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Married Women as Informal Caregivers of the Elderly Parents Living With or Apart From Them

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Although the majority of informal care of the elderly parents is provided by one married woman, namely a married daughter or a son's wife, living with them, some elders receive help from other caregivers who are often living apart from them as well. This analysis focused on the married women, especially who live apart from parents, as informal caregivers of the elderly parents.

Data from the Second National Survey on Family in Japan (1998) conducted by National Institute of Population and Social Security Research were employed. Among 8,186 married women, 751 (9.2%) had disabled elderly parents living apart from them, whereas 112 (1.4%) had those living with them. About 70% of the latter was "internal" primary caregivers. Among the former, about 10% was "external" primary caregivers, and about 30% helped those. A logistic regression identified the following statistically significant determinants of married women's participations to care for their own parents living apart from them: disability and household type of disabled parent, caring of her husband's parent, family norm. In the case of care of their husband's parents, the following determinants manifested themselves: sex, age, marital status, and household type of disabled parent, caring of their own parents, distance to parent, employment status, existing husband's elder brother. In addition, it was shown that the number of parents that a couple should care in the future was simulated.

It was suggested that decrease in the number of siblings and increase in the number of elders living alone or living with spouse only would enlarge the burden of married women to care parents in the future.