

## Services and Housing for the Elderly in Japan ④

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> serialization of *Services and Housing for the Elderly in Japan*

In the last article, I have discussed the key points for the elderly's housing or facility selection.

In this article, I will introduce "Types and characteristics of care facilities for the elderly," "More specific points," and "Third-party evaluation of welfare services."

Let's review what we discussed in the previous article. Checking the available facilities with your current physical condition is the first step.

The key is the followings: Nursing care level, Presence of dementia, and whether or not medical treatment is required.

The reason is that the facilities available for you depend on these three points.

Moreover, "Conditions for termination of residency" and "Whether or not the facility can take care of you until your death" are other important points to take into account.

Table 1 summarizes the above-mentioned points, which are nursing care level, presence of dementia, medical system, and end-of-care system by types of facilities.

Once you know the types of facilities available for you, the next step is to consider your requirements or intention as well as those of your family.

The more, the better; it is important to come up with as many detailed requirements as possible.

Such detailed requirements may relate to: Cost, Location, Facility, Meals, Activities and events, Medical system and services, Care system, Hygiene level of the facility, Facility's atmospheres (staff and other residents), and Amount of freedom.

Setting priorities the requirements you and your family list up is the next step. In many cases, while the prospective residents tend to set importance to Meals and Amount of freedom, their families tend to weigh heavily on Costs, Location and Medical system.

Examples they are particularly concerned about might be, as for Meals, if individual tastes in food can be reflected in the menu or if they can choose the menu, and if the facility allows them to choose where and when to eat. As for Amount of freedom, how much individual preferences can be allowed. Regarding Costs, you need to inquire that in the case a resident's level of care required worsens in the future, whether or not he or she would be charged more, in addition to estimates of actual costs, etc. After checking with facilities, prospective residents, their families and all the people involved prioritize those requirements.

Table 1 Types and Characteristics of Major Elderly Facilities

Type	Main Facility Provider	Level of Care Required	Dementia	Medical System	End-of-Life Care	Cost (Example/JPY)		Remarks	# of Facilities ※3	
						Deposit	Monthly			
Health care facilities for the elderly requiring long-term care	Public	Municipality · Medical Corporation, etc.	Care Required Lv. 1 & Up · 65y.o and Up	○	Facility Doctor · Nurse	○	No	80,000~170,000	Returning home is the goal. On-site doctors, nurses, PTs, OTs, STs, dietitian, etc.	4,283 (Y2022)
Welfare facilities for the elderly requiring long-term care (Special nursing home for the elderly)		Municipality · Social Welfare Corporation, etc.	Care Required Lv. 3 & Up	○	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor · Facility Nurse	○	No	80,000~170,000	Unit-type facilities are a mainstream these days. Low cost and many people are on the waiting list.	8,501 (Y2022)
Sanatorium type medical care facilities for the elderly requiring care		Municipality · Medical Corporation, etc.	Care Required Lv. 1 & Up · 65y.o & Up	○	Facility Doctor · Nurse	○	No	80,000~250,000	Emerging model of sanatorium type of facilities and lives supported by medical system.	731 (Y2022)
Care house (Low Cost (Independent-type · Care-type))		Municipality · Social Welfare Corporation, etc.	Independent ~ Care Required Lv. 5	△	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor · Facility Nurse	△	0~Several Millions	100,000~200,000	For low-income and/or living-alone elderies. Both w/ and w/o nursing-care types are available.	509 (2024)
Assisted living home	Private	Corporation · Medical Corporation · Limited Corporation · Social Welfare Corporation, etc.	Independent ~ Care Required Lv. 5	◎	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor · Facility Nurse	◎	0~Tens of Millions	200,000~350,000 ※2	A wide range of available services including care level, dementia, medical care, and end-of-life care.	17,327 (Y2022)
Residential-type nursing home		Corporation · Medical Corporation · Limited Corporation · Social Welfare Corporation, etc.	Independent ~ Care Required Lv. 5 ※1 · 60y.o & Up	○	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor · Home-visit Nursing Service	△	0~Tens of Millions	200,000~350,000 ※2	Individualized care services since many residents are independent. Variety of activities.	
Group home		Municipality · Social Welfare Corporation · Medical Corporation · NPO · Private Business Operator, etc.	Support Required Lv. 2 & Up	◎	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor	◎	0~Hundreds of Thousands	100,000~300,000	Only demented persons are admitted. A resident must have a residential cert in the same area as the facility's location.	
Serviced housing for the elderly		Corporation · Limited Corporation · Medical Corporation · Social Welfare Corporation · NPO, etc.	Independent~ Care Required Lv. 5 ※1 · 60y.o & Up	○	Cooperating Medical Institution Doctor · Home-visit Nursing Service	△	0~Hundreds of Thousands	100,000~300,000	The only rental housing. Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's jurisdiction. Provided safety confirmation, life consultation, and meals. Need a research due to various differences among facilities.	8,307 (Y2024)

※1 Some facilities have a termination condition with the care required level of 3 or 4.

