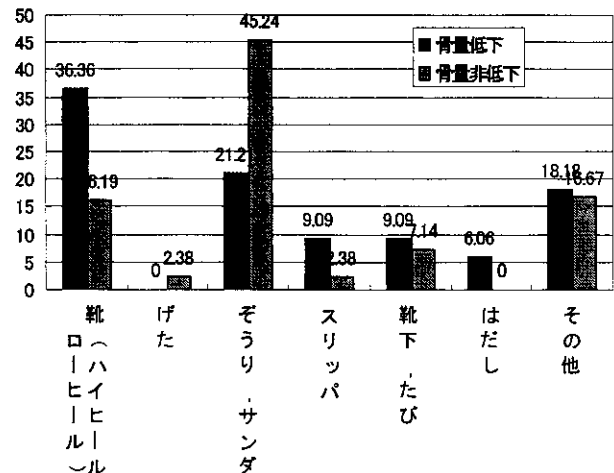


図 9. 転倒者における骨量低下/非低下別の履き物

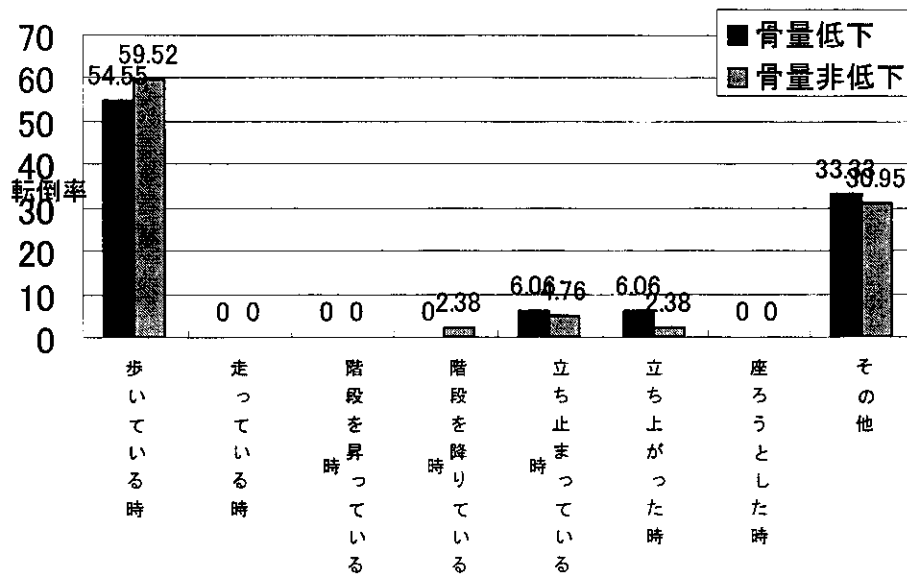


図 10. 転倒者における骨量低下/非低下別の転倒直前動作

表 2. 転倒者における骨量低下群/非低下群別の統計量（連続変数）

	転倒あり						p-value
	骨量低下群			骨量非低下群			
	N	mean	SD	N	mean	SD	
BMI	33	22.03	3.57	42	24.16	2.91	0.009
体脂肪率	33	23.91	8.38	42	27.32	7.15	0.059
前屈度	33	7.60	9.45	40	12.21	7.29	0.037
大腿周囲径	32	34.50	3.42	42	36.44	3.19	0.024
下腿周囲径	33	30.14	2.62	42	32.10	2.41	0.005
歩数A	33	22.70	6.81	41	19.71	4.78	0.074

p-values are tested by two-way ANOVA adjusting age

表3-1. 転倒者における骨量低下群／非低下群別の調査項目の頻度(1)

