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長寿科学総合研究事業

老化因子と加齢に伴う身体機能変化に関する長期縦断的疫学研究

平成15年度総括・分担研究報告書

2／2

主任研究者　下 方 浩 史

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Ⅴ. モノグラフ

MONOGRAPH

The Third Wave

May, 2002～September, 2003

National Institute for Longevity Sciences Longitudinal Study of Aging

NILS-LSA

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I. Objectives and Overview of the NILS-LSA

I. Objectives and Overview of the NILS-LSA

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1) Background and outline of the NILS-LSA

The life expectancy of the Japanese population is the longest in the world. Both the absolute number and relative percentage of the elderly population in Japanese society is rapidly increasing. In 2020, the percentage of the elderly population in Japan will be the largest in the world. Along with these changes, various medical and care-giving problems for the elderly have arisen. Longevity science, with the goal that all of elderly people can live a long life with good physical and mental health should be promoted in Japan.

Human aging is associated with many factors, including not only physical and physiological factors but also social and psychological factors. Thus, research into human aging requires many kinds of examinations and specialists in various areas. In addition, human aging research requires long-term study in which the same subjects are measured repeatedly to observe age-related changes. However, the number of researchers and budget for studies on gerontological and geriatric epidemiology are limited. It has been very difficult in Japan to start and to continue a large-scale and comprehensive longitudinal study of aging, despite a rapid increase in the elderly population.

In 1995, a new national research institute of aging in Japan, the National Institute for Longevity Sciences (NILS) was established as a research facility in Chubu National Hospital and in 1997 the NILS-LSA (NILS – Longitudinal Study of Aging) started. The participants in the NILS-LSA of the first wave were 2,267 randomly selected males and females aged 40 to 79 years from the NILS area. They will be examined every two years and now the third wave examination is carrying out. Six to seven participants are now examined every day at the NILS-LSA examination center. The aging process is assessed by detailed questionnaires and examinations including clinical evaluation, body composition and anthropometry, physical functions, nutritional analysis, and psychological assessments. The data from the study will be useful to investigate the causes of geriatric diseases and health problems in the elderly such as depression, mental disturbance, restriction of ADL, low nutrition and physical activity. The data will also be useful to prevent these diseases and health problems in the elderly.

In March 2004, Chubu National Hospital and NILS were reorganized to establish National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology as a new national facility for research and medical care. There are six National Centers for Advanced and Specialized Medical Care in Japan. Other National Centers are located in five areas; Cancer Center in Chuo-ku, Tokyo and in Kashiwa-shi, Chiba, Cardiovascular Center in

Suita-shi, Osaka, Center of Neurology and Psychiatry in Kodaira-shi, Tokyo and Ichikawa-shi, Chiba, International Medical Center in Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, and Center for Child Health and Development in Setagaya-ku, Tokyo. They provide advanced medical care and conduct researches in each special medical area.

Chubu National Hospital was reorganized as National Hospital for Geriatric Medicine. NILS was also reorganized to cover more area of geriatrics and gerontology. The number of department increased from 8 to 13. A new research section, the Section of Nutritional Epidemiology was added to the Department of Epidemiology and the Laboratory of Epidemiology for the Aged was reorganized to the Section of Preventive Epidemiology.

2) Progress of the NILS-LSA

In 1990, projects of "Comprehensive Research on Aging and Health" were started by the Ministry of Health and Welfare to promote longevity sciences in commemoration of the 60th year in the reign of Emperor Showa. A research group for a longitudinal study of aging was organized as one of these projects. Indices of aging were evaluated, the methodology for the longitudinal study was assessed, and many problems in actual longitudinal follow-ups using existing cohorts were analyzed by this research group in order to start a new comprehensive longitudinal study of aging in Japan. A pilot longitudinal study on aging started in 1992. A manual of the many procedures used in the study was published in 1996.

In July 1995, the National Institute for Longevity Sciences (NILS) was established as the leading national research center for aging and geriatrics in Obu city in the suburbs of Nagoya. In 1996, the Laboratory of Long-term Longitudinal Studies was established in the Department of Epidemiology to start a new longitudinal study of aging in Japan.

Various equipments necessary for geriatric research, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and peripheral quantitative computed tomography (pQCT) were set up in the NILS, and a special examination center for longitudinal study was established in the Chubu National Hospital. Physicians, psychologists, nutritionists, epidemiologists, and exercise physiologists were assigned to the Laboratory of Long-term Longitudinal Studies and the Department of Epidemiology.

