

International Comparison

A survey was conducted in 6 countries (Japan, USA, UK, France, Israel and Argentina) to understand older people's activities, health status and life satisfaction after retirement (please see page 76 for the detailed questions and results).

The following are examples of the survey responses which show the unique characteristics of older people in each country.



6-Country Comparative Study on Life after Retirement

<Subjects>

Persons aged 60+ (no upper age limit), purposively selected, who worked for the greater part of their life and retired (once) from a full-time job, at or after the age of 55 years.

<Questions>

Q1: How long (in years) are you retired?

Q2: Reasons for retiring

Q3: Are you currently engaged in any of the social or professional activities outside your home (excluding hobbies and family care)?

If yes, please write your activities and also indicate how many hours per week on average you are engaged in that activity.

Q4: If no in Q3, what are the reasons for not being engaged in any of these activities?

Q5: What are the reasons for starting the activities?

Q6: In general, would you say your health is good or poor?

Q7: Before the retirement, did you benefit from a health maintenance program proposed by your company?

Q8: What do you put in practice to maintain health?

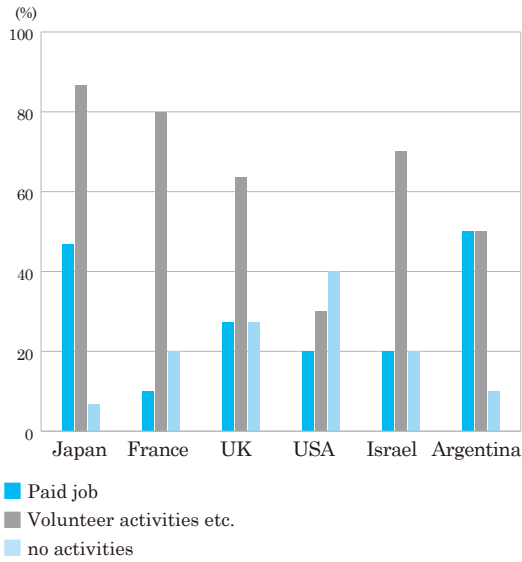
Q9: What activity makes you feel happy ?

Q10: Are you satisfied with your current life?

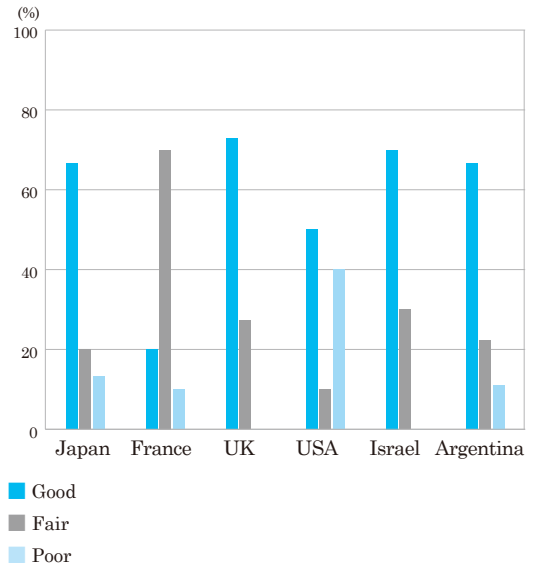
Please tell us the reasons.