健康度	転倒あり:80歳未満				転倒あり:80歳以上				CMH p-value
	骨量低下群		骨量非低下群		骨量低下群		骨量非低下群		
	n	N %	n	N %	n	N %	n	N %	
健康度	0	12 0.0%	2	23 8.7%	2	21 9.5%	1	19 5.3%	0.157
生活動作:入浴	5	12 41.7%	13	23 56.5%	10	21 47.6%	9	19 47.4%	0.618
生活動作:家のまわりを歩く	0	12 0.0%	7	23 30.4%	2	21 9.5%	1	19 5.3%	0.398
生活動作:電話にすぐ対応する	0	12 0.0%	1	23 4.3%	3	21 14.3%	0	19 0.0%	0.288
生活動作:服の脱着	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	1	21 4.8%	0	19 0.0%	0.525
生活動作:簡単な掃除	1	12 8.3%	6	23 26.1%	5	21 23.8%	1	19 5.3%	0.115
生活動作:簡単な買い物	0	12 0.0%	1	23 4.3%	4	21 19.0%	0	19 0.0%	0.041
この1年間の通院	10	12 83.3%	22	23 95.7%	20	21 95.2%	18	19 94.7%	0.942
既往:脳卒中	0	12 0.0%	2	23 17.4%	2	21 9.5%	0	19 0.0%	0.335
既往:心臓病	3	12 25.0%	4	23 17.4%	8	21 38.1%	3	19 15.8%	0.115
既往:高血圧	5	12 41.7%	6	23 26.1%	7	21 33.3%	9	19 47.4%	0.366
既往:甲状腺	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	0	21 0.0%	0	19 0.0%	—
既往:糖尿病	2	12 16.7%	3	23 13.0%	2	21 9.5%	3	19 15.8%	0.550
既往:白内障	1	12 8.3%	3	23 13.0%	5	21 23.8%	5	19 26.3%	0.527
既往:パーキンソン症候群	0	12 0.0%	0	23 0.0%	0	21 0.0%	0	19 0.0%	—
既往:骨粗鬆症	2	12 16.7%	1	23 4.3%	3	21 14.3%	0	19 0.0%	0.087
既往:リウマチ	0	12 0.0%	1	23 4.3%	4	21 19.0%	6	19 31.6%	0.361
既往:その他	4	12 33.3%	7	23 30.4%	4	21 19.0%	6	19 31.6%	0.574
既往:なし	12	12 100.0%	18	23 78.3%	18	21 85.7%	15	19 78.9%	0.371
握力	3	12 25.0%	2	23 8.7%	7	21 33.3%	4	19 21.1%	0.065
握力	2	12 16.7%	3	23 13.0%	4	21 19.0%	3	19 15.8%	0.619
物忘れ	0	12 0.0%	2	23 8.7%	3	21 14.3%	5	19 26.3%	0.427
物忘れ	2	12 16.7%	2	23 8.7%	2	21 9.5%	1	19 5.3%	0.609
交通機関を使って一人で外出	0	12 0.0%	2	23 8.7%	8	21 38.1%	5	19 23.8%	0.270
日用品の買い物	2	12 16.7%	2	23 8.7%	2	21 9.5%	2	19 10.5%	0.270
食事の用意	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	2	21 9.5%	0	19 0.0%	0.916
請求書の支払い	1	12 8.3%	2	23 8.7%	2	21 9.5%	2	19 10.5%	0.270
預金の出し入れ	0	12 0.0%	2	23 8.7%	2	21 9.5%	1	19 5.3%	0.342
書類の記入	1	12 8.3%	1	23 4.3%	3	21 14.3%	3	19 15.8%	0.334
新聞を読む	3	12 25.0%	4	23 17.4%	6	21 28.6%	5	19 26.3%	0.342
本や雑誌を読む	3	12 25.0%	2	23 8.7%	3	21 14.3%	1	19 5.3%	0.855
健康についての関心	1	12 8.3%	2	23 8.7%	5	21 23.8%	5	19 26.3%	0.836
友達の家を訪ねる	1	12 8.3%	3	23 13.0%	6	21 28.6%	6	19 31.6%	0.574
家族や友達と相談に乗る	0	12 0.0%	4	23 17.4%	3	21 14.3%	4	19 21.1%	0.141
病人を見舞う	0	12 0.0%	3	23 13.0%	3	21 14.3%	4	19 21.1%	0.417
若い人に見舞う	1	12 8.3%	4	23 17.4%	9	21 42.9%	19	19 100.0%	—

\*p<0.05, #p<0.1

表3-2. 転倒者における骨量低下群／非低下群別の調査項目の頻度(2)

