

Comparing the reasons for continued operation of the community living room via elapsed years of operation

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Background

Increasing importance is being given to creating spaces for community building and promoting mutual assistance among residents, such as community cafés.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to identify differences in reasons for continued community space's operation based on its period of operation and provide implications for efficient future operations.

Methods

We distributed a self-administered questionnaire to representatives of 390 Chiiki no Cha-no-Ma spaces in Niigata City, Japan. Chiiki no Cha-no-Ma is operated as a place where community residents can freely visit. The survey period was from June to October, 2019. The number of valid responses was 303. This study divided the Chiiki no Cha-no-Ma places into two groups: operating over three years (over three years group) or less than three years (less than three years group). To compare the differences in reasons for continued its operation between the groups, we employed Fisher's exact test, and conducted a qualitative analysis using open-ended questions.

Results

For reasons of continued its operation, the over three years group selected "user's expectation for continuing" ($p=0.033$) and "grants received from the municipality" ($p=0.029$). By analyzing qualitative data, we confirmed that the following elements are important for continued operations: "concerned persons' enthusiasm," "elaborative plan," "a homely atmosphere," and "cooperation of community residents," "utilization of community resources."

Conclusions and implications

It is important to continue the representatives' and users' strong enthusiasm for continuing its operation. Furthermore, the supports of the local government is required for creating better community spaces.