

Factors Associated with Disaster Preparedness among Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities

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Background

It is often difficult for children with developmental disabilities (DD) to adapt to environmental changes, especially during disasters, which dramatically change the surroundings. However, it has been reported that families of children with DD are not well prepared for disasters due to a lack of information and parental burden.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to identify factors associated with disaster preparedness among families of children with DD.

Methods

We chose 172 parents of children with DD (including those suspected to have DD) aged 6–18 years as participants. These parents belong to parent associations for children with DD throughout Japan. We developed a disaster preparedness index (3 factors of 22 items) to assess disaster preparedness. We also conducted multiple regression analysis (stepwise method) to examine the associated factors with the disaster preparedness index. This research was approved by the Ethics Review Board of Kobe University (No. 894).

Results

Over 90% of the respondents were mothers, and about 70% were in their 40s. Higher parental resilience ($\beta=.264$, $p<.001$) and disaster risk perception ($\beta= .233$, $p<.01$), older age ($\beta=.173$, $p<.05$), feeling less burden of disaster preparedness ($\beta= .158$, $p<.05$), and higher individual social capital ($\beta= .148 \sim .157$, $p<.05$) were significantly associated with higher disaster preparedness score.

Conclusions and implications

The findings suggest that supporting parents to feel positive about parenting, informing them about disaster risks and preparation as well as helping them connect with the community are important to promote disaster preparedness among families of children with DD.