	転倒あり:80歳未満				転倒あり:80歳以上					
	骨量低下群		骨量非低下群		骨量低下群		骨量非低下群			
	n	N %	n	N %	n	N %	n	N %		
町内会の催しや行事	3	12 25.0%	8	23 34.8%	10	21 47.6%	7	19 36.8%	0.453	0.961
庭いじりなどの軽い運動	1	12 8.3%	5	23 21.7%	4	21 19.0%	1	19 5.3%	0.209	0.525
規則的に散歩	0	12 0.0%	10	23 43.5%	5	21 23.8%	7	19 36.8%	0.502	0.058#
規則的に体操	5	12 41.7%	8	23 34.8%	11	21 52.4%	6	19 31.6%	0.268	0.266
ボウリングに参加	9	12 75.0%	15	23 65.2%	18	21 85.7%	14	19 73.7%	0.496	0.611
老人クラブの集まり	2	12 16.7%	9	23 39.1%	8	21 38.1%	4	19 21.1%	0.276	0.494
運動やスポーツ	7	12 58.3%	14	23 60.9%	12	21 57.1%	14	19 73.7%	0.476	0.345
近所づきあい	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	6	21 28.6%	0	19 0.0%	0.036	0.072#
階段を上ったり下りたりできる	2	12 16.7%	3	23 13.0%	5	21 23.8%	1	19 5.3%	0.101	0.159
階段を上がる時に風切れない	1	12 8.3%	4	23 17.4%	6	21 28.6%	4	19 21.1%	0.583	0.452
飛び上がることができる	3	12 25.0%	3	23 13.0%	5	21 23.8%	1	19 5.3%	0.101	0.159
走ることができる	9	12 75.0%	17	23 73.9%	19	21 90.5%	14	19 73.7%	0.163	0.312
歩いている他人を早足で追い越せる	8	12 66.7%	14	23 60.9%	16	21 76.2%	12	19 63.2%	0.369	0.382
30分以上歩きつづける	5	12 41.7%	16	23 69.6%	12	21 57.1%	11	19 57.9%	0.962	0.883
水がいったい入ったバケツを持ち運ぶことができる	4	12 33.3%	6	23 26.1%	11	21 52.4%	6	19 31.6%	0.324	0.735
米の袋10kgを持ちあげることができる	4	12 33.3%	3	23 13.0%	11	21 52.4%	4	19 21.1%	0.184	0.194
倒れた自転車を起こせる	2	12 16.7%	1	23 4.3%	10	21 47.6%	3	19 15.8%	0.032	0.015*
広口ビンの蓋をあげるができる	2	11 18.2%	0	23 0.0%	4	21 19.0%	4	19 21.1%	0.874	0.422
立った位置から膝を曲げずに手が床に届く	2	12 16.7%	9	23 34.8%	11	21 52.4%	5	19 26.3%	0.184	0.883
くつしたズボン・スカートを立てたままはける	5	12 41.7%	8	23 34.8%	9	21 42.9%	6	19 31.6%	0.273	0.286
椅子から立ちあがる時手の支えなしで立ち上がれる	2	12 16.7%	10	23 43.5%	9	21 42.9%	5	19 26.3%	0.462	0.63
物につかまらずにつま先立ちができる	6	12 50.0%	12	23 52.2%	14	21 66.7%	11	19 57.9%	0.462	0.738
話すことが減った(別居している子供)	1	12 8.3%	2	23 8.7%	4	21 19.0%	3	19 15.8%	0.567	0.836
話すことが減った(親戚)	2	12 16.7%	4	23 17.4%	6	21 28.6%	3	19 15.8%	0.280	0.779
話すことが減った(友人)	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	2	21 9.5%	4	19 21.1%	0.451	0.344
話すことが減った(近隣の人)	0	12 0.0%	3	23 13.0%	2	21 9.5%	3	19 15.8%	0.283	0.188
外出	2	12 16.7%	2	23 8.7%	7	21 33.3%	3	19 15.8%	0.181	0.151
日中過ごす場所	1	12 8.3%	1	23 4.3%	1	21 4.8%	1	19 5.3%	0.465	0.893
ADL	0	12 0.0%	1	23 4.3%	1	21 4.8%	0	19 0.0%	0.525	0.931
同居(配偶者)	6	12 50.0%	10	23 43.5%	16	21 76.2%	11	19 57.9%	0.217	0.257
同居(子供)	2	12 16.7%	6	23 26.1%	1	21 4.8%	2	19 10.5%	0.489	0.388
同居(孫)	3	12 25.0%	10	23 43.5%	8	21 38.1%	6	19 31.6%	0.666	0.694
同居(その他)	1	12 8.3%	0	23 0.0%	3	21 14.3%	1	19 5.3%	0.342	0.146
転倒時置物:くつ	0	12 0.0%	2	23 8.7%	1	21 4.8%	1	19 5.3%	0.942	0.444
転倒時置物:サンダル	4	12 33.3%	6	23 34.8%	8	21 38.1%	3	19 15.8%	0.110	0.755
転んだ原因:段差	0	3 0.0%	5	11 45.5%	3	21 14.3%	13	19 68.4%	0.001	0.755
転んだときの怪状	0	12 0.0%	5	11 45.5%	1	6 16.7%	2	19 10.5%	0.464	0.546
骨折後の処置	7	11 63.6%	5	15 33.3%	7	15 46.7%	3	14 21.4%	0.269	0.622
									0.129	0.065#