<Survey Results>

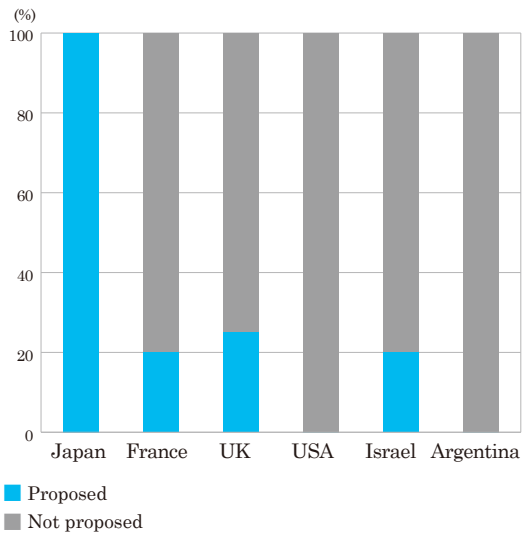
Current Activities



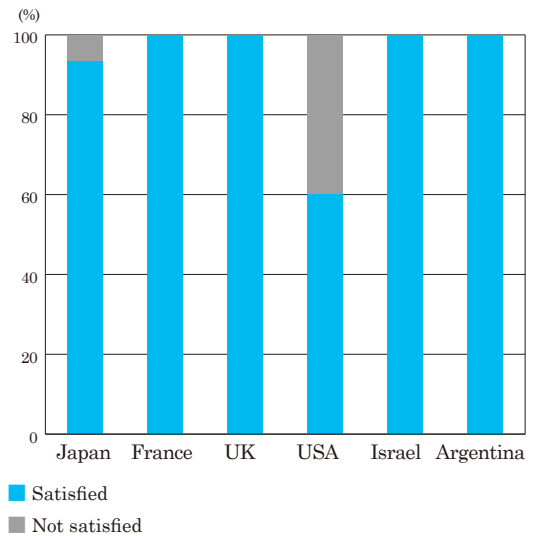
Health Status



Benefit from Health Maintenance Program



Life Satisfaction



Case Examples

<Japan>

Mr. A 67-year-old male, retired 6 years ago

He manages his music studio and participates in flute and chorus concerts, which have been his long time hobbies. He also plays music at nursing homes as a volunteer and organizes music events, which keep him busy.

His health is very good at the moment, and he hopes to stay healthy by contributing to society through music and continuing these activities.

Playing music on stage and getting applause and compliments make him feel happy, and he is mostly satisfied with his current life.

Ms. B 71-year-old female, retired 13 years ago to live with her elderly mother

She has been engaged in various activities at an international exchange association, hoping to contribute to world peace. She particularly enjoys volunteering once a week to teach Japanese to foreigners. The young international students' energy and serious attitudes towards learning give her energy and a sense of fulfillment.

She maintains her good health by eating balanced meals.

The top priority in her current life is taking care of her mother, who is physically disabled but does not require too much assistance. Someone still needs to watch her all the time, so she uses a day care service and uses that time to do things for herself.

She travels abroad once a year with her husband. While they are away, her sisters help with their mother.

She is very happy with her current life.

Mr. C 65-year-old male, retired 8 years ago

He currently works full-time as a board member of an organization and also attends study groups. He hopes to continue to be able to help people and feel needed by others.

His health is very good, and he is happy with his life. Yet, he sometimes feels disappointed that there is not enough time left for him to start pursuing certain things that he is interested in.

Ms. D 66-year-old female, retired 5 years ago

She is currently studying in order to begin volunteering but her health is not very good and she needs to consider it before doing volunteer work.

She enjoys listening to continuing education class lectures at colleges or local community centers; there are still so many things that she wants to learn.

However, there are many things in her life that she didn't accomplish and that lowers her self-confidence.

International Comparison

<U.S.A.>

Mr. E 78-year-old male, retired 12 years ago to take care of his wife and due to his own health deterioration

His health has not been very good recently, and he also takes care of his grandchildren. These are the reasons why he is not involved in other activities.

He feels depressed since he lost his wife recently due to Alzheimer's disease. However, he enjoys seeing his children and grandchildren who visit him often, as well as playing harmonica in his band.

Ms. F 90-year-old female, retired 21 years ago to care for a family member

She volunteers as a docent at a museum, a member of the UN NGO Committee on Aging and a board member of social service organizations. She hopes to share her expertise and experiences in social work and aging to benefit society.

She also enjoys discussions with people as well as going to theaters and concerts.

Her health is very good, and she is happy that she is very busy every day and contributing to society.

Mr. G 81-year-old male, laid off 3 years ago

He has a heart disease and is not currently involved in any activities.

