

A 2-year follow-up survey of health and life style in Japanese unemployed persons.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:

To clarify how unemployment affects health and life style in Japanese unemployed persons.

METHODS:

A group of 768 workers over 40 years of age in a large shoemaking company were dismissed because of sudden bankruptcy. Every 6 months after they had left the company, a survey with questionnaires was performed on 473 of them, who had organized an association. The questionnaires contained queries about somatic and mental symptoms and life style, including sleep, diet, exercise, smoking and drinking habits. The data from 263 of 473 subjects responding to four consecutive surveys every 6 months were analyzed in detail.

RESULTS:

The subjects kept their health and daily life style in good condition. This might have been due to the financial support of unemployment benefit. When the right to unemployment benefit expired, mood disorders occurred. In daily life, the prevalence rates of smoking and drinking consumption hardly changed in all subjects, and physical exercise was also habitually undertaken. The motivation for re-employment was remarkably enhanced by family economic crisis.

CONCLUSION:

Health, except for mental status, and life style of the unemployed persons were maintained in good condition. Mood disorders may result from prolonged jobless situations and cessation of the right to unemployment benefit.

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