\*p<0.05, #p<0.1

### Ⅲ. 研究成果の刊行に関する一覧表

## 研究成果の刊行に関する一覧表

### 雑誌

発表者氏名	論文タイトル名	発表誌名	巻名	ページ	出版年
Niino N, et al	Frequencies and Circumstances of Falls in the National Institute for Longevity Sciences, Longitudinal Study of Aging (NILS-LSA)	J Epidemiol	10	S90-S94	2000
新野直明、他	National Institute for Longevity Sciences-Longitudinal Study of Aging (NILS-LSA)における運動能力調査	Research in Exercise Epidemiology	2	10-15	2000
Aoyagi K et al.	Calcaneus bone mineral density is lower among men and women with lower physical performance	Calcif Tissue Int	67	106-110	2000

#### IV. 研究成果の刊行物・別刷



## Frequencies and Circumstances of Falls in the National Institute for Longevity Sciences, Longitudinal Study of Aging (NILS-LSA)

Naoakira Niino, Shigeki Tsuzuku, Fujiko Ando, and Hiroshi Shimokata

Frequencies and circumstances of falls were assessed among 1030 middle-aged and elderly people who participated in the NILS-LSA (National Institute for Longevity Sciences, Longitudinal Study of Aging) from November, 1997 to March, 1999 and responded to the questionnaires. The variables analyzed in the present study were demography and history of falls in the past one year. Circumstances of falls, e.g. time, location, activities associated with falls, cause of falls and degree of injury due to falls were asked when the subjects experienced a fall. Fear of falling was also investigated in all subjects.

The prevalence of falls was 12.9% in the middle-aged group (40-59yr.) and 16.5% in the elderly group (60-79yr.). The distribution of time, location, activity associated with falls, cause and injury due to falls corresponded with previous fall studies among community-dwelling elderly people. The incidence of falls was extremely high during the daytime and outdoors. Falls occurred most frequently while walking. The majority of falls were due to extrinsic factors. About 40% of all falls caused no injury. As to the fear of falling, about 30% of the middle-aged subjects and about 60% of the elderly subjects reported that they were fearful. Our results suggested that fall accidents are not rare, even in middle-aged people. *J Epidemiol*, 2000 ; 10 : S90-S94.

fall, middle-aged, elderly, frequency, circumstance

### INTRODUCTION

Falls are one of the most important problems among the elderly<sup>1-3</sup>. They constitute a serious threat to life, health and quality of life<sup>4</sup>. In Japan about 20% of community-dwelling elderly people fall at least once during a year<sup>5</sup>. It is said that the frequency of falls increases with advancing age<sup>4</sup>. However, there are very few studies which have investigated the frequencies of falls among the middle-aged and compared the frequencies between middle-aged and elderly people.

The purpose of the present study was to assess the prevalence and circumstances of falls among the participants in the NILS-LSA (National Institute for Longevity Sciences, Longitudinal Study of Aging)<sup>6</sup> consisting of middle-aged and elderly people. It is thought to be valuable to describe the frequencies and circumstances of falls in community-dwelling adults, including the middle-aged as well as the elderly, for the prevention of falls in the community.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The subjects were 1126 people who participated in the NILS-LSA from November, 1997 to March, 1999. The NILS-LSA is a multidisciplinary longitudinal project conducted by the Department of Epidemiology, the National Institute for Longevity Sciences<sup>6</sup>. Out of these subjects, 1030 persons responded to the questionnaires concerning fall accidents (Table 1).

The variables analyzed in the present study were demography and history of falls in the past one year. Circumstances of falls, e.g. time, location, activities associated with falls, cause of falls and degree of injury due to falls were also asked when the subjects experienced a fall. The causes of falls were classified according to Haga et al.<sup>7</sup>, whose classifications were simple and practical: due to environmental factors (extrinsic), due to the subject him/herself (intrinsic) and origin unknown. When the subjects had fallen more than twice a year, the cir-

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**Table 1.** Age and gender distribution of the respondents.

