

Social changes induced by COVID-19 in frail older adults participating in salons

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Background

Social resources for frail older adults with cognitive decline to lead fulfilling life include interacting with others, ikigai-kan (Japanese: the feeling that life is worth living), and social support.

Aim of the study

The aims of this study were to clarify the effects of Covid-19 on social skills of frail older adults.

Methods

An anonymous, self-administered questionnaire was sent to 560 people aged 65 or above. The data were collected from November 2020 to January 2021. Survey questions regarded age, the frequency of going out and interaction, and measured social skills used the Geriatric Depression Scale, social support, and the ikigai-kan Scale. Respondents were divided into healthy and frail groups based on the cutoff values of the self-administered dementia checklist scales, and attributes and social skills were compared.

Results

Among the 360 respondents, 335 were included for analysis (healthy: 311, frail: 24). Before and after COVID-19, going out at least 3 times a week decreased from 62.5% to 54.2% in frail, from 75.6% to 57.6% in healthy, and interaction decreased from 62.5% to 33.3% in frail, from 65.3% to 41.5% in healthy. GDS ($<.001$), social support ($P=0.03$) and ikigai-kan ($<.001$) were significantly lower in frail.

Conclusions and implications

There was no difference between the two groups on the frequency of going out and interacting with others. However, the frail older adults showed significantly lower health condition on social skills. The results suggest the necessity of psychological health observation for the frail older adults.