ASSOCIATION OF AWARENESS OF PARENTAL AGING WITH IDENTITY FORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS IN JAPAN: ADOLESCENCE TO EARLY ADULTHOOD

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Keywords: parental aging, identity formation, parent-child relationship, adolescence, early adulthood

Japan’s aging society has led to prolonged and increasingly important parent-child relationships. I speculate that greater awareness of parental aging will serve to promote positive adolescent development. In this study, I explored identity formation and psychological and social support for one’s parents as developmental indicators. This study aimed to clarify the relationships between awareness of parental aging and identity formation and support for one’s parents from adolescence to early adulthood in Japan.

In May 2018, a survey of 1,940 Japanese participants aged 20 to 39 years (940 men, 1,000 women) was conducted online. Items were scored on a 5-point scale and covered awareness of parental aging (both positive and negative) over one year, identity formation as assessed by the ISRI (Identity Stage Resolution Index; Côté, 1997), and efforts to support one’s parents (Ikeda, 2018).

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict ISRI scores and efforts to support one’s parents based on an awareness of parental aging according to parent-child-gender relationships. The analysis indicated negative associations between negative awareness of parental aging and ISRI score (range $\beta = -.11$ to $-.08$), and positive associations between positive awareness of parental aging and ISRI score (range $\beta = .21$ to .23). Positive awareness was also positively associated with efforts to support one’s parents (range $\beta = .26$ to .31). In addition, negative awareness of parental aging was positively associated with efforts to support one’s parents ($\beta = .07$, .15) for relationships between parents and children of different genders (e.g., father-daughter and mother-son).

The results suggest that awareness of parental aging promotes identity formation and efforts to support one’s parents from adolescence to early adulthood. A future longitudinal study is needed to investigate the causal relationships of awareness of parental aging with identity formation and support for one’s parents.