Age	Male	Female	Total
40~49	144 (27.3%)	127 (25.3%)	271 (26.3%)
50~59	126 (23.9%)	123 (24.5%)	249 (24.2%)
60~69	130 (24.7%)	131 (26.0%)	261 (25.3%)
70~79	127 (24.1%)	122 (24.3%)	249 (24.2%)
Total	527	503	1030

cumstances of falls were questioned regarding the fall resulting in the most serious injury. Fear of falling was also investigated in all subjects according to their response to an ordered-choice, closed-ended question about a general fear of falling ("Are you afraid of falling?"). In the present study, falls were defined as "events that cause subjects to fall to the ground or other lower level against their will" which was merely a modification of the definition proposed by Gibson<sup>9</sup>.

The prevalence of falls (rate of subjects with falls in the year preceding the survey) was assessed and compared in the middle-aged group (aged 40 to 59) and the elderly group (aged 60 and older). Statistical analysis was done using the  $\chi^2$ -square test. Circumstances of falls were investigated for the falls resulting in the most serious injury. Thus, not all the falls were recorded either in the middle-aged group or the elderly group.

As the proportion of recorded falls to all falls might be different from the middle-aged to the elderly, it was difficult to compare the general condition strictly on when, where, or how the fall occurred between two age groups using our results. Therefore, as to the circumstances of falls, simple descriptive data were reported in this paper. These data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) release 6.12.

## RESULTS

The prevalence of falls (rate of subjects with falls) is shown in Table 2. It was 8.9% in the middle-aged group and 14.4% in the elderly group for males. The prevalence was significantly higher in the elderly. For females, it was 17.2% in the middle-aged group and 18.6% in the elderly group. There was no significant difference between the two age groups. Although females tended to have a higher prevalence than males, a significant difference was found only in the middle-aged group.

The distribution of time when the falls occurred is shown in Table 3. In both age groups, falls were much more common during the daytime.

As to the location of falls, outdoor falls were much more frequent than indoor falls. For the middle-aged, 69.0% of all falls occurred outdoors and for the elderly 75.0% occurred out-

**Table 2.** Number and rate of subjects with falls.

	Total No. of fallers(%)	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of fallers(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of fallers(%)	$\chi^2$ (Middle-aged vs Elderly)
Total (n=1030)	151(14.7)	67(12.9)	84(16.5)	2.65
Male (n=527)	61(11.6)	24(8.9)	37(14.4)	3.90*
Female (n=503)	90(17.9)	43(17.2)	47(18.6)	0.16
$\chi^2$ (Male vs Female)	8.21**	8.00**	1.62	

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , Middle-aged:n=520, Elderly:n=510

**Table 3.** Distribution of the time of day.

Time of day	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of falls(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of falls(%)
00:00- 6:00	4 (6.8)	2 (2.9)
6:00- 12:00	24 (40.7)	31 (44.9)
12:00- 18:00	20 (33.9)	29 (42.0)
18:00- 24:00	11 (18.6)	7 (10.1)
Total	59	69

**Table 4.** Distribution of activities associated with falls.

Activity	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of falls(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of falls(%)
walking	22 (33.3)	34 (42.0)
running	6 (9.1)	3 (3.7)
ascending stairs	7 (10.6)	3 (3.7)
descending stairs	9 (13.6)	7 (8.6)
standing still	1 (1.5)	1 (1.2)
getting up	2 (3.0)	2 (2.5)
sitting down	1 (1.5)	0 (0.0)
others/unknown	18 (27.3)	18 (38.3)
Total	66	81

doors.

Activities associated with falls were classified as shown in Table 4. Except for others/unknown, falls most frequently occurred while walking, followed by descending stairs in both age groups.

The main cause of falls identified by our classification were: 83.3% extrinsic falls, 1.5% intrinsic falls and 15.2% unknown for the middle-aged group and 76.5% extrinsic falls, 7.4% intrinsic falls and 16.1% unknown for the elderly group (Table 5).

The majority of falls were due to extrinsic factors in both age groups.

About 40% of all falls caused no injury in either age group (Table 6). In the middle-aged, only 1 fall (1.5%) led to a fracture and in the elderly 6 falls (7.4%) led to a fracture. There were no hip fractures.

