



# **Study for further promotion of job placement and continuous employment for the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities**

## **[Research Reports No.97] Summary**

### **【Keywords】**

Middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities, Hindrance in working, Consideration at workplaces

### **【Points for using the findings】**

Persons with disabilities who are working or who had worked before have a strong desire to keep working until 60 years old. However, this desire is difficult to be fulfilled. The research focuses on recruiting and employment continuance for the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities. Research is composed of bibliographical research, two times questionnaire surveys of the employments, and interviews by the employer's visit, and attending lectures by specialists. This research will give useful information and insight for the employer and those who relate to the following issues: "strategy for finding employment," "supports for keep working," and "smooth retirement from employment."

April 2010

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## **2. Period**

Fiscal 2008 to 2009

## **3. Composition of the research report**

Chapter 1 Background, Objective, and Method of Study

Chapter 2 Reviews of Books on the Employment of Middle-aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 3 Questionnaire Survey of Workplaces

Chapter 4 Interviews Regarding the Actual Situation Surrounding the Employment of Middle-aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 5 Expert Hearing

Chapter 6 Issues Surrounding the Promotion and Stabilization of Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Aging Society

## **4. Background and Purpose**

Before the commencement of this study, prior statistics data indicated the existence of such needs as “strong desire to work among middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities,” “a harsh employment environment,” “challenges assigned in the workplace,” and “diverse types and forms of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities.” Taking these needs in consideration as a background, major objectives of this study are set to elucidate the attitude and the lines of thinking of the workplaces involved, and the actual employment situation surrounding middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities.

The objective of this study is, through a grasp of the employment situation surrounding middle-aged and elderly workers, to provide middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities (regardless of whether they are employed or not) who are feeling uncertainty, as well as workplaces and work-supporters, with useful information and findings that can reduce the spreading uncertainty regarding middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities gaining employment and continuing employment.

## **5. Method**

### **(1) Survey of Previous Studies**

As a reference for this study, especially when we decided our basic approach for this study, we looked into various materials regarding the workplaces that employ persons with disabilities, the aging of persons with disabilities, and the employment of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities. Such materials included papers, individual publications, Web sites and other relevant documents, conversations in seminars, and lectures in workshops.

An example in this line, which should be introduced as one of the most helpful materials, is a research project named, “Research on work and life of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities,” which

was carried out by the Tokyo Metropolitan Labor Research Institute twenty years ago. The framework adopted for that project was carefully studied when we designed the workplace questionnaire in our study. The findings obtained from the investigative study on job-seeking activities of the people visiting public employment security offices also gave us a certain insight into the views held by middle-aged and elderly job seekers, which largely did not fall within the scope of this study.

Major activities that constituted this study are outlined in Table 1:

**Table 1. Outline of the Study**

Method of study	<b>Questionnaire survey (1<sup>st</sup>):</b> See Section 1, Chapter 3 The attitude and actual situation in workplaces surrounding the employment of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities	<b>Questionnaire survey (2<sup>nd</sup>):</b> See Section 2, Chapter 3 The attitude and actual situation in workplaces surrounding the employment of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities (personal survey)
Date	September 2008	March 2009
Coverage	7,120 workplaces: member of the Association of Employment Development for Citizens in Miyagi, Tokyo, Aichi, Hyogo, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka prefecture.	607 workplaces: those allowed visiting interviews in the first questionnaire.
Valid response	2,178 (response rate 30.6%)	407 (response rate 67.1%)
Selection method of object person Contents of questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment situation of persons with disabilities (Size, industrial sector)</li> <li>• Types of disabilities that hinder employment</li> <li>• Age at the time of employment, and age restrictions</li> <li>• Reasons that hinder employment of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Problems and concerns that arise with aging</li> </ul>	Selected based on the collected questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual employment situation of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities (personal situation)</li> <li>• Sex, age, type of disability, time of disability occurrence</li> <li>• Living situation (family), time and method of commuting</li> <li>• Contents and hours of the work, service years, style of the work</li> <li>• Income from the work, other incomes</li> <li>• Considerations and other supports for vocational life</li> </ul>
Study method	<b>Visit and Interviews:</b> see Chapter 4	<b>Hearing from experts:</b> see Chapter 5
Date	From December 2008 to October 2009	From June to October 2009
Number of objects	42	8
Information providers	Middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities: 31 Persons in charge of workplace: 32 (In presence of both: 25, Persons in charge of workplace only: 9, Persons with disabilities only: 5, family: 1)  Person in charge from employment-support organizations: 2	Mr. Y. Hagiwara (Itochu Unidas) Ms. K. Ohhashi (Takashimaya, Yokohama) Mr. S. Kiriya (Kudan Pulse) Mr. M. Okamoto (Kimono brain) Mr. C. Hatakeyama (ATARIMAE Project) Mr. K. (living in Chiba city) Mr. H. Sato (Japan College of Social Work) Ms. M. Yamamoto (“Abuabua Band”)
Selection of object person Contents of	Workplaces that permitted visiting interviews, and those recommended from the organizations concerned and the Vocational Rehabilitation of our	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service years and aging of the persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Avoidance of repetitive routines, and job</li> </ul>

