

Chapter 2: New Issues concerning Safety and Security Posed by Changes in the Structure of Society

MLIT has had a reasonable degree of success in improving the safety and security of Japan's citizens up to now by enacting earthquake, flood control, and other measures to protect against natural disasters and by implementing comprehensive safety measures through government and industry to prevent accidents. In spite of this, against a background of unanticipated events and other issues many citizens feel that Japan today is dangerous.

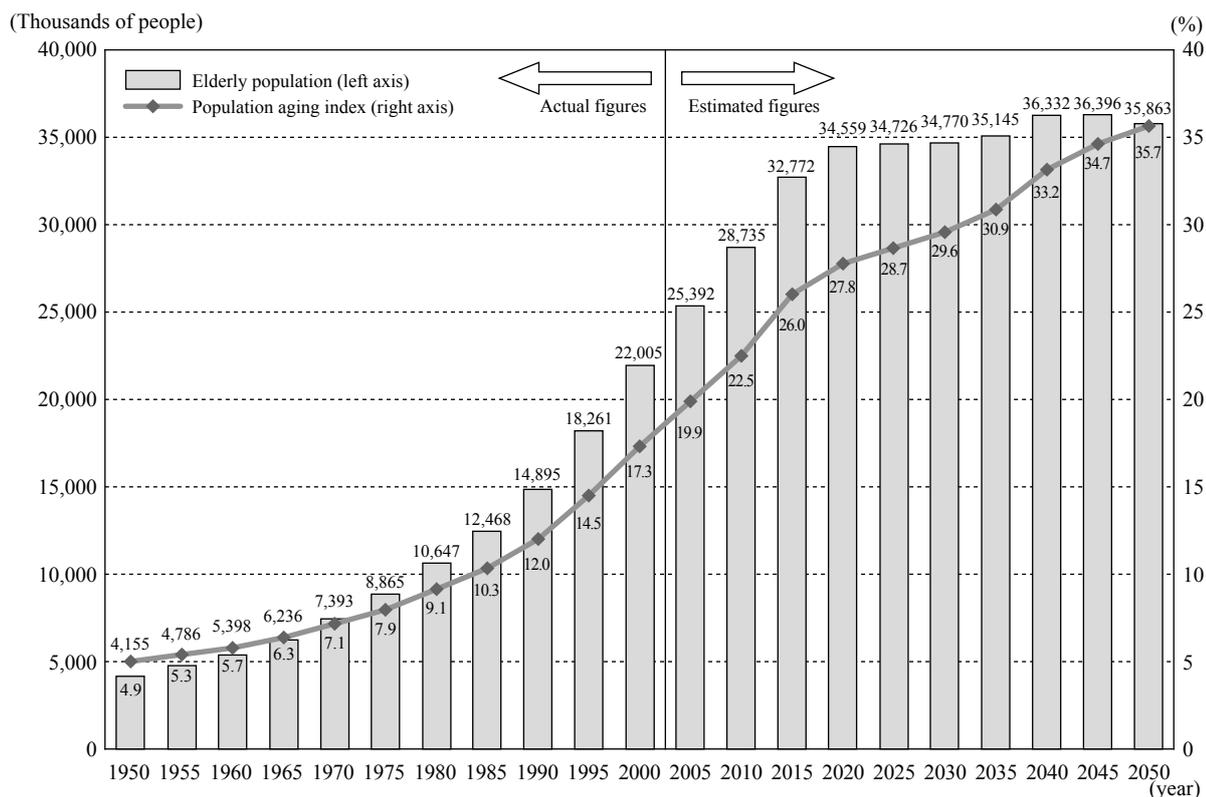
The possibility of a large-scale earthquake looming ever larger, torrential rains exceeding the capacity of the country's infrastructure, and other noticeable changes in Japan's natural characteristics, as well as instances of natural disasters, accidents, terrorism, and so forth occurring both domestically and internationally in recent years are issues surfacing in relation to changes in the structure of society. This is why it is necessary to deal with these issues appropriately in order to establish a truly safe and secure society.

[Issues accompanying the declining birthrate and the aging population]

As of October 1st, 2004, Japan's population aged 65 or older (elderly population) was approximately 24,880,000 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications estimate), accounting for a proportion of the total population (population aging index) of approximately 19.5%.

At the same time, Japan's total fertility rate has been generally falling for about 30 years – since the second baby boom (1971-1974), reaching 1.29 in the year 2004. In addition, the yearly number of live births totaled approximately 1,070,000 in the year 2005 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare estimate), a record low.