As to the fear of falling, about 30% of all middle-aged subjects and about 60% of all elderly subjects reported that they were fearful (Table 7). The difference in the prevalence of fear

**Table 5.** Distribution of the main causes of falls.

Cause	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of falls(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of falls(%)
Extrinsic		
Tripping	29 (43.9)	38 (46.9)
Slipping	21 (31.8)	18 (22.2)
Colliding with obstacles	1 (1.5)	2 (2.5)
Loss of footing on a staircase	4 (6.1)	4 (4.9)
/Subtotal	/ 55 (83.3)	/ 62 (76.5)
Intrinsic		
Vertigo	0 (0.0)	4 (4.9)
Dizziness	1 (1.5)	2 (2.5)
/Subtotal	/ 1 (1.5)	/ 6 (7.4)
Others/unknown	10 (15.2)	13 (16.1)
Total	66	81

**Table 6.** Distribution of injuries due to falls.

Injury	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of falls(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of falls(%)
None	28 (42.4)	32 (39.5)
Bruise	27 (40.9)	31 (38.3)
Fracture	1 (1.5)	6 (7.4)
Others	10 (15.2)	12 (14.8)
Total	66	81

**Table 7.** Number and rate of subjects with fear of falling.

	Total No. of fearful(%)	Middle-aged(40-59) No. of fearful(%)	Elderly(60-79) No. of fearful(%)	$\chi^2$ (Middle-aged vs Elderly)
Total (n=1013)	449 (44.3)	165 (32.3)	284 (56.6)	60.51**
Male (n=521)	157 (30.1)	53 (19.7)	104 (41.3)	28.75**
Female (n=492)	292 (59.3)	112 (46.3)	180 (72.0)	33.71**
$\chi^2$ (Male vs Female)	87.52**	41.16**	48.24**	

\*\*p<0.01, Middle-aged:n=511, Elderly:n=502

of falling was statistically significant between the two age groups.

## DISCUSSION

The prevalence of falls was 12.9% in the middle-aged group and 16.5% in the elderly group. Although the elderly tended to fall more frequently, there was no significant difference. There have been some studies on falls in community-dwelling elderly in Japan<sup>9-12</sup>. The reported prevalence rates were around 20%, which were similar to our result in the elderly group. For Japanese middle-aged people, we have little comparable data. However, according to our result, fall accidents are not rare even in middle-aged people.

Previous studies have found a higher fall rate in females<sup>7,11,13</sup>. In the present study, females tended to have a higher prevalence than males but significant difference was found only in the middle-aged group.

The distribution of time, location, activity associated with falls, cause and injury due to falls corresponded to previous fall studies among community-dwelling elderly<sup>9,12-15</sup>. The incidence of falls was extremely high during the daytime and outdoors. Falls occurred most frequently while walking. The majority of falls were due to extrinsic factors. About 40% of all falls caused no injury. There seemed to be little difference in the circumstances of falls between the middle-aged group and the elderly group. However, with extrinsic causes, the proportion of tripping was much higher in the middle-aged than in the elderly. As to prognosis, fractures were more frequent among the elderly. These results suggested that falls among the elderly may not be completely the same as falls among the middle-aged.

The prevalence of fear of falling was significantly higher among the elderly group than among the middle-aged group. This result is consistent with a previous study which reported the increase in fear of falling with age<sup>16</sup>. Younger people may be reluctant to admit to have a fear of falling. There have been quite a few epidemiological studies on fear of falling in Japan. However, this fear can lead to a debilitating spiral marked by loss of confidence and reduce activity, resulting ultimately in a loss of independence<sup>17</sup>. Further studies are needed on the fear of falling.

This study had several limitations. First of all, because the subjects of this study did not include all the participants in the NLS-LSA, we have to be prudent in generalizing the results. Secondly, since all measurements were based on the subjects' memory and self-rating, the objective reliability of the results is somewhat limited.

However, the results obtained in the present paper reveal the frequencies and circumstances of falls not only in the elderly, but also in the middle-aged. These data provide useful information for the prevention of falls in community-dwelling populations.

This study is part of a multidisciplinary project. Therefore, we have investigated other medical, psychological and sociological variables. In the next stage, we intend to analyze risk factors on falls in the middle-aged and elderly people by investigating the relationships between falls and other variables.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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