

Experiences of Japanese female caregivers who are simultaneously responsible for childcare and elderly care of their parents: An ethnographic study

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Background

Japanese women are giving birth later in life; thus, the number of female caregivers who are responsible for childcare and caring for their elderly parents at the same time is expected to increase. Such caregivers have multiple roles, such as being a wife, daughter, and parent, and take on different care roles; however, measures to support them have not been sufficiently explored.

Aim of the study

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of Japanese female caregivers who are responsible for childcare and care of elderly parents (including in-laws).

Methods

This study used an ethnographic study. Data was collected through observation of carers attending a café and interviews. The study was conducted between February 2019 and December 2021. Subjects (n = 15) were recruited using snowball sampling. This study was approved by the Medical Ethical Review Board of Kanazawa University, the researchers' affiliated institution.

Results

Japanese female caregivers that were responsible for childcare and elderly care had the experiences of "acting the role of a woman," "holding it alone," "supporting and being supported," and "performing the role at hand" in multiple family relationships.

Conclusions and implications

This study revealed that Japanese female caregivers that were responsible for childcare and elderly care carried out their care roles without any sense of discomfort under a "women are to be obeyed at home" values, which is unique to Japanese culture; however, they were alone in the conflicts that arose in their multiple roles.