questionnaire	organization. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex, age, type of disability, time of disability occurrence</li> <li>• Living situation (family), time and method of commuting</li> <li>• Income from the work, other incomes</li> <li>• Considerations and other supports for vocational life</li> <li>• Evaluation from the person in charge of the workplace</li> </ul>	rotation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyper-aging of the parents and concerns over job continuation</li> <li>• Reasons and circumstances that support recruitment of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Retirement problems of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Occurrence of secondary disability and job continuation</li> <li>• Aging problems of persons with disabilities in the special affiliated companies</li> <li>• Summary from the standpoint of ICF: the employment problems of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Simultaneous pursuit of leisure activities and job continuation</li> </ul>
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## (2) Mail-in Survey to Workplaces (conducted twice)

The first mail-in survey was carried out targeting the 7,120 member workplaces of the Association of Employment Development for Citizens in six prefectures (Miyagi, Tokyo, Aichi, Hyogo, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka), and 2,178 of them replied (response ratio 30.6%, anonymous). A classified summary of the workplaces that responded is shown in Table 2. The second survey was carried out targeting the 607 workplaces that had consented to a visiting questionnaire by submitting their addresses, and 407 replied (response rate 67.1%).

**Table 2. Number of Workplaces and Their Classification that Responded to Questionnaire**

	Workplaces that employ middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities	Workplaces that employ middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities, but with age restriction (45 or below)	Workplaces that do not employ persons with disabilities	Total (%)
<Number of employees>				
~55	37.1	16.1	46.8	100.0 ( 498)
56~300	66.1	16.0	17.9	100.0 ( 782)
301~	87.7	8.8	3.5	100.0 ( 806)
<Business category>				
Manufacturing	69.9	16.1	13.9	100.0 ( 762)
Information-communication	66.7	23.5	9.8	100.0 ( 51)
Transport	67.9	1.8	30.4	100.0 ( 112)
Construction	54.1	7.4	38.5	100.0 ( 148)
Wholesale	61.2	14.9	24.0	100.0 ( 121)
Retail	71.0	13.1	15.9	100.0 ( 107)
Service	64.9	13.5	21.6	100.0 ( 430)
Others	70.8	9.3	19.9	100.0 ( 322)
Total	66.9 (1457)	13.1 (285)	20.0 (436)	100.0 (2,178)

Note: The numbers in parentheses under “Total” represent the actual number of workplaces that responded.

### (3) Visits and Interviews with Workplaces

Hearing investigation was carried out on 31 middle-aged and elderly employees with disabilities (including the retired), 32 persons in charge of the workplaces that employ persons with disabilities, and 2 persons in charge from recruitment support organizations. In 25 cases, both the person in charge and the employees belonging to the same workplace were interviewed. In these cases, as the interview could touch on the subtleties of the workplace, the methods and location must be selected in view of the circumstances. The situations surrounding the 37 middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities are as follows:

#### Attributes and disabilities of middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities

In employment: 30; out of employment: 7; Male: 28 – Female: 8 (one person's gender is not disclosed)

