A Study into Supporting Safe Driving and Active Life for the Elderly (4)

Awareness of care managers and neighborhood councilors regarding driving cessation of elderly persons with lowered cognitive functions

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the difference in awareness between care managers and neighborhood councilors regarding driving cessation of elderly persons with lowered cognitive functions.

Methods

Survey period: August 2010.
Subject: Care managers and neighborhood councilors in "A" town, Shikoku, Japan.
Survey methods: Local comprehensive support center and local Department of care welfare in "A" town were asked for cooperation. Purpose of the study, survey methods, voluntariness for cooperation, privacy protection, and publication of the results were verbally explained to the subjects. That data obtained by this survey are used for only this study and that data are immediately deleted when the study is completed. In addition, the survey was conducted using a self-administered anonymous questionnaire developed for our own study. Return of the questionnaire was considered as consent to participate in our study. This study was approved by the Ethical Review Board of the author's organization.

Results

Result 1: Who should make a judgment about driving cessation when an elderly individual is diagnosed as dementia?

Care managers answered that the family doctor or the police should do it. Neighborhood councilors answered that the elderly person himself or herself or the family should do it. (p < .05) (Figure 1)

- Differences in awareness between occupations -

Care managers: 75.2% of the care managers responded to the consultation, while 36.6% of the neighborhood councilors did. (p < .05) (Figure 2)

- Experience of being consulted -

Yes: Care managers: 45.0%, Neighborhood councilors: 9.9% (p < .01) (Figure 1)

No: Care managers: 45.0%, Neighborhood councilors: 2.4% (p < .01) (Figure 2)

All the care managers had trouble responding to the consultation.

Discussion

It is presumed that care managers have more chances to meet families or neighbors who have had trouble with driving cessation of elderly persons with dementia than neighborhood councilors because care managers directly take care of people who received Certification of Needed Support or Certification of Needed Long-Term Care in the care insurance system.

Care managers should be involved in the education about driving cessation of elderly persons with dementia. Currently, elderly drivers are obligated to attend an educational course (at renewal of a license for drivers of 70 years old and over since 2002) and preliminary examination (at renewal of a license for drivers of 75 years old and over since 2003). In 2009, the preliminary examination for elderly drivers was conducted for 209,401 elderly drivers 1). However, 223 returned their driver's license as a result of the examination.

It would become difficult for the elderly with dementia to drive a car ensuring public safety. When care managers think it is dangerous for the elderly person to drive a car, they begin to feel emotional turmoil and have difficulty in dealing with the situation. Knowing how difficult it is for the people around the elderly to make them stop driving, care managers expect that the final decision about driving cessation should be followed under publicly-provided system.

Reference