

Report 2.**Research on Proactive Support for Inclusive Society**

Noriaki Tsuchida
(College of Letters, Professor)

Let me report on the research on proactive support for inclusive society. My name is Tsuchida from the College of Letters of Ritsumeikan University. We implement the elderly people's well-being targeted to practical and fundamental research focusing on demonstrativeness for inclusive society. Research for proactive support has two pillars. One is the elderly people support. Another one is the change of high-level mental function with aging. As for the first, research on elderly people support is on what support can be delivered using this university as a local resource. The second pillar is that we set up an environment for the elderly. What is important to set up an environment for the elderly? To get the fundamental materials for that purpose, we consider what sort of change aging will bring about in mental function.

Research results in this fiscal year, for instance, as for the elderly people support, we verified whether a program to prevent depression affects cognitive function. As for the second pillar, change in high-level mental function as we age, we implemented fundamental research on motor control in the elderly. To some extent, we have achieved some outcomes and results. Let me briefly report on the outcomes. First pillar, the research report, is the influence of the depression prevention program to cognitive function. There is a Life Goal Pursuit Program conducted jointly by Doshisha Women's University, Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, and Ritsumeikan University. Our group focused or measured the change in cognitive function, mainly, and the content of the program is very free. There are 10 sessions in total for 2-3 months, centering on group discussions that were conducted. As for the effect verification of the program, one group was around 15 people. There was that limitation, also the staff and a limitation on the

venue. We set up only three groups this year. Those applicants were randomly divided into three groups. One group was considered to be the control group. For the actual assessment method, we implemented the Five Cog, cognitive behavior group therapy, and determined their effect. First, those 5 aspects of cognitive functions—divided attention, episodic memory, visual/spatial skills, language fluency, and abstract reasoning—were determined. In fact, in the results shown here, only in episodic memory we find a significant effect from the intervention. In the control group, we conducted the measurement two times. However, there was no significant difference. However, for the intervention groups, of the 5 aspects we found significant difference only in episodic memory. A big effect was confirmed.

It's only still on the way, but as a summary of the first study, we found effectiveness in improvement of episodic memory that uses language. The Life Goal Pursuit Program is an initiative that frequently uses language, and the Life Goal Pursuit Program promotes a social relationship. These two points might have caused improvement in episodic memory. We are considering that at this point. We are still continuing this study.

The second study report, the second major pillar, is as I mentioned earlier, the change in mental function with aging. Here, I put some charts and photographs. The background of this study is the stepping error between the accelerator and brake, which led to accidents. In case of the elderly, it's said that elderly drivers tend to end up with major accidents. This stepping error is not intrinsic. It's not found only in the elderly. We found stepping error accidents among young people as well. Why do elderly drivers end up with major accidents? That is the point of the examination. So, when people receive information, they make a decision. They usually have a reaction or response. In terms of inhibition, aging may have an impact. From that viewpoint, we conducted research. This is some data from that research. I have already reported in detail in the poster session. For the university student groups, the younger ones, although we set up various conditions there was no impact, but in the case of the older people's group, the

visual stimulus was controlled, but the big impact was given to the happening of the errors. These kinds of experiments have been repeated—we are still continuing, changing the variables or the environment. The research is still ongoing, but at this stage we can say the following things. More nervous excitement may strongly affect the inhibition of behavior for the elderly. So far, the cognitive aspect research were found many, but after making a decision, at the stage of implementation, we find various impacts or influences, and we got various data on that aspect. It suggests the necessity of fundamental research on this motor-level aspect. Including the future plan, there is a summary, in order to prevent dementia, depression, or accidents, elderly people support and also we continuously implement initiatives emphasizing the demonstrativeness as to the changes in high-level mental function with aging, and we will continue this research. Thank you very much for your attention.

Inaba: Thank you. The next theme is the escorted support for social inclusiveness. Dr. Tani will make a presentation.