The Progress of Population Aging and Future Estimation

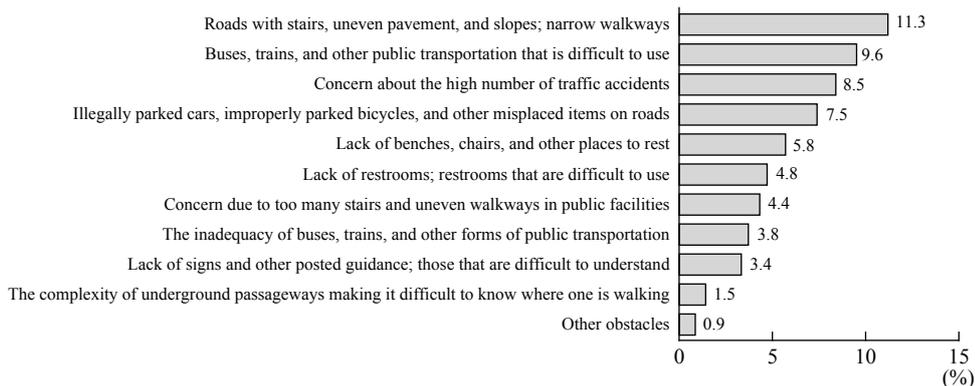


Source: Compiled from Cabinet Office, *Heisei 17 Nen Ban Kourei Shakai Hakusho* (Annual Report on the Aging Society 2005)

○ Safety and security in daily life in consideration of the declining birthrate and the aging population
 (Development of an outdoor environment where people can enjoy safety and security when they leave their homes)

The high proportion of those that mentioned difficulties in using roads and public transportation as obstacles to the elderly when out of doors indicates that this infrastructure requires immediate improvement. There are also calls for living environments that take into consideration independence of and care for the elderly. In addition, improvement of the outdoor environment is also important in providing support for the raising of children from the standpoint of whether or not expecting mothers, children, and those accompanying children can go outside and get around safely and feel secure doing so.

Obstacles for the Elderly (those 60 and over) in Going out of Doors (multiple responses allowed)

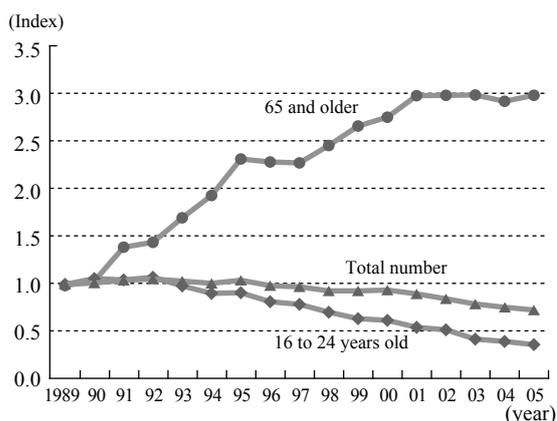


Source: Compiled from Cabinet Office, *Koureisha no Nichijou Seikatsu ni Kansuru Ishiki Chousa* (Survey of Attitude on Everyday Life for the Elderly) (survey conducted from November through December 2004)

(Traffic accidents involving the elderly)

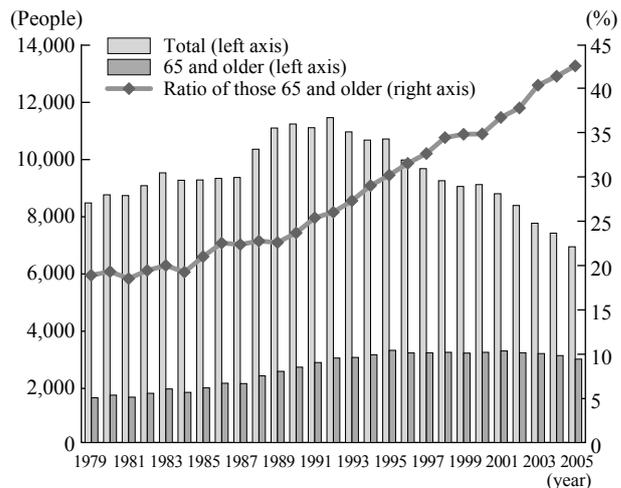
Elderly licensed drivers are on the rise, and many senior citizens are getting around by car. As the elderly population increases, with even greater use of personal cars by the elderly expected in the future, the issue of traffic accidents involving the elderly is becoming more and more serious.

Trends in the Number of Fatal Accidents with Young and Elderly Motorists (first party)



Note: Index set at 1 for 1989
 Sources: Through 2004 compiled from Cabinet Office, *Heisei 17 Nen Ban Koutsuu Anzen Hakusho* (White Paper on Traffic Safety in Japan 2005); for 2005 compiled from National Police Agency data

