Changes in Profiles of Psychological Functioning in the Old and Oldest Old

Jacqui Smith

Patterns of change are illustrated for 9 subgroups of Berlin Aging Study participants identified at baseline (Smith & Baltes, 1997). We used cluster analysis to identify 9 subgroups of individuals with different profiles across 12 measures of intellectual, personality, self-related, and social functioning. Four subgroups reflected different patterns of desirable functioning (47% of the sample) and five subgroups had various profiles characterizing less desirable functioning (53%). Relative risk of a less desirable profile was 2.5 times higher for the oldest old (85-103 years) than for people between the ages of 70-84 years and 1.25 times higher for women compared to men. The present paper examines patterns of aging among survivors (N = 206) of these subgroups over 4 years (Time 1, 1990-1993: M = 79 years to Time 2, 1995-1996: M = 84 years). 80% of those individuals who were grouped together at baseline remained together four years later. In general, change was observed within subgroups in terms of level of functioning but not in terms of profile shape (interrelations) across domains. 20% of participants moved into new subgroups in the follow-up assessment. Movement was typically into a less desirable profile group: only 5% moved upwards. Differences in stability and change in the various subgroups was related to life history factors (e.g., education, occupational status, gender) and current life conditions (e.g., physical health and functional impairment).

Affective Relationships and Psychological Well-being among Japanese Elderly Adults

Keiko Takahashi

Previous studies indicated that people who had inadequate social resources were suffered from low satisfaction of life, and sometimes showed some kinds of psychological maladjustment. This paper aimed to understand characteristics of such people who were living being isolated from others and specifically named as Lone wolf type, by both quantitative and qualitative data. Concretely, this study examined whether; (1) Lone wolf type elderly people, who report deficiency in human resources, will show more difficulties in psychological adjustment than the elderly who have relationships with significant others; and (2) Lone wolf type elderly people will describe their life stories with focusing on mostly negative side of their lives from young childhood to the present, because their present social relationships color their life histories.