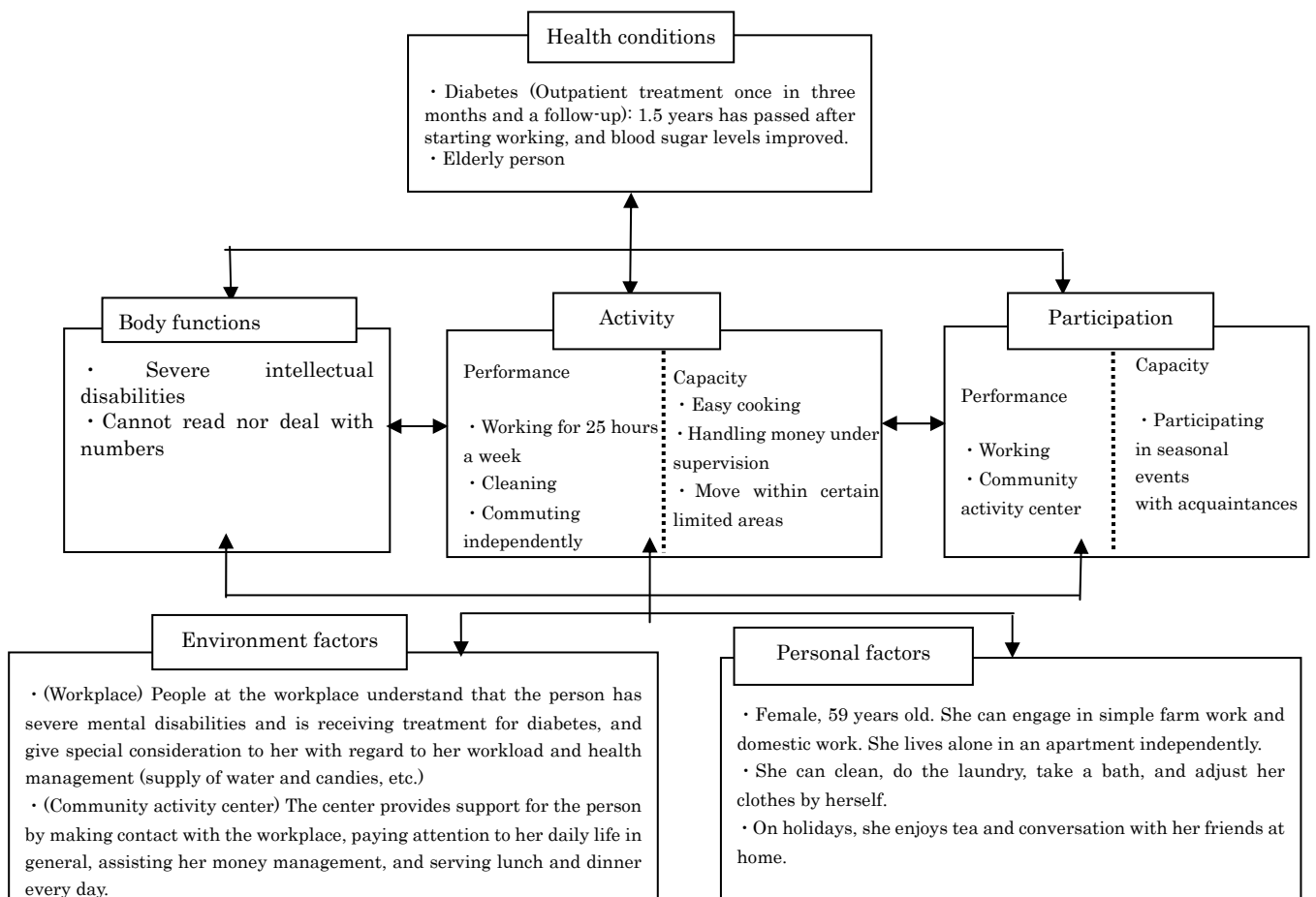
Age: 43 to 68; Those who already had disabilities before recruitment: 36 – Those who developed disabilities after recruitment: 1

Time of disability occurrence:

- Around the time of birth: 22 (Physical disabilities: 9; Hearing disabilities: 3; Intellectual disabilities: 10)
- Persons with acquired disabilities: 15 (Visual disability: 1; Physical disabilities: 6; Internal impediment: 4; Higher brain dysfunction: 2; Psychiatric disabilities: 2)

The case examples collected by the interviews were put in order considering their contents (such as “hindrance in employment” and “considerations (Note 1)”) and then further analyzed in search of their mutual correlations (in terms of such as “alleviation of employment hindrance through accumulation of considerations,” etc.).

