



A Statistical Research on China Eldercare Service: Take Haining City as Example

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Abstract: Supported by the survey of eldercare service in Haining City, Zhejiang province, this paper has made needs analysis of eldercare service and home care. It aims to propose the better methods for the senior citizens to get more professional service, which are different from traditional family care in China. Moreover, it has provided some suggestions for the local government to make better eldercare plans and policies.

Key Words: Family care, Institutional care, Home care, Haining

Introduction

According to Statistics-gov, there were approximately 0.2 billion people over 60 years old living in China at the end of 2013. Given a total (2013) China population figure of more than 1.4 billion, this means that almost one in seven of the population is minimally qualified as elderly.

These staggering statistics show that the need for eldercare is universal in China. Fortunately there is also a lot of eldercare occurring in the country. It may be classified into three major categories: 1) family-providing care (referred to as family care), of which the needs of living of elders including material and spiritual are provided by their family; 2) institution-providing care (referred to as institutional care). The eldercare services are provided by elder-institutes after elders have paid the fees; 3) family-providing plus organization-providing care (referred to as home care). Those elders living at home, not only can receive family care, but also are the concern of various organizations including communities, volunteers, social workers, neighbors, etc. nearby their households.

Rapid aging is associated with a variety of eldercare polices making. In order to solve the elders' survival problem and improve the quality of elders' lives, Chinese government should plan ahead to address those needs of eldercare, and service integration, innovation of institutional care and home care are inevitable.

It is important to gain information about the type of care needed, the reasons why care is needed and the quality of life among most elderly people living in lower-pension or at disabled. Thus a study was performed to investigate people aged 60 years and older in Haining City. Haining City (hereinafter referred to as Haining), located between Hangzhou and Shanghai, is a county-level city in China, whose economy has developed to higher level in the country. In 2013 its per capita GDP had reached 7507 US dollars, while the same indicator in China in the same year was 6629 US dollars. In other words, China's per capita GDP by 2020 would reach Haining's level in 2013 if it would increase by 5% annually. In addition, the social culture and the quality of life of Haining's people are at ahead of the country; therefore, we conducted a case study on required eldercare service for seniors in the city and we made efforts to summarize the innovation of home care combined with institutional care mode, which aims at disabled and low-pension elders, provides service in innovative ways in the future in China, and emphasizes on professional home



care services that differ from traditional family care. It is especially regarded as the reference of government financial support for eldercare service.

A professional group had adopted the method of questionnaire and interview. The survey was designed to choose 5% of people aged 60 years and older in the city as samples. Moreover, the proportion of those samples was consistent with the proportion of each community population size as far as possible.

In deed, 1012 cases were collected in order to ensure the reliability of the analysis. The valid sample (n=878) comprised those who are in a community-stratified randomized sample of seniors living in urban area in Haining. There were notable differences in their needs of institutional care services between urban and rural in China; so four communities in the city were specially investigated in order to understand the difference in eldercare service needed. The questionnaire covered sex, age, living conditions, civil status, numbers of children, respondents' health status, quality of life, help from another person, and the type and amount of help received.

For the perspective of the survey, it is necessary to have information about the eldercare conditions needed, the type of care needed and satisfaction of home care services among the most elderly people living in their communities in order to maximize their quality of life.

Those investigators were trained in order to ensure the quality of the investigation.

Several selected community workers accompanied the investigators in case a few respondents did not say mandarin. Investigators filled all of the questionnaires after face-to-face interviews. The raw data was processed by SPSS, before the research report was presented.

Descriptive research

The characteristics showed by the research are that the average age of elderly people is 71 years old. Nearly 80% of them have a spouse and 17% are widowed. 61% of them are below junior education level. From a gender perspective it is obvious that the education level of the male respondents significantly is higher than that of the female ones; we also see that the education level of the respondents in urban area is greatly higher than that of those in rural or suburban area. Most respondents living in rural communities had been engaged in agricultural work before 60 years old; however, a majority of those living in urban communities were workers, teachers, etc. before 60 years old.

The following descriptive analysis results are mainly addressed:

1. The health conditions

More than 23% of the cases maintain their independence within the comfort of their own home. Many older adults in Haining urban areas prefer to stay at home for as long time as possible. It's natural for them to want to stay at home as seniors grow older. However, the majority of elderly people aged 60-75 who lived in rural area still work outside.