His health is improving by working out at the gym and maintaining regular daily routines. He is hoping to start some volunteer work related to history because interacting with people gives him energy and history interests him.

<U.K.>

Mr. H 73-year-old male, retired from a part-time position 1 year ago

He volunteers at a local environmental organization and also as Santa Claus during the Christmas season.

His hobbies include tennis, walking, drama, reading, and crossword puzzles.

He enjoys socializing with his family and friends, and he is happy since he can often do as he pleases.

Ms. I 76-year-old female, retired 8 years ago

She volunteers 2 days a week at a center for people with disabilities, and she pays attention to her own health, too.

She enjoys organizing and directing drama, reading, writing poems, tennis and cooking.

She has a good relationship with her husband and enjoys grandparenting. Having good friends is her emotional support, too.

Mr. J 77-year-old male, retired 6 years ago

He had worked very hard and contributed to society in the past, so he decided to leave things to the younger generation. He wants to use the time left for himself.

He finds happiness in playing tennis, listening to music and reading books as well as spending time with his wife.

He is fully satisfied with his life because he has a good home a family, financial stability, good health and good friends. He also greatly enjoys spending time with his grandchildren.

International Comparison

<France>

Mr. K 81-year-old male, retired 22 years ago

He volunteers at the cinema as a projectionist about 6 hours a week. Seeing children smile when they are watching the films he projects makes him happy.

When he has some free time, he enjoys seeing his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He has no health problems and is relatively happy with his life.

Ms. L 61-year-old female, retired 2 years ago due to dissatisfaction with work and the desire to pursue other interests.

She volunteers 3 hours a week as a member of an organization. She enjoys interacting with people and learning new things, so she attends lectures on society or health topics as well as training in public speaking.

Her hobbies include surfing the Internet, gardening, hiking, and travelling abroad. She also enjoys making photo reports and journey records.

Ms. M 80-year-old female, retired 20 years ago

She has been volunteering for a long time, supporting prisoners' families and helping an association of retired persons. Recently, she has been teaching at knitting workshops which she is good at, and she is very happy that she can do something for others.

Her health is very good at the moment, and stress management seems to help.

She gets energy from spending time with her friends she volunteers with and her hobby of singing in a chorus.

<Israel>

Mr. N 67-year-old male, retired 20 years ago

He teaches meditation as a volunteer and rides a tandem bicycle with people with visual impairment. He is also registered as a military reservist. He likes helping other people and always exercises.

He is very happy with his life; he has an excellent family and enjoys the full time activities.

Ms. O 68-year-old female, retired 29 years ago

She volunteers at a health equipment assistance center about 4 hours per week. She enjoys interacting with and helping others.

Her hobbies include music and using the computer. She cannot think of a better life and considers it wonderful.

Mr. P 71-year-old male, retired 5 years ago

He maintains regular daily routines, and his health is very good.

He is not interested in volunteering or participating in society; he would much rather enjoy helping his children and grandchildren. Also, he is busy with tennis lessons every day in order to take part in tennis tournaments.

International Comparison

<Argentina>

Mr. Q 72-year-old male, retired 6 years ago

He earns money by working as a civil engineer 35 hours a week. His health is very good.

He finds a purpose in his life by continuing to work.

He enjoys outdoor activities such as cycling and travelling. He is happy with his life, and his satisfaction comes from meeting with friends and being in love.

Ms. R 89-year-old female, retired 8 years ago

She earns money by working as a social worker 36 hours a week and is also a member of an academic society. Attending various courses and conferences fulfills her intellectual curiosity

Her health has been good, and she hopes to continue working as long as possible. Her hobbies include travelling and reading.

She is very happy with her life because she did what she liked and that makes her feel free.

Ms. S 68-year-old female, retired 7 years ago

She is involved in community support activities about an hour a week as an artist.

She is happiest when being contact with nature and painting it.

She is happy that she is retired so that she can spend as much time as she wants pursuing her interests.