In this analysis, an attempt was made to introduce a correlation chart compiled from the viewpoint of ICF (Internal Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health). This approach was used to make two charts, “Employment Instances Where a Combination of Minor Considerations Helped Achieve Recruitment” and “Case where a combination of secondary disabilities had an effect on the employment (“participation” and “activity”),” which proved effective to illustrate the cross-interactions that often went hitherto unheeded.



**Fig. 1. Employment Instances Where a Combination of Minor Considerations Helped Achieve Employment**

#### (4) Hearing from the Experts

In view of developing our insight into the subject matters of this study, we had lectures from eight specialists knowledgeable in particular areas. Written descriptions of these lectures can be found in the report.

### 6. Summarized Results of the Study

Major findings obtained through the implementation of the approach described above are summarized, in conjunction with important points that should be kept in mind, in terms of the following subjects: promotion of employment of the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities, employment stabilization, and smooth coming to an end of a vocational life.

#### (1) Promotion of Employment

(a) According to the survey focused on the view that the workplaces have toward recruitment of the persons with disabilities, about 30% of the workplaces placed the upper age limit on the age at the time of employment at around 45, and 67.3% of workplaces had a view that they would only consider recruiting persons of around 45 years of age or below. The views of these workplaces toward the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities differed depending on their past employment experiences of these people (See Fig.2, Table 3).

(b) The types of disabilities also have an effect on the views toward employment: more than 60% of

workplaces considered it difficult to recruit those that have visual disabilities (80%), mental disabilities (71%), intellectual disabilities (59%).

- (c) According to the localized comparison of data confined to the Tokyo metropolitan area at two points of time separated by 20 years, an increased number of workplaces replied that “internal disability” did not hinder recruitment, and a decreased number indicated that “mental disability” hindered recruitment. The ratio of workplaces that limited recruitment opportunities to persons 45 years of age or younger decreased from 67% to 34%.
- (d) Around 70% of workplaces showed their concerns about physical capacity and health when they tried to consider recruiting middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities. Note, however, that only 35% of the workplaces with these workforces actually pointed out the emergence of problems caused by their decreased physical strength with age.

