

# 超高齢化の日本：板ばさみの世代

By Deanna Elstrom, Fumiya Shirahama and Takayuki Higuchi



いろいろな意味で、日本は、人が「全盛期」を過ごす理想的な場所であるように見えます。平均寿命は世界最高の84歳を誇り、人口の28%が65歳以上(対して、0-14歳は13%)<sup>1</sup>で占められています。ですから、自身が高齢となっても、間違いなくたくさんの仲間と過ごすことができるでしょう。また、高齢者は適切なケアを受けることもできます。日本は、全国民に長期の医療保障を提供し、質の高い医療を公平に手ごろな価格で利用できると保証しています。<sup>2</sup> そのため、OECD諸国の中では、GDPに占める医療支出の割合が6番目に高い国となっています。安全で清潔な公共スペース、最高水準の公共交通機関、そ

して儒教的に孝行(年配者に対する敬意)を重んじる伝統が根付く日本では、高齢化についても比較的前向きな見通しが期待できそうな気がします。

しかし、イプソスが高齢化<sup>3</sup>について実施したグローバルアドバイザー調査では、日本で「自身が高齢になることを、楽しみにしていない」と回答した人が87%にのぼっています。一方で「楽しみにしている」と回答した人はたったの10%でし

30

33%

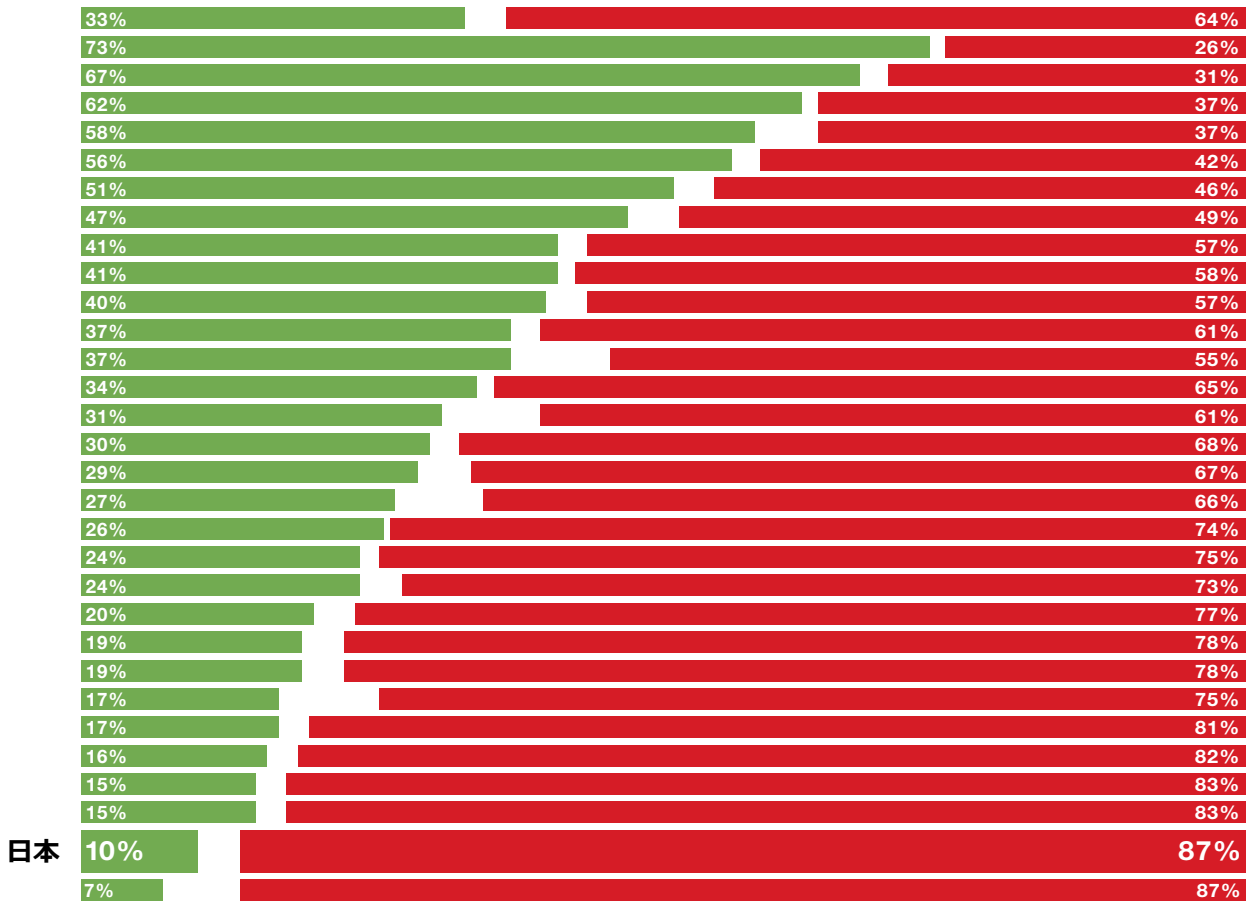
(7%)

