STUDY ON THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SELF-RATED HEALTH

Shintaro Fukushima

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In recent years, many people wonder if economic and material wealth were the only criteria which contributed to well-being of people. Against this background, current researches indicated that human health and subjective well-being were generated not by the absolute income level but by the relative income level among the neighbors after people achieved a certain level of economic development. This study deals with the wealth held between individuals and their environments. In particular, this study focused on the wealth which is kept among people, and examined the relations between various forms of connections among individuals and self-rated health, to build the preferable society from the viewpoint of well-being of people.

2. SOCIAL CAPITAL

There are various kinds of researches concerning connections among individuals. This study particularly focused on social capital as one of such human connections. In this research, social capital was defined by three forms of human relationships: trust, norm, and networks. Moreover, this study distinguished the properties of these forms of human connections.

3. STUDY AREA AND METHOD

The study area is a rural area in three cities of the northern Kyoto prefecture. The questionnaire survey was conducted in the study area, and the rate of received questionnaires was 30.9 % (N = 12,378). Logistic regression analysis was conducted to consider the relations among explanatory variables, and examine the effect of those variables on the objective variable.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the result of the analysis. Trust in members of the community and interpersonal trust held in the community had close relationship with self-rated health in various forms and types of social capital, while general trust was less related to self-rated health. In addition, these trusts held in the community are also closely related to the networks in the community. The results also showed that there were almost no relations between norms or rules in the community and self-rated health.

Table 1 Odds ratio of variable social capital on self-rated health

The forms and types of social capital	The contents of the answer sheet for odds ratio calculation	Odds ratio	(P value)
General trust	(most people / no people)	0.921	(0.583)
Trust in members of the community	(most people / no people)	2.890	(0.000)
Interpersonal trust	(have / not have)	1.515	(0.002)
Norms in the community	(exist / not exist)	1.062	(0.630)
Rules in the community	(exist / not exist)	1.019	(0.876)
Community network (frequency)	(almost every day / less than 1 times a month)	1.322	(0.273)
Community network (amount)	(most people / few people)	1.102	(0.380)

5. CONCLUSION

Not only economic development, but also connections among individuals are important for the improvement of self-rated health. In order to construct the desirable society in the context of well-being of people, it is necessary to provide for face-to-face meetings among community residents, and cultivate two-way relationships of trust among them. The results also imply the fact that it is not simply preferable to shift from the closed society which holds norms or rules to open society. Further studies are needed to examine both good and bad aspects of human connections, and lead to the concrete practice.