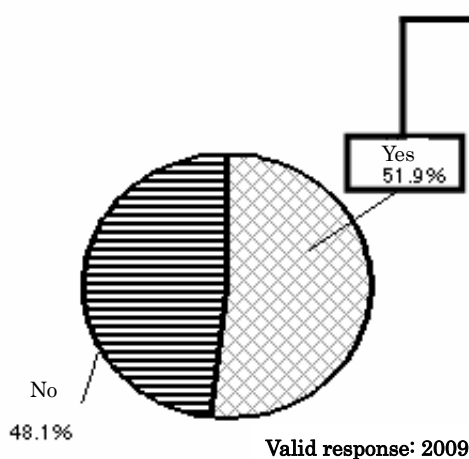


Fig. 2-1 Whether or not to place age limit at the time of employment

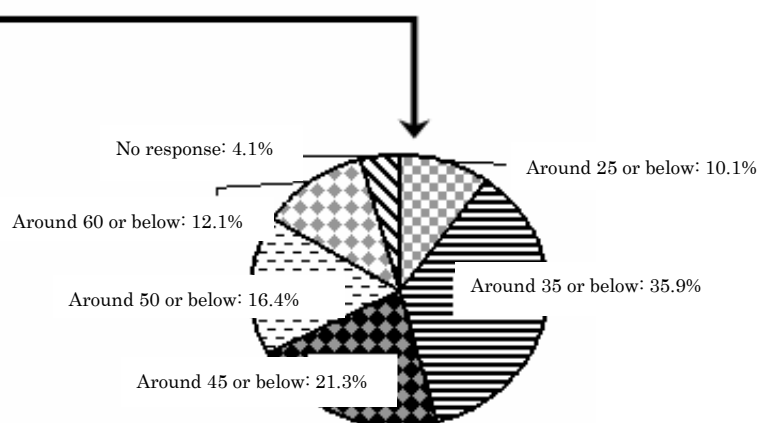


Fig. 2-2 Age limit

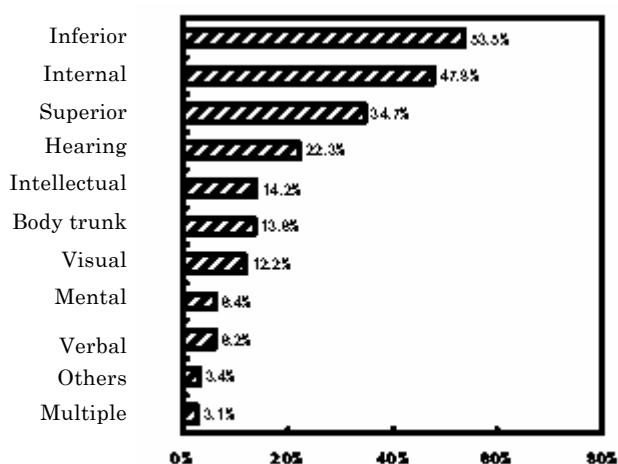
**Table 3. Age Restrictions in Employment (classified by the types of workplaces)**

Type of Workplace	All	For Middle-aged and Elderly Person with Disabilities	For Younger (45 or below) Persons with Disabilities	For Persons without Disabilities
Age limit for employment	Valid response: 2,009 Age limit in place: 1,040	Valid response: 1,377 Age limit in place: 685	Valid response: 264 Age limit in place: 150	Valid response: 368 Age limit in place: 198
Around 25 or below	105 (10.1%)	63 (9.2%)	25 (16.7%)	17 (8.6%)
Around 35 or below	373 (35.9%)	226 (33.0%)	62 (41.3%)	85 (42.9%)
Around 45 or below	222 (21.3%)	142 (20.7%)	45 (30.0%)	35 (17.7%)
Around 50 or below	171 (16.4%)	133 (19.4%)	10 (6.7%)	28 (14.1%)
Around 60 or below	126 (12.1%)	101 (14.7%)	5 (3.3%)	20 (10.1%)
No response	43 (4.1%)	27 (3.9%)	3 (2.0%)	13 (6.6%)

(e) It became apparent that many work places actually employ (or have desire to employ) middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities. These workplaces cited the following reasons:

- Ease of vocational capacity evaluation from employment history
- Difficulty of finding able-bodied workers and young persons with disabilities
- Ease of labor coordination (e.g., short-term contract) and condition settings (e.g., wage ).

(f) Frequencies of disabilities among the employed middle-aged and elderly persons are, in decreasing order, as follows (Fig. 3):



**Fig. 3. Types of Disabilities among the Employed Middle-Aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities (in decreasing order)**

(g) The route for finding job showed differences depending on when the disability took place: 51% of those who had a disability found their job through the Public Employment Security Office for persons with disabilities, and this percentage was as low as 12% among those who developed a disability after recruitment (Table 4).

**Table 4. Recruitment Path for the Middle-aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities: In Relation to the Time of Disability Occurrence**

(%)

	Public Employment Security Office for persons with mental disabilities	Private job provider	Pamphlet	Private allocation	School	Others	Total
Before employment	50.8	1.6	6.5	20.0	14.1	7.0	100.0 (185)
After employment	11.5	0.0	5.8	25.0	36.5	21.2	100.0 (52)
Unknown	50.0	2.6	7.9	5.3	15.8	18.4	100.0 (38)
Total	43.1	1.4	6.4	19.1	18.4	11.7	100.0 (283)

Note: The “Total” on the leftmost column includes the responses that did not specify the time of occurrence



- (h) Types of employment include permanent positions (62%) and part-time/contract-base positions (24%). In terms of the types of disabilities, more than 60% of persons with disabilities in inferior limbs, superior limbs, and internal disabilities hold permanent job. In contrast, permanent jobholder ratio decreased below 50% for persons with hearing or intellectual disabilities, and part-time/contract-based job occupied more than 40%. In terms of the time of recruitment, the employment status among the persons who had disabilities at the time of recruitment is characterized by more than 30% of part-time/contract-based positions (33% of part-time/contract-based positions and 53% of permanent position). In contrast, among the persons who developed disability after recruitment, 85% had a permanent position and only 5% had an employment status of part-time or contract-based (Table 5).
- (i) Classifying annual income (pretax nominal value) by the types of disabilities and time of their occurrences (the disabilities in inferior limb, superior limb, internal disability, hearing disability, and intellectual disability are discussed here because of their high occurrence frequency), 45% of persons with disabilities in inferior limbs and 47% of persons with internal disabilities earn more than average income (overall, 37% of persons with disabilities earns more than average income). In contrast, no one among the persons with intellectual disabilities earns more than ¥4 million and 84% of them earn below ¥2 million. Clear difference in income levels were also observed depending on the time of disability occurrence: 69% of persons who developed disabilities in the course of employment earn more than ¥4 million and 25% of persons who had disabilities at the time of recruitment earn the same level of income (Table 6).

