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学 位 論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

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学 位 論 文 題 名

Comprehensive visualization of welfare services for the elderly in a small-sized municipality: a case study of information compiled by the manager of the health and welfare division, Tsurui Village, Hokkaido
(小規模自治体における高齢者福祉事業の俯瞰的可視化:
北海道鶴居村保健福祉責任者が集約した情報に関する事例研究)

Due to the declining birthrate and aging population, the population is declining in many regions, increasing the elderly's percentage in the population. For the elderly to be able to live live continuously in their communities, municipalities in those areas are working to enhance "the welfare services," administrative services, such as welfare, nursing care, and medical care deeply related to their daily lives. However, they cannot provide welfare services to all elderly who need them without leakage. This dissertation conducted two case studies focusing on the "Daily Living Information File," a file compiling information on the welfare services used by the elderly in Tsurui Village, Hokkaido, Japan, a small-sized municipality, from the perspective of "No one will be left behind" as a spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015).

The "Daily Living Information File" is a Microsoft® Excel file created by the manager of the health and welfare division in June 2018 to compile each elderly's access information on the welfare services or absence of their responses to questionnaires (hereafter called as "the user information of welfare services") held by each section under the division. The file targets all senior citizens aged 65 years and older (777 people as of April 1, 2018), from the viewpoint of eliminating whether the presence of the elderly who do not know the welfare services are available (so-called "no one left behind" perspective). The "Daily Living Information File" contains (1) personal information such as name, age, and address, as well as the presence or absence of the user information on the welfare services (2) by laws and regulations and (3) by the Tsurui-original. Since the "Daily Living Information File" includes necessary information such as name, gender, and date of birth, the protection and management of personal information must be considered in accordance with the Law Concerning the Protection of Personal Information and the Tsurui Village Regulation Concerning the Protection of Personal Information. The other items are only listed with the presence or absence of the user information on each welfare service, which is relatively easy to manage and share within the health and welfare division.

Chapter 2 demonstrated what kind of information can be extracted from the “Daily Life Information File.” The file effectively worked the Health and Welfare Department new to find 30 elderlies out of a total of 777 seniors. The interviews confirmed that none of the health and human services division had known their living conditions. By implementing a “Visit survey for grasping the actual living conditions of the elderly,” one of the Tsurui-original projects established targeting about 50 elderly each year, the department will not pass unnoticed these elderly’s living conditions anymore. In other words, the “Daily Life Information File” should allow us to achieve “No one will be left behind,” a spirit of the SDGs, at the level of grasping after one year. Using the “Daily Life Information File,” it was attempted to visualize elderly’s situations such as percentage of living alone, age, and certification of nursing care in each district and to investigate their reasons. Many of the results were as the staff in charge had grasped or imagined but were also found to be different from what was imagined: e.g., cause of Tsurui Village’s lower percentage of nursing care certification than surrounding municipalities.

Chapter 3 discussed the case in which the “Daily Life Information File” was used to extract people to be checked for their safety during a large-scale power outage “blackout” following the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake in September 2018. The “Daily Life Information File” ensured comprehensiveness, flexibility, and convenience in the extraction process of persons matched with unexpected blackout requirements under the condition of the limited number of staff assigned. This study demonstrated that the “Daily Life Information File” can be used, even in emergencies, to extract people according to new requirements and circumstances, although the government recommends the use of “List of Persons in Need of Evacuation Support” in normal times. Although the “Daily Life Information File” must be carefully managed since it contains personal information, an ingenious contrivance made it relatively easy to manage without including detailed information was also found. There is a challenge that the “Daily Living Information File” has not been updated after the earthquake and does not ensure its reliability.

This dissertation reveals the significance of the “Daily Life Information File” from an academic perspective. On the other hand, updating the information becomes a challenge. The “Daily Life Information File” complied by the health and welfare division has not been updated since it was made. As discussed in Chapter 3, to be updated frequently, there may be ways to reduce the amount of information, create an incentive to update, or make it mandatory. In addition, this research has not discussed how unique the “Daily Life Information File” is compared with other municipalities. These points remain challenges for this study. If other municipalities have a file/database like the “Daily Life Information File” or similar cases, a comparative study could be done. This study shows the potential of compiling the user information on welfare services to ensure that no one will be left behind in the aging society with declining birthrates and provide welfare services suitable to individual elderly people. This research is a case study of Tsurui Village, a small-sized municipality but it is expected that more and more municipalities will introduce the trial like this research.