Questionnaire Survey on the Meals of Senior Citizens: Key Findings 2012

◆ Research Outline

Yano Research Institute has conducted a questionnaire survey on the meals of senior citizens as described below.
1. Research period: April to May 2012
2. Research targets: 60-years or older men and women living in their own homes in Japan: 1,159 samples (Male: 924, female: 235)
3. Research methodologies: Internet online survey

<What is the questionnaire survey on the meals of senior citizens?>
In order to cope with the hyper aging society, Japanese government has introduced a “new program focused on preventive care” in April 2006 for the nursing-care insurance system which is positioned as the core part of the government welfare policy for the aged. As the meal is playing an important role in preventing the weakening of living functions of aged people, a questionnaire survey has been conducted on 60 years and older males and females about their meals. In this research, 60-year and older males and females are referred to as “seniors”.

◆ Key Findings

• Senior prefers well balanced meals, including fruits, vegetables and fishes.
  Responses on “daily concerns on meals (multiple answers)” indicate that seniors are highly conscious of their dietary life, with 67.0 percent of respondents answered, “Eat fruits and vegetables”, followed by 61.9 percent “well balanced meals”, and 56.5 percent “eat fishes”. There are segments of population who are conscious of their everyday meals although they are healthy regardless of their ages. This trend, however, appears to be strengthened among the seniors.

• Seniors have a tendency to cook and eat at home.
  Responses on the question on cooking methods and pattern of each meal (multiple answers) indicate the preferences of seniors for eating at home the meals cooked by family members or by themselves for every meal from breakfast to supper. There are not so many seniors who go out for eating or purchase cooked foods for eating at home. Also not many of them are using catering services such as home delivery meals or meals prepared for specific diseases.

• What is needed is to review the meals in consideration of nutrient factors and nutritional values
  While majority of seniors are feeling that they do not have any difficulty on everyday meals, some of them are having difficulties in reviewing and adjusting their meals by considering nutritional values and nutrient factors, such as salt and calorie contents adjustment, balancing of nutrient factors, a menu getting staled. Also, there are seniors who are getting tired of cooking their meals, or having difficulties in going out for shopping.

  Solutions of these dietary issues are important for enhancing the health-maintenance of the seniors. There are issues, however, such as additional financial cost for relying on the outside service providers. For the seniors living alone, opportunities are limited for advises and supports on cooking by family members.
Fig 1: Concerns on Daily Meals (Multiple Answers)

- Eat vegetables and fruits: 67.0%
- Well balanced meals: 61.9%
- Eat fishes: 56.5%
- Refrain from taking too much salt: 52.0%
- Drink water: 46.7%
- Not to eat or drink too much: 42.0%
- Eat high-fiber foods: 35.6%
- Chew my food well: 29.3%
- Refrain from taking too much fat: 28.2%
- Refrain from taking too much calories: 26.7%
- Refrain from taking too much sugar: 25.8%
- Trying on home cooking: 24.4%
- Use supplements and health-foods: 22.3%
- Avoid to eat fast: 17.2%
- Avoid fast foods and eat-outs: 15.0%
- Refrain processed or instant foods: 14.7%
- Avoid food additives: 14.1%
- Eat trace elements (vitamins, minerals): 9.6%
- Nothing in particular: 8.5%
- Others: 0.8%

(Prepared by Yano Research Institute)

Note 1: Research period: April to May 2012, Research targets (samples): 60 year or older males and females living in their own homes in Japan (1,159 samples), Research methodology: Online Internet survey, with multiple answers.
Fig 2: Cooking Method and Pattern of Each Meal (Multiple Answers)

Fig 2-1: Lunch

Cooking by family members: 57.3%
Cooking by myself: 41.2%
Eat out: 13.3%
Cooked foods at a supermarket: 11.9%
Cooked foods at a take-out lunch shop: 7.8%
Cooked foods at a fast food store: 4.2%
Cooked foods at a convenience store: 3.7%
Home delivery, catering service: 3.7%
Cooked foods by mail-order service: 1.6%
Scheduled home delivery service: 0.8%
Cooking at home by a home helper: 0.5%
Prepared renal disease diet: 0.3%
Prepared calorie-controlled foods: 0.3%
Prepared easy-to-digest foods: 0.3%
Prepared diabetes diet: 0.3%
Do not eat: 1.1%
Others: 2.2%

(Prepared by Yano Research Institute)

Note 2: Research period: April to May 2012, Research targets (samples): 60 year or older males and females living in their own homes in Japan (1,159 samples), Research methodology: Online Internet survey, with multiple answers.

Fig 2: Cooking Method and Pattern of Each Meal (Multiple Answers)

Fig 2-2: Supper

Cooking by family members: 66.6%
Cooking by myself: 14.7%
Eat out: 13.3%
Cooked foods at a supermarket: 10.2%
Cooked foods at a department store: 8.7%
Cooked foods at a take-out lunch shop: 7.7%
Home delivery, catering service: 4.8%
Cooked foods by mail-order service: 4.8%
Cooked foods at a fast food store: 2.8%
Scheduled home delivery service: 1.2%
Cooking at home by a home helper: 0.9%
Prepared easy-to-digest foods: 0.9%
Prepared calorie-controlled foods: 0.7%
Prepared renal disease diet: 0.3%
Prepared diabetes diet: 0.3%
Do not eat: 0.7%
Others: 0.6%

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Note 3: Research period: April to May 2012, Research targets (samples): 60 year or older males and females living in their own homes in Japan (1,159 samples), Research methodology: Online Internet survey, with multiple answers.
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