**Table 5. Employment Status of Middle-aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities:**  
**Types of Disabilities and Time of Disability Occurrence**

	Permanent	Temporary	Part time/Contract	Contingent	Others	Total
<Type of disability>						
Inferior limb	68.3	9.5	20.6	0.0	1.6	100.0 ( 63)
Superior limb	65.5	10.3	24.1	0.0	0.0	100.0 ( 29)
Internal	66.2	15.5	14.1	1.4	2.8	100.0 ( 71)
Hearing	45.9	13.5	40.5	0.0	0.0	100.0 ( 37)
Intellectual	43.8	6.3	43.8	0.0	6.3	100.0 ( 32)
<Development of disability>						
Before employment	53.1	9.9	33.3	0.5	3.1	100.0 (192)
After employment	85.5	8.1	4.8	1.6	0.0	100.0 ( 62)
Unknown	67.5	15.0	17.5	0.0	0.0	100.0 ( 40)
Total	62.5	10.2	24.7	0.7	2.0	100.0 (304)

**Table 6. Early Earnings of Middle-aged and Elderly Persons with Disabilities:  
Types of Disabilities and Time of Disability Occurrence**

	~.99(mil.)	1.0~1.99	2.0~3.99	4.0~6.99	Over 7.0	Total
<Type of disability>						
Inferior limb	1.7	12.1	41.4	32.8	12.1	100.0 ( 58)
Superior limb	3.6	14.3	25.0	46.4	10.7	100.0 ( 28)
Internal	1.5	14.7	36.8	29.4	17.6	100.0 ( 68)
Hearing	8.8	20.6	41.2	23.5	5.9	100.0 ( 34)
Intellectual	35.5	48.4	16.1	0.0	0.0	100.0 ( 31)
<Development of disability>						
Before employment	10.6	27.9	36.9	18.4	6.1	100.0 (179)
After employment	1.7	6.8	22.0	54.2	15.3	100.0 ( 59)
Unknown	2.6	12.8	41.0	33.3	10.3	100.0 ( 39)
Total	7.6	20.6	34.4	28.2	9.3	100.0 (291)

## (2) Employment Stabilization

- (a) In regard to the problems that emerge as the employees get older, views on employees with disabilities and on general employees were somewhat different: regarding the general employees, greater concerns were shown about “decrease of physical capacity” and “inability to do the job comparable with the wage” (10 points higher than the same concerns regarding those with disabilities); and regarding the employees with disabilities, greater concerns were shown for “accidents and injuries while at work” and “accidents and injuries on the way to/from work” (10 points higher than the same concerns regarding the general employees).
- (b) In regard to the problems that may arise with the aging of the employees, 31% of those who responded to the questionnaire replied that they have “no special considerations” regarding general employees and 27% gave the same answer regarding employees with disabilities. This result can be translated that around 70% of the workplaces have some considerations for coping with the aging of the employees.
- (c) Through the interviews with the workers and persons in charge of the workplaces, various data was gathered indicating the real picture of thoughtful considerations <sup>Note 1</sup> and ingenuities in place to lessen obstacles that hindered the activities of the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities. Some of these cases indicated a sophisticated combination of considerations and ingenuities, regardless of whether these efforts are implanted consciously or unconsciously, in and out of the workplace, and whether they are related or not related to the actual work (Table 7).

