Life-Course Patterns of Caregiving Among Married Women: Age-Specific Probabilities of Providing Care

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This study aims to clarify the patterns of family care involvement among married women in Japan along the life course. Using individual-level data from the 7th National Survey on Family in Japan (conducted in 2022), we analyzed the most recent caregiving experiences reported by married women and examined the current situation by age and type of care recipient. Furthermore, employing the indicator of "age-specific care involvement probability," we investigated the extent to which married women are involved in family caregiving at different points in their lives. The analysis revealed that caregiving is not a single, isolated event but rather a recurring process that occurs multiple times throughout the life course, involving different recipients such as grandparents, parents, and spouses. Age-specific patterns indicated three major "waves" of caregiving: caregiving for grandparents in the late 20s to 30s, caregiving for parents around the late 50s to early 60s, and caregiving for spouses from the late 70s onward. Cohort comparisons, although limited, showed higher probabilities of caregiving involvement among women born after the 1960s. While this study focuses only on the most recent caregiving experience—possibly underestimating caregiving involvement in younger ages—it visualizes the waves of caregiving that married women encounter over the course of their lives.

Keywords: married woman, life course, family caregiving, age-specific probabilities of providing care