

Community-based Dementia Care Project

Omuta City



Background

Omuta City once flourished as a coal-mining area, boasting the largest volume of coal production in Japan. As the demand for coal declined, the population of the city decreased from approximately 205,000 in 1960 to 118,351 in October 2016. The number of people aged 65 or over is 41,040 (an ageing rate of 34.7%). The city has become an aging society 15 years faster than the national average.

Although the Long-Term Care Insurance System started in 2000, families and care workers were struggling with how to treat people with dementia at nursing care sites. To solve these challenges, a study group was formed by medical and nursing care staff, now called the “Dementia Life Support Study Group” and has been playing a core role in implementing this project, working with the city of Omuta, which serves as the administrative office of the project.

Purpose of Project

Aims to create a society where people can lead an enriched life with a sense of security in the familiar environment of their local community even after they begin to suffer from dementia, and as a result, create a society where everyone can live in peace.

Outline of Project

The city has been promoting the following four main initiatives to create a community-based system to support people with dementia. In recent years, efforts have been made to enable the active participation of

the people with dementia themselves in these initiatives.

1. Development of human resources who play a core role in supporting people with dementia in local communities (training of dementia coordinators)
2. Efforts to prevent dementia and stabilize lifestyles through the early diagnosis of dementia and early intervention (forgetfulness prevention / consultations and examinations/ dementia prevention class/ local dementia support teams)
3. Creation of a network to watch over people with dementia on a daily basis and to look for missing persons with dementia (SOS Network for Elderly People)
4. Learning about dementia from childhood through activities with the local communities (dementia classes using illustrated books/ simulated Dementia SOS Network training)



Children talking to a person who is playing the role of a person with dementia in the simulated training

Progress and Achievements

1. Human resource development

There were 115 people who completed the Dementia Coordinator training course as of June 2016. They are assigned to medical institutions and long-term care facilities in the city and are playing core roles in implementing the project. A total of over 400 hours needs to be completed over the 2-year course which includes lectures, hands-on learning and task-based learning. The trainees learn about the philosophy of dementia care, knowledge of the disease, medical cooperation, and different perspectives involved in realising community-based care and support.

2. Community-based network

The city has established the “SOS Network for Elderly People” in order to share information on any missing elderly persons who get lost due to their dementia and to look for them, in cooperation with private businesses and care facilities, etc. focused at the police station. The city government, which is one of the members of the network, shares information with more than 6,000 citizens in the city by a mail delivery system, and with the local residents’ networks through long-term care operators to help look for any missing elderly persons with dementia.

3. Programs and activities to raise the awareness of dementia

In order for the community-based network to function, many of the citizens need to gain an accurate understanding of dementia. To this end, the city has been continuously providing children with “dementia classes using illustrated books” since 2006 so they can learn about dementia from childhood. The classes are provided in about 15 elementary schools and junior high schools every year. A total of more than 10,000 children have learned about dementia, visited care facilities for the elderly and engaged in ac-

tivities with local residents. An annual training program is offered to practice information sharing and looking for missing persons through the network, assuming that a person with dementia is reported as missing (simulated Dementia SOS Network training). More than 3,000 citizens participate in the training program every year including the children who have learned about dementia.



Dementia class using illustrated books

Effects of Project

1. Improvement in the quality of care

Those persons who have completed the Dementia Coordinator training course are now helping to improve the quality of care in the medical institutions or long-term care facilities that they belong to. At the same time, they are making efforts to provide community-based support for people with dementia, not just within their own facilities, while being aware of the importance of promoting cooperation with professionals in a variety of different fields.

2. Finding missing persons with dementia and taking them into protective custody faster

As a result of efforts to raise the awareness of dementia in citizens by holding the simulated Dementia SOS Network training every year, the rate of finding missing persons has increased and it now takes less time to find a missing person.

3. People from different generations watch over people with dementia

The children who have learned about dementia participate in activities in the local communities. As a result, the city has received multiple reports that elementary and junior high school students have talked to elderly persons who had apparently got lost or were crouching down because they felt sick, and helped them.

Problems and Responses

1. Securing human resources

Cooperation from local residents, medical institutions and workers in long-term care facilities is essential to promote the various programs. It is, however, expected that it will become more difficult to gain the cooperation needed to implement this project, due to the shortage of human resources in the long-term care field.

2. Continuation of the project (securing of budget, development of leaders, change of generations)

The city has been continuing this project for 14 years since 2002. To continue further, it is necessary to secure budget, develop human resources who can lead the project, and promote a change of generations.

3. Preventing people from going missing due to dementia and ensuring their safety

As the number of reports of missing persons with dementia has been increasing, further efforts need to be made to prevent people from going missing and to secure their safety through care management on a regular basis. Since ICT (information and communication technology) devices have become more advanced, their effective utilization needs to be considered for this project.

Outlook

1. Considering the establishment of a training center to develop human resources in the field of dementia care

Promoting the development of human resources for dementia care in a variety of fields, while remaining centered on the idea of dementia-friendly community development.

2. Employment support for people with early-onset dementia

Promoting initiatives to improve the environment that enables people with early-onset dementia to continue working, and to create new jobs/roles after their retirement.

Reference URL

http://www.city.omuta.lg.jp/hpkiji/pub/detail.aspx?c_id=5&id=2167

(Simulated Dementia SOS Network Training)

Contact

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Diagram of Omuta City “Hotto Anshin (Walking) Network”