**Table 7. Considerations and Measures for Persons with Disabilities (In/out of the workplace, directly/indirectly linked to the work, and others)**

Initiative-taker	Considerations taken	Linked to the work	Not directly linked to the work
Workplace		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of work scope</li> <li>• Fill-in work</li> <li>• Work instruction</li> <li>• Support for work completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuting, health care, leisure activity</li> <li>• Contact with the authority concerned and family</li> </ul>
	Out of the workplace		
	Employee, Family...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ingenuity and effort for work completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuting, health care, leisure activity</li> <li>• General housekeeping</li> </ul>
	Work-supporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work instruction</li> <li>• Support for work completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuting, health care, leisure activity</li> <li>• General housekeeping</li> <li>• Contact with workplace/family</li> </ul>

- (d) There were cases where the support of daily life posed a serious concern because of the aging of the family, and multiple cases where the occurrence of secondary disabilities led to the job discontinuation.

### (3) Smooth transition from vocational life

- (a) According to the data obtained from mail-in survey, only around 10% of replies indicated the needs for “paving way from employment to welfare,” a smallest fraction alongside with “showcase of a successful employment.” However, from the interviews and specialist hearings, not a few (in charge of the workplace and work-supporters as well as the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities) showed concerns and gave suggestions, in conjunction with the items described in (d) above, over the aging and retirement problems of the employees with disabilities. <sup>Note 2</sup>
- (b) In the latest “Survey on the Employment Situation of Persons with Disabilities,” many persons with disabilities who have active jobs hold “anxiety for future,” and their major concerns are over the post-retirement life and continuous employment. Consultation on these issues is expected to increase in the future. The active use of the links and networks among the people involved in work-support and recruitment-support is highly expected.

## 7. Methods of effective use of research achievements

This report is intended to be useful for those people involved irrespective of the type of disabilities and their social standpoints. The authors think that the following chapters/sections are particularly useful for the following readers.

### (1) Persons with Disabilities and Their Families

Results on the attitude and line of thinking of workplaces can be utilized in case of job search or seeking continuous employment. A reference to Chapter 4 and 5 of the appended material will be useful for their approaches toward the job.

## (2) Workplace Employer

This report provides the overall trends and lines of thinking that the workplace employers have over the issue of employment of persons with disabilities. A reference to the case studies in Chapter 4 and 5 of the appended material will provide useful guidelines for addressing this problem.

## (3) Supporters for employment and work

This report provides information regarding the attitude and line of thinking of the workplaces, which will be useful to support work/employment activities. Among the accelerated trends of aging, the issue of employment of persons disabilities needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner giving due considerations to surrounding problems. However, relevant information and case studies thereof is still scarce. The authors hope that this report provides a clue leading to a solution.

## (4) Others in general

This report can be used as a useful reference to understand the latest actual situation surrounding the vocational life of the middle-aged and elderly persons with disabilities, and the views and the line of thinking the workplace employers have over the employment of these persons.

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(Note 1) In this study, the term “considerations (hairyo in Japanese)” is used in a broader sense, including “attention, care, mindfulness, and arrangement,” from the viewpoint of focusing on ascertaining the current status of “considerations and measures taken at workplaces where persons with disabilities are employed.” It is widely known that the idea of “reasonable accommodation” as used in the context of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been discussed actively internationally. However, we chose not to clearly define the scope of the term “considerations (hairyo),” which was adopted as a Japanese translation of “accommodation,” but to describe the current status by using the term in a broader sense as mentioned above.

(Note 2) Figure 4 shows a series of vocational rehabilitation services, in light of the PDCA cycle and from the viewpoint of workplaces. The figure clearly shows that employment support shall be provided in a manner that will not cause worries in workplaces before hiring persons with disabilities, burdens on workplaces after hiring them, and unpleasant troubles when workers retire.

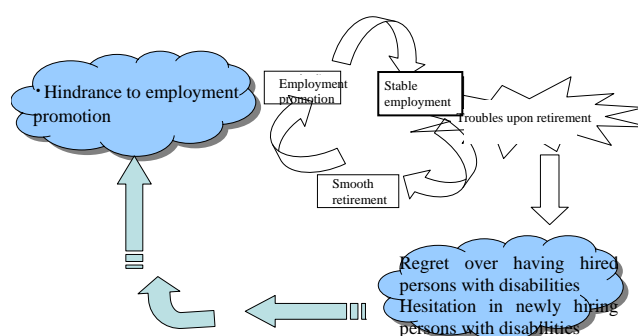


Fig. 4 Vicious Cycle in which Troubles Causing Retirement Lead to Hesitation in Hiring Persons with Disabilities