Trends in the Number of Traffic Accident Fatalities by Age Group

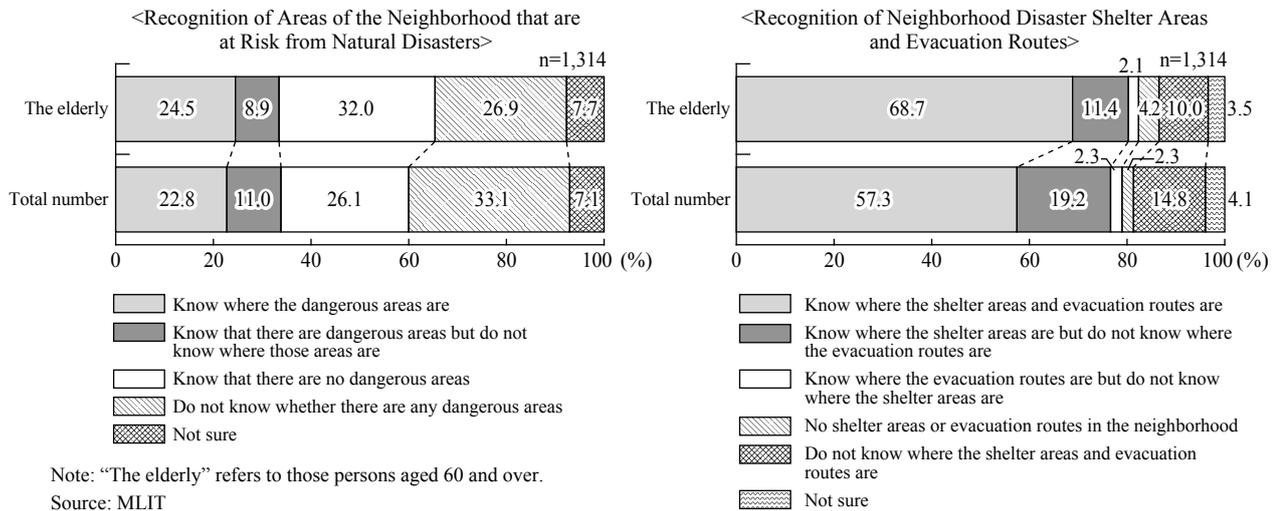


Source: National Police Agency

○ Safety and security in times of disaster in consideration of the declining birthrate and the aging population
(Issues in the evacuation of the elderly)

In order to enable effective and speedy evacuation in the event of a disaster it is essential to get to know which areas of the neighborhood are at risk from natural disasters and determine evacuation routes and shelter areas in advance during ordinary conditions, envisioning the actual occurrence of a natural disaster.

“Recognition of Areas of the Neighborhood that are at Risk from Natural Disasters” and “Recognition of Neighborhood Disaster Shelter Areas and Evacuation Routes”



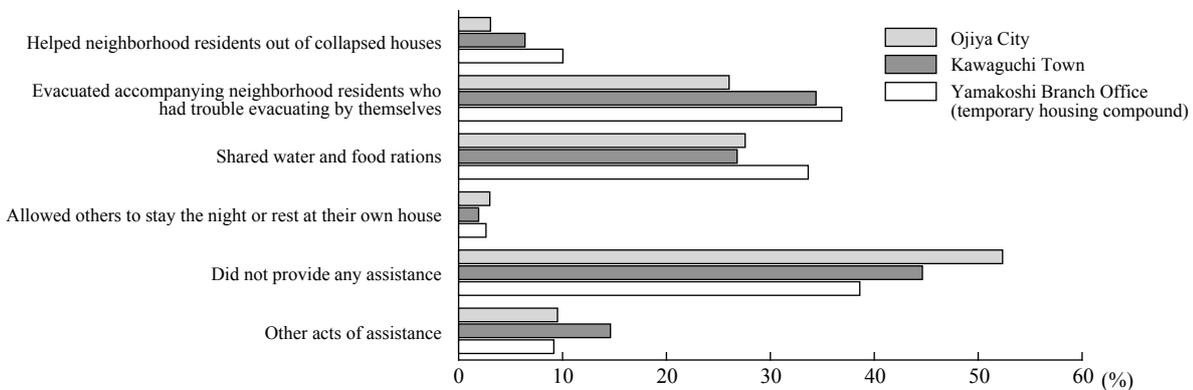
Among the cases of the elderly falling victim to disasters, some cases are due to factors like delayed evacuation, lack of support, or inadequate support. In order to prevent the elderly from being harmed by disasters, it is important that local authorities provide evacuation information in a reliable way promptly so that elderly individuals can evacuate in an effective and speedy manner in the event of a disaster.

(Issues relating to the support of the elderly in evacuations)

Support from family, neighborhood residents, and other people close by is effective for ensuring that elderly individuals evacuate in an effective and speedy manner.

It is important now and in the future to enhance the support system for the elderly with such measures as raising consciousness of disaster prevention in young and middle-aged people and promoting active participation in disaster prevention efforts.

Acts of Assistance in the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake in 2004 (multiple responses allowed)



Source: Cabinet Office, *Heisei 16 Nen Niigataken Chuetsu Jishin ni Kansuru Juumin Anke-to Chousa* (Residents' Questionnaire on the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake in 2004) (poll taken in July 2005)