Eldercare requirements are determined by several factors, including the type of health conditions they develop, the severity of those conditions, the type of deficits caused by those conditions and the natural course of those conditions. A fifth of the respondents reported that their health conditions are poor or very poor. From a providing high quality elder-services perspective, it is important to have information about the type of diseases. The following ranking list highlights some of the most common disease for those elders living in the city:

- Diabetes mellitus (25.93%),
- Heart disease (12.65%),
- Cervical vertebra and lumbar vertebra diseases (10.8%),



- A joint disease (10.39%).

It is obvious that physical functions of elderly people become to decline, as they grow older. In addition, their physical problems are becoming more and more serious. The report shows that about a sixth of elders living in the city met great difficulties in ill cure. It seems that males face fewer difficulties than females. The proportion of the elderly people they have medical difficulties increase as they are aging.

2. Requiring eldercare

In deed, home care mode is obviously available in China's present social-culture environment and under such economical conditions. There were notable differences in requiring eldercare among elderly people living in various communities and age groups.

According to the survey, more than half of the cases still tend to choose family care, roughly a third of them are willing to accept home care, and one in ten of the respondents selected institutional care.

About 74% of the cases living in rural areas prefer to choose family care, by contrast, only 43% in urban areas.

More than 16% of those living in urban areas are willing to accept institutional care, but less than 7% of the respondents living rural are willing so. There is a 10-percentage-point gap between those two groups. It is obvious that institutional care services are mainly accepted in cities.

Roughly 37% of the cases said "yes" when they were asked if they were willing to enter nursing homes at their own expense, about 22% of the respondents said "maybe" and more than 40% of them said "no".

More than half of the cases living urban communities were willing to choose institutional care at their own expense; by contrast, less than 30% of those living in rural communities were willing so; roughly one in five of respondents living urban communities are reluctant to choose institutional care paid by themselves and more than half of the cases living in rural communities are reluctant to do so.

By 2014, the proportion of older people benefiting from institutional care provided by government or public institutions reached 90 percent. They thought that the fee having to pay to these institutions established by government certainly is less than that to those private eldercare agencies because government provides subsidies to the former.

3. Requiring eldercare service

Not all older people in Haining end up requiring eldercare service; for the most part, only those who become ill at their old age will require substantial elder care. According to the survey, the majority of seniors in the city can take care of themselves. The proportion of older people who have difficulties in taking care of themselves accounted for 8% and more than 4% of them are completely unable to do so. In other words, about one in ten of respondents had to seek for eldercare service.

From age group perspective, we may see that a lot of those cases reported their self-care abilities are in decline when they grow elder. The percentage of elders that are able to take care themselves in daily life has decreased from 90% among 60-year-old elders to 53% among 80-year-old older. Nearly 10% of the seniors cannot completely take care of themselves and need help or care services. We also catch sight of the phenomenon that the male elders have fewer difficulties than the female ones.

The respondents reported they firstly could seek help from their spouses, then the family



members, and next nannies if they start to find it difficult or impossible to carry on their activities of daily living.

Knowing that whether an elder requires home care is one important thing. Figuring out what sort of home care arrangements can be made is inevitable. According to the table 1, we can see, five top items of requiring home care services provided by communities are buying vegetables, cleaning room, laundering, and helping outdoor activities. See table 1.

Table 1 Elder’s difficulties of going activities of daily living in Haining

activities	eating	cooking	Cleaning room	shopping	washing	bathing	Getting out of bed	dressing	toilet	outdoor activities
index of difficulty	1.3597	1.7067	1.8053	1.8158	1.7943	1.6535	1.4977	1.4796	1.4842	1.7373

Elders' requirements of care are determined by several factors, including Elders' income, the type of health conditions they develop, the severity of those conditions, etc. Improving eldercare service ability involves many aspects, so it should be given to provide multi-participation. In deed, the community providing home care service for elders living in the communities is the government’s behavior; therefore, the roles and responsibilities of those communities to provide home care services must be preferentially determined.

