

THE NECESSITY OF CONSIDERING SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY -SURVEY RESULTS OF
SILVER PEER RESIDENTS

Yukiko Kudo Researcher, International Longevity Center Japan, 2-3-11
Nihonbashi-Honcho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103 Japan

It is important to provide an adequate living environment in terms of functional perspective (security, convenience, and comfort) and emotional perspective, those aspects which create a sense of belonging for the individual (familiarity, guaranteed residence, connection with the community) to help elderly continue to live independently in their communities.

This research analyzes the living environment of elderly residents in Silver Peer Housing, multipul-unit housing for the elderly in Tokyo, illuminate problems, and considers ideas for improving the urban living environment. Since the proportion of the elderly living apart from their adult children is on the rise, and household size is decreasing in urban Japan, the provision of multiple-unit housing for the elderly is crucial.

Method: In three districts in Tokyo, an questionnaire interview was administrated to the residents aged 65 and over living at home , and to the residents of Silver Peer Housing. Out of the total, 19 respondents were chosen for a free response interview to obtain more detailed information.

Results: (1) Residents are highly satisfied with the safety, comfort , and convenience of Silver Peer Housing. It can be concluded that there is a sufficient level of satisfaction in terms of functional aspects. (2) The analysis on residents' "sense of belonging" in the Silver Peer Housing environment has brought to light several fundamental problems. There is less integration and participation in their neighborhood for the Silver Peer residents compared with elderly living at home. (3) Of the various visits they had more and less frequently in the past ten years, the number of places where they go less frequently has increased. Their reduced outings may be negatively affecting their QOL. (4) Moving from the previous neighborhood imposes a tremendous impact on the social relationship of elder person by not only creating the physical distance between them and their closest friends, but also by reducing the frequency they see each other.(5) The policies of the Silver Peer Housing are required reconsideration to improve their living environments.