Issues Currently Faced by Care Professionals with regard to Community-Based Rehabilitation Aims for Long-Term Care Prevention Support: Qualitative Analysis of the Interviews with the Providers of Long-term Care Prevention Support

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Introduction:
The causes of the problems related to care prevention for community-dwelling elderly people, and the countermeasures taken in this regard vary according to the characteristics of the areas they live in. The purpose of this study is to contribute to more area-specific and thus more effective long-term care prevention support in areas of varying characteristics by analyzing the current situation of the providers of long-term care prevention support.

Methods:
Two types of tape-recorded interviews were conducted in the urban, peri-urban and depopulated areas of Kagoshima; in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews with long-term care support specialists at selected community general support centers and focus group interviews with physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and care workers providing day-care rehabilitation services and/or home-visit rehabilitation services. Qualitative methodologies were used to analyze the data obtained by transcribing the interviews.

Ethical Considerations
Prior to the interviews, the informed consent process was appropriately completed to protect the privacy of the subjects, the confidentiality of the data, the right of the subjects to withdraw at any time, and such.

Results:
The results of this research suggest that in particular, the competency of long-term care specialists varies much with their qualifications, work experience, and innate qualities, and thus, quality improvement is necessary for the providers of long-term care prevention support.
The results also reveal that in depopulated areas, the lack of funds and human resources due to the population decline make it difficult to provide a wide range of services to suit individual rehabilitation needs. In some of those areas, nurses and care workers act as substitutes for rehabilitation specialists.

Conclusions:
With regard to day-care and/or home-visit rehabilitation services in depopulated areas, this study clearly demonstrates the need to foster area-specific rehabilitation coordinators with highly professional qualities, while also establishing a legal framework for a payment system for the services provided according to the characteristics of the areas involved.

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