Table 2 Elders' requiring of home care services in Haining

Services items	The extent of need %				
	very need	deed	normal	no deed	without any need
Maid service	2.67	13.02	8.14	57.56	18.60
Daily care	0.35	4.31	9.09	66.20	20.05
Eating table for elders	0.82	5.85	8.19	66.43	18.71
Delivering meal to home	1.76	7.03	7.03	65.46	18.74
Help cooking	0.47	3.16	6.79	70.73	18.85
Daily interviewing	0.82	7.59	13.32	59.70	18.57
Shopping agent	0.70	3.98	9.12	67.13	19.06
Helping bash	0.70	3.62	6.88	69.54	19.25
Haircut and manicure	1.40	9.33	9.22	61.49	18.55
Home appliance repair	4.10	38.80	15.36	30.01	11.72
Home delivery service	2.25	18.44	11.94	52.36	15.01
Help medical	7.45	34.21	17.93	29.24	11.17

There are notable differences in the requiring of home care services among people of different age groups. However, home care services for elderly people are developed with the population aging and practical situations of elders in various conditions.

According to the proportion of requiring home care service reported by the elders in Haining, the highest is helping to repair household appliance; then is medical service; next is home delivery service and maid service. However, Daily care, help cooking and helping bath are not available to



them, see table 2.

From age perspective, we can notice that the requirement for maid care service rose with aging. The age of those who need daily care concentrated between 75 to 85-year-old group; there are notable requirement of eating table for elders in 70-year- old to 80-year-old group; home cooking, home delivery service are mainly available to those aged 75 to 85 years old; the people aged 75 years and above need a significant requirement of daily visiting; shopping agents are available to the cases aged 70 years old and above; manicure barber is mainly available to the people aged 80 and above; home appliance repair and home delivery service are significantly available to the elderly people in each age group.

4. Home care service satisfaction

About 90% of respondents reported that they are satisfied with their life in old age. However, nearly 10% of them is less satisfied with their life, and it seems that male elders are more dissatisfied with their life than female ones.

There is significant difference in the degree of satisfaction with life among different age groups. The percentage of people satisfied with their life was decreasing with the growth of the age and the highest degree of satisfaction is in the group aged 60-70 years old.

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the different types of eldercare available to seniors in Haining may be broken down into seven major categories: economy needs, survival needs, security needs, emotional needs, communication needs, respect the needs and self-actualization needs. The following discussion provides descriptions of the index of various types of needs which have been met. The index of meeting survival needs (1.6719) and meeting emotional needs (1.563) are lower than others, which mean that there were also notable efforts designed to improve to meet their communication needs, respect the needs and self-actualization needs in order to offer elder residents with the widest range of care options. See Table 3.

Table 3 Estimating for meeting of requiring eldercare in Haining

categories	economy needs	survival needs	security needs	emotional needs	communication needs	respect the needs	self-actualization needs
Index of meeting	2.4894	1.6719	2.1081	1.563	2.391	2.3819	2.467

An Evaluation of the satisfaction with home care service provided by the community shows that the service satisfaction of elderly people in Haining is very high - more than 40% of old people are very satisfied, nearly 58% are more satisfied, less than 2% are not satisfied.

Conclusions

The statistics in this survey has indicated that there is urgent and enormous need for eldercare in China. As far as the quality of the old people's living standard, the government must have definite goals and undertake its responsibilities for making timely eldercare plan and professional help to the elder people. By far, the eldercare service is still the bigger challenge and vital issue for the local government. Due to the drawback in elder service policies and resources, the governments and families cannot offer satisfactory services for the old people.

In fact, the majority of elderly people in China now have ability to perform activities of daily living. Only one in ten of them cannot live without other's care and help in their daily activities. This group of people are usually disabled or in terribly poor health. They should get immediate



concern and care from the governments and the communities.

The critical issue is the public eldercare resources is far from available for one part, and for the other part the information of eldercare service need is not sufficient. This has partially caused the poor eldercare service in China. To solve this problem, the local governments should firstly collect the basic information of old people's health and medical records, and sort out them in files.

Furthermore, it is better for the governments to help the families with old people design how to get better eldercare service in accordance with their personal needs and financial situations. No matter what service the governments offer the old people, it must meet the old people affective.

There are three kinds of eldercare modes in China. They are family care, institutional care and home care. Like a coin with two sides, each of them has their own advantages and disadvantages. Whatsoever, it is a better choice for governments to develop in-home care service in China, for it follows the traditional Chinese culture that the young generation should take care of the elderly people.

To sum up, the case study above has statistically analyzed the situation of eldercare service in Haining, Zhejiang province. It suggests that the care providers were enlisted to help provide for elders' care needs. Although family members are able to care for their elders, they still need help from the neighbors and the community. It is available to the construction of harmonious society.

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