In October 1997, a trial run of the examinations was conducted, and in November 1997, the NILS-LSA began as a large-scale and comprehensive longitudinal study of aging in Japan. From Tuesday to Friday in every week, six or seven participants were examined at the NILS-LSA Examination Center. In the first wave of the examination finished in April 2000, 2,267 males and females had completed the examinations. All participants will be examined every two years. The second wave of the examination started in April 2000 and finished in May 2002. Total number of participants of the second wave examination was 2,259. From May 2002, the third wave examination started (Fig.1), and until September 2003, 1657 participants were examined. The number of examined variables was over 1,000, including various areas of gerontology and geriatrics such as medical examinations, anthropometry, body composition, physical functions, physical activities, psychological assessments, nutritional analysis and molecular epidemiology.

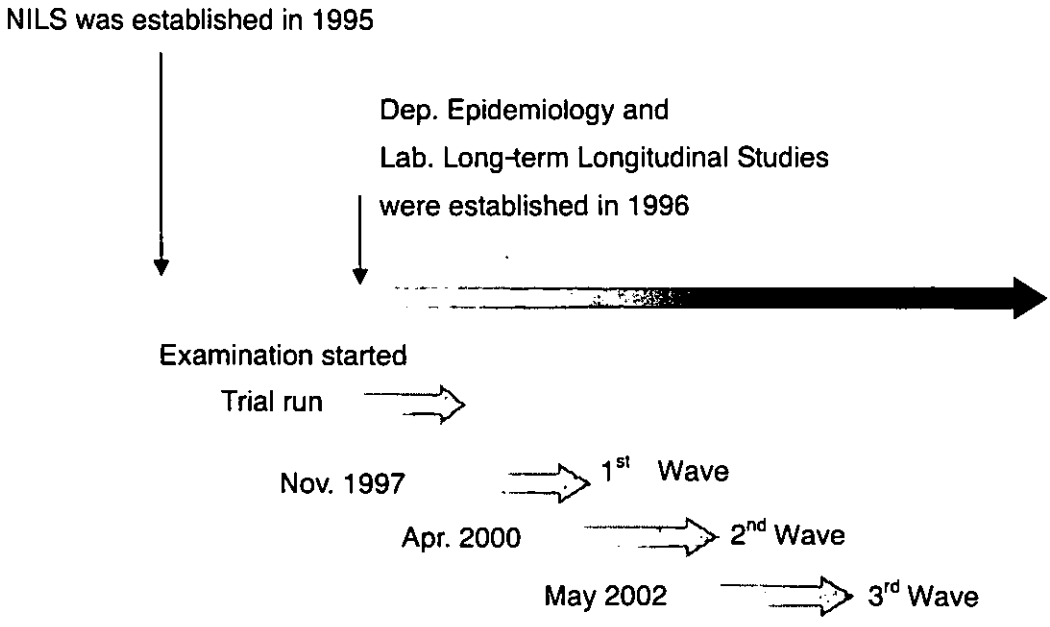

Fig. 1 Progress of the NILS-LSA

3) Objectives of the NILS-LSA

1. Main purpose

Systematic observation and description of the process of normal aging in humans.

(1) To quantify normal and successful aging

(2) To determine the reference values in normal aging process by longitudinal observation

2. Additional purpose

(1) To find out early markers of age-related diseases

(2) To clarify molecular genetic factors of aging and geriatric diseases

(3) To find out factors associated with longevity

(4) To examine the effects of life-style, stress, life events and disease on aging process

(5) To separate normal aging and age-related disease

(6) To assess the influence of age on progressive changes of various diseases

(7) To determine predictors of age at death and risk factors for diseases as well as institutionalization and loss of independence

(8) To examine race difference by international comparative study

(9) To assess social and economical changes with age in the elderly

(10) To develop indices of biological age

(11) To prepare basic population for the research of clinical and social medicine

4) Research area

The NILS-LSA is a facility-based study using various equipments including MRI, DXA and pQCT for the detailed and comprehensive assessments of aging and geriatric disease. The facility of examinations is located at the Chubu National Hospital adjoins the NILS. Thus, the research area was determined to be in the neighborhood of the NILS, that is Obu city (population 70,000) and Higashiura town (population 40,000) (Fig. 1). This area is located in the south of Nagoya, and is a bedroom town and also industrial area of the Toyota group, but still has many orchards and farms, having both urban and rural characteristics.

This research area is geographically located at the center of Japan, and the climate is almost Japanese average. We examined the representativeness of the area via national postal questionnaire of prefecture-stratified random samples of 3,000 households from all prefectures in Japan, and found that the life-style of this area was the most typical of all areas in Japan. It is expected that the results of examinations in this area will represent Japan.

