

Report of Research Results (English)
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<Research Title> Does Oral hypofunction Promote Social Withdrawal Among Older Adults?

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【抄録】

It is well known that many older adults require nursing care because they are "withdrawn," meaning that they stay at home and do not go out. It has been reported that psychological factors associated with a decline in the esthetic appearance of the oral area and a decline in oral function are also associated with withdrawal. On the other hand, there are no longitudinal reports on the relationship between withdrawal and oral function worldwide, and evidence is lacking. The purpose of this study was to clarify the characteristics of oral function in older adults that lead to withdrawal through longitudinal analysis.

The subjects were 969 older adults aged 65 or older living in the Tamba-Sasayama area who had participated in medical examinations at least twice between 2016 and 2022. The state of withdrawal was assessed based on responses to "Kihon checklist" or the results of an activity tracker. In addition, items related to oral function, body composition, motor function, and factors related to cognitive function were evaluated. As a result, about 16% of the subjects decreased the number of outings over a 2-year period (the "worsening withdrawal group"). Comparing the control group, whose frequency of going out did not change, and the worsening withdrawal group was significantly older and had poorer physical functions at the first medical checkup than the control group. In particular, walking speed, grip strength, and knee extension muscle strength were significantly lower than in the control group. On the other hand, there was no clear difference in oral function between the control and the worsening withdrawal group. We are currently in the process of organizing the data collected to date, and since there are many unanalyzed items, we plan to examine the relationship between withdrawal and oral function more closely in the future.