※2 Monthly cost depends on the amount of deposit.

※3 Since the data source is by facility type, the year and definitions may differ.

The list of the references is at the end of the article.

So far, I have talked about choosing a facility based on information.

Once you have narrowed down the facilities you are interested in, your next step is to visit the facilities, which matters most when it comes to selecting facilities.

It is the best to inspect facilities with as many eyes as possible, so contact facilities to make sure how many people they can accommodate at a single facility tour. Most facilities require the prior arrangement, so make an appointment with them.

When you think that it might be your final bode, you would be more serious.

Based on my experience having visited more than a few hundred facilities so far, the first thing I look for during a facility tour is its smell. In other words, I pay attention to the information receive from my sense of smell.

You have chosen the facilities by prioritizing your preferences according to information but it is not exaggerated to say that a facility tour should be led by your five senses.

In a clean facility where residents take a bath properly, there is no smell; however, there are some facilities that have smell unique to the elderly care facilities. Facility employees spend every day there, so they might not be aware of it, but it is just as clear as day for

those who visit the facility for the first time.

You may be able to identify the cause of such smell when facility employees show you a room and a bathroom.

What comes to next is surprisingly its sound. Try to concentrate on the information you can get with your ears.

Residents may seem restless and are noisy or facility staff may be very loud. On the contrary, it might be strangely quiet. You can learn something from casual conversations between residents and staff.

And, of course, there is visual information. I would like you to pay attention to the residents' facial expression first, then the staff's expression. After that, look at the dirt or dust on the floor. Being that said, however, you need to think flexibly here. If it's not right after the cleaning, it is natural that there are some dusts here and there as many people come and go and time passes.

In addition, the daily meal is something residents enjoy the most. You should ask the facility to show you its dining scene and if possible, sample some dishes.

Meal assistance is also part of nursing care. Even though you can't eat on your own, you might want to eat what you want in the order you want them at your own pace. You can have such an opportunity during a facility tour that how the meal is served. Besides meal restrictions related to medical reasons such as allergy and medication, each facility has its own rules. So, you need to check with the facility whether or not a facility can consider your food preferences when preparing a menu, and whether or not you can bring in your favorite food you used to eat all the time especially when you lose your appetite.

I suggest you try a short stay or a trial stay, if possible, at the facility of your choice.

I have explained so far the key points and viewpoints when you select facilities. In Japan, however, you can find some information evaluated and published by third parties.

On May 7, 2004, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare issued the guideline related to the third-party evaluation of welfare services.

Its purpose is to lead business operators to improve their service quality by identifying their problems.

By making the evaluation result public, it helps users make an appropriate decision when they select services.

A third-party evaluation of welfare services is conducted across the nation, and during the fiscal year 2022, there were total of 5,819 evaluations, of which 3,949 were conducted in Tokyo, accounting for 67.9% of the total.

More than three evaluators involve in a third-party evaluation, conducting a user survey

and business evaluation based on common criteria. The result is available on the website of the evaluating organization.

Tokyo Welfare Navigation <https://www.fukunavi.or.jp/fukunavi/hyoka/hyokatop.htm>, is it, for example, in Tokyo,

Being subdivided into 62 welfare services such as nursing homes for the elderly, elderly care facilities and group homes, the evaluation results of the business operators that underwent evaluation are available to view.

The contents of this website include the facility's philosophy and policies, and its overall feedback such as the facility's best point, areas for improvement, and initiatives most focused on."

The contents are also divided into Organization Management and Analytical Result for its services.

Organization Management is literally all about the management of organization such as its social responsibility, risk management, employee development and so on. It is very useful to know how the organization enhances its employees' skills.

Analytical Result is just like a facility tour; you can check the facility's initiatives including where the facility information is available, how the facility handles residents' privacy, how the facility makes meals enjoyable, and so on.

Many people start to research information on the services and housing available for the elderly when they are forced by necessity; however, with some preliminary knowledge, you will be able to gather much better information.

Even though this information is not necessary for you yet, it will be so someday, so I couldn't be happier if you'd take this opportunity to learn about it.

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