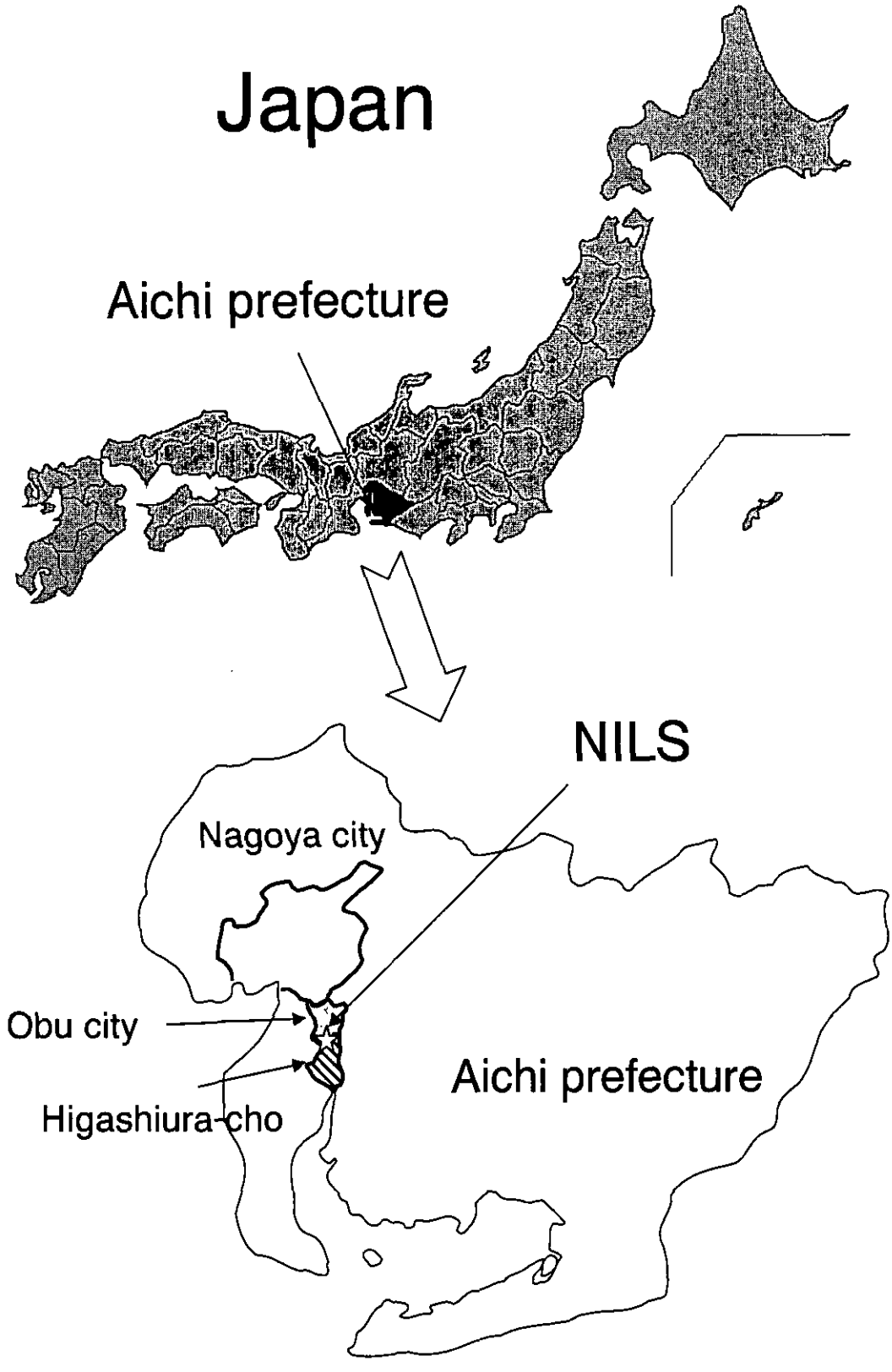

Fig. 2 Research area of the NILS-LSA

5) Subjects

The subjects of baseline examination of the NILS-LSA were males and females aged 40 to 79 years old. The population of Obu city and Higashiura town was stratified by both age and gender, and randomly selected from resident registrations in cooperation with the local governments (Fig.3). The number of males and females was to be equal to test gender difference, and the number of participants in each decade (40s, 50s, 60s, 70s) was also to be equal. The total number of participants was to be 2,400, that is 300 males and 300 females for each decade. They will be followed up every two years. Age and gender-matched random samples of the same number of dropout participants will be recruited except the participants over 79 years old. The male and female participants aged 40 years will be also newly recruited every year (Fig.4). Table 1 shows age and gender distribution of the participants in the first wave examination. Table 2 shows age and gender distribution of the second wave participants. Eighty percent subjects of the first wave examination participated the second wave examination again (Table 3). The third wave examination will end in May, 2004. Number of participants was 1657 until September 2004. Age and gender distribution of the third wave participants until September 2004 was shown in Table 4.

Recruitment and follow up of convenient samples would be much easier than with random samples. However, these samples generally tend to be interested in health, and observation of these samples would produce biased results. Examinations in random samples are necessary to observe the aging process of ordinary Japanese who live ordinary lives.