( 1



(46.9 )<sup>4</sup> (28.5 )  
 (28 )

図1：「高齢になることを楽しみにしている」人の割合



2018 8 24 9 7 30 16 64 20,788



2060 1 2,600 3 8,700

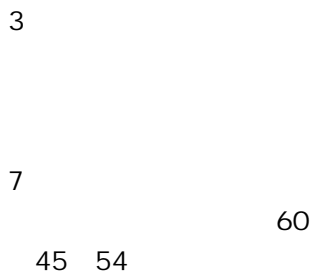
( )

2015 44% OECD 2050 6

73

GDP 220 OECD 7

(67% )



Those who will be retiring in the forthcoming decades and have not enjoyed the security and benefits of “regular” employment, will be most vulnerable; the widening of income inequality will extend into old age and the different financial situations between those with and without pensions will be extreme. Longer lives and gender inequality compound these problems.



## BEST AND WORST THINGS ABOUT AGEING

Many of the concerns that Japanese feel about ageing mirror those felt globally. Consistent with the global average, the 3 worst things about getting old for the Japanese are ‘losing mobility’, ‘not having enough money to live on’ and ‘losing memory’. On the other hand, ‘being in pain’, ‘being lonely’ and ‘losing independence’ are uniformly less worrisome for Japanese than the global average.

There is a stronger than average concern about providing care to others, which is perhaps unsurprising as many middle-aged and elderly relatives are already caring for many of the 35 million Japanese currently aged 65+, including 11 million aged 80+ and 2.2 million aged 90+.<sup>8</sup> And, with Japanese living longer than ever before, many are acquiring age-related diseases that make their care especially taxing. Dementia, for example, currently affects 4% of the Japanese population (5 million) and is forecast to grow to 6-7% by 2030.<sup>9</sup>

According to Japanese individuals, the best things about getting older parallel those chosen globally, but with less enthusiasm. Only ‘having a slower pace of life’ elicited a stronger response in Japan, (26% Japan versus 20% global average). The desire for more free time is evident in the remaining advantages of ageing chosen by most respondents: ‘more time for hobbies/leisure’ (32% Japan vs. 32% global average), ‘more time to spend with friends/family’ (21% vs. 36%) and ‘more time for holidays and travel’ (20% vs. 26%).

The lower than global average level of ‘more time to spend with friends/family’ may reflect the smaller and more geographically-dispersed families prevalent in Japan today. Over the past 50 years, the Japanese population has become concentrated, with 93% living in urban areas. Smaller nuclear families, combined with the clearly-defined gender roles that foster separate social worlds of Japanese husbands and wives, may help to explain the relatively muted anticipation of greater time together.

A final notable difference is that only 5% of Japanese chose ‘being financially secure’ as something to look forward to in older age in comparison to the 20% global average, providing another indicator of the anxiety that many Japanese feel about their financial futures.

## PESKY OLD FOLKS

In recent years, the word *rougai* 老害 has increasingly entered the public lexicon. Defined as “the nuisance caused by the elderly”, the term describes incidences of elderly people causing societal disruption such as delaying trains seemingly on purpose and dressing down younger people in public.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the survey results reveal the generational friction and polarized perspectives between older and younger Japanese; opinion is split between those who agree with the statement ‘People don’t respect old people as much as they should’ (32%) and those who disagree (24%). As one might expect, those ages 45-64 were most likely to agree, while those ages 16-44 were least likely to agree.

Figure 2: Percentage agreeing that people don’t respect old people as much as they should

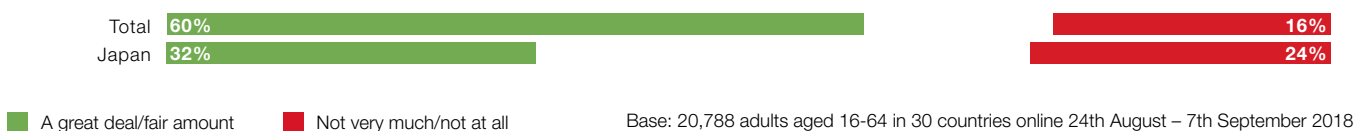
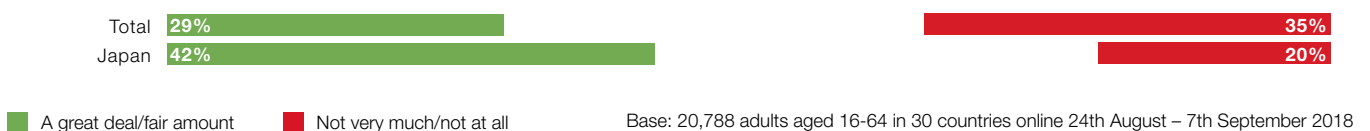


Figure 3: Percentage agreeing that old people have “too much political influence”



The perception that older people wield too much political influence is another source of friction. Japanese were the most likely of all countries surveyed to agree with the statement 'Old people have too much political influence' (42% vs. 29% global average), with the youngest agreeing even more strongly (56%).

One survey result that stands out as particularly surprising for a country with a designated holiday of "Respect for the Aged" (敬老の日) is the relatively low level of agreement with the statement 'It is the job of the young to care for ageing relatives' (23% vs. 57% global average). More confounding is that those ages 55-64 are least likely to agree with this statement. Wouldn't this older generation want their younger relatives to feel a sense of responsibility for their care?

Yet this is the group of Japanese who are squeezed in the middle between raising children and making a living, and also actively providing care to their elderly parents and relatives. For them, there is nothing theoretical about this duty that they live every day.

## FEELING THEIR AGE

Visit Japan and you will see the fittest and healthiest old people you can imagine. They crowd the gyms and swimming pools and are often out walking and exercising in parks. They eat healthy traditional diets and receive consistent, high-quality health care. Yet, survey results reveal a relatively low percentage of Japanese who expect to be fit and healthy in old age (23% vs. 57% global average). Once again, we must keep in mind that the survey respondents mirror the demographic makeup of the nation - as they are older than in other countries they are more likely to already be feeling the effects of ageing.

Also, with the world's longest life expectancy, staying fit and healthy to the end is a tall order for the Japanese. And likely at play in these low expectations is the Japanese propensity for perfectionism; you can always make a greater effort to eat healthily and exercise more.



## THE FIRST, BUT NOT THE LAST

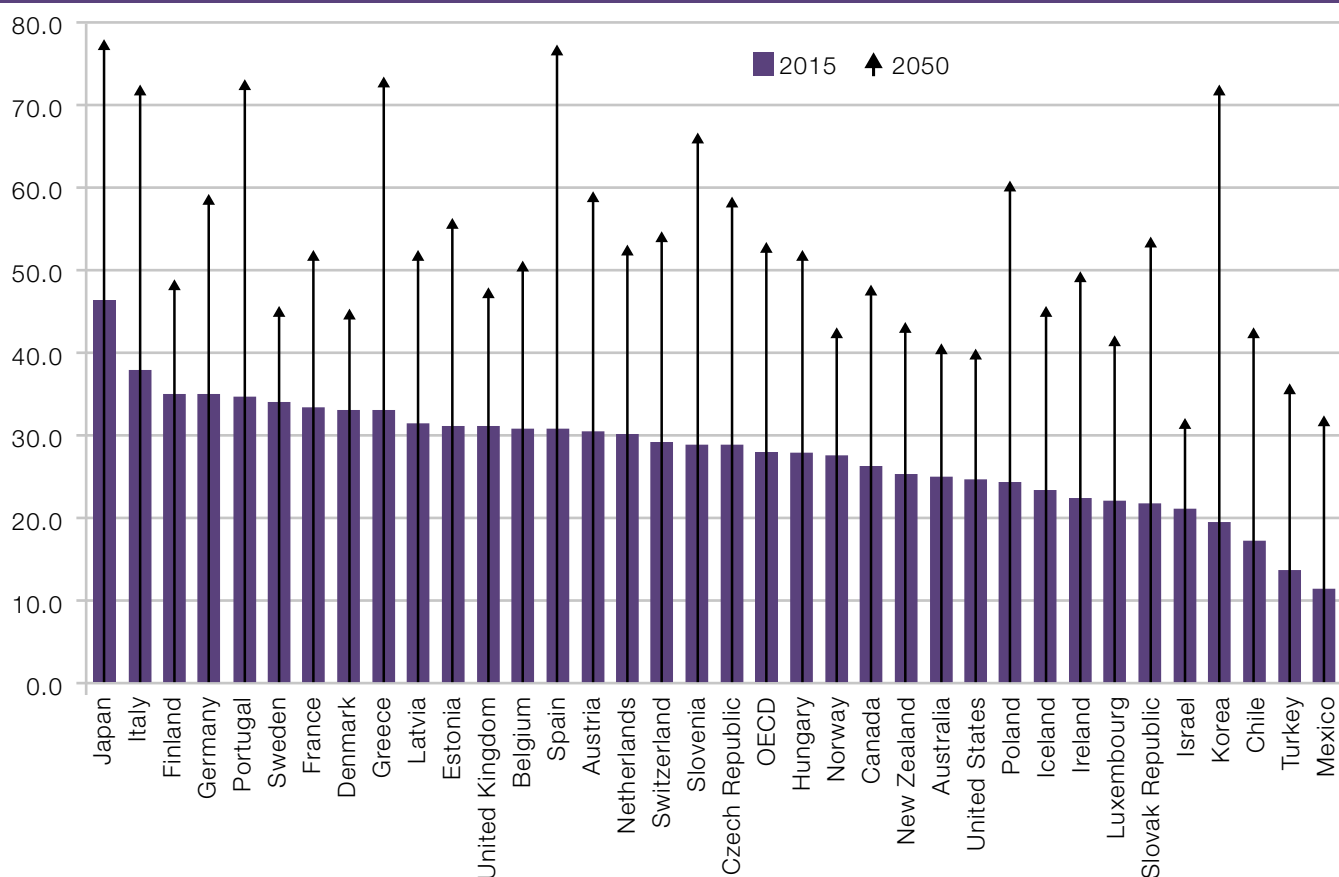
Though Japan may have the highest proportion of older citizens in the world, it is not alone. In fact, many countries are ageing at a rate even higher than Japan is. The UN forecasts that, by 2050, Spain will be equally “super-aged”, with Korea not far behind.

Rather than viewing Japan from afar as an anomaly, it can serve as a catalyst for global action – a test lab of sorts to bring together the best ideas and put them into action. Urban planners, architects, social

scientists, designers, medical experts and others could work together to find solutions that make growing old as positive an experience as possible for the individual and the family, emotionally and physically, as well financially sustainable at a national level.

Ideas like intentionally intergenerational housing such as Saettedammen in Denmark<sup>12</sup> may challenge cultural norms, yet extend current thinking in creative new ways. The global demographic, societal and economic shifts of the past half-century require collective solutions that go beyond borders.

Figure 4: Proportion of citizens over 65 years old over the working population (20-64 years old)



Source: Pensions at a Glance 2017 - © OECD 2017

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# JAPAN IN NUMBERS

LIFE EXPECTANCY IS THE WORLD'S HIGHEST, AT

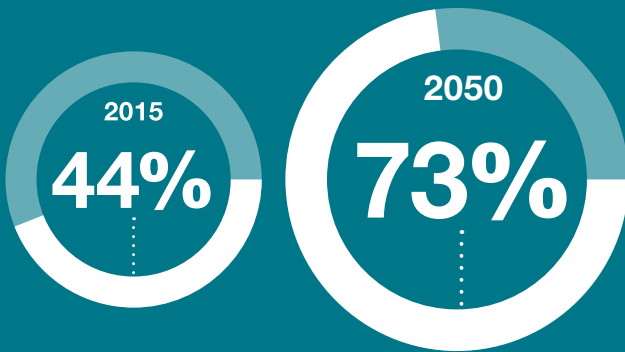
**84** YEARS OLD

**28%**



OF THE POPULATION IS 65+

## ELDERLY DEPENDENCY RATIO



ONLY **10%** ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO OLD AGE.

(MAKING JAPAN THE SECOND MOST PESSIMISTIC COUNTRY.)

## WOMEN AGED 75+ IN POVERTY



**1 IN 4**  
JAPAN



**1 IN 7**  
OECD AVERAGE

**35**  
MILLION

CURRENTLY AGED 65+

INCLUDING

**11**  
MILLION

AGED 80+

**2.2**  
MILLION

AGED 90+



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