

Maurer's Healthcare Insight (111)

The Devil Is in the Details

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Every year at this time I try to entertain the readers of this paper with statistics that take the pulse of Japanese society. In fact few people find statistics entertaining, but you may use some of these facts to impress home office visitors who know very little about Japan.



The Aging and Shrinking of Society

Because I came to Japan in 1970, many of the trends cited below use that year as a basis of comparison to the present. Every time I do this exercise the changes are stunning. Helps me to put down an oft expressed view that nothing ever changes in Japan.

Year	Japanese population (000)	Percentage distribution by age		Live births (per 1,000 population)	Deaths
		0-14	65+		
1970	103,119	24.0	7.1	18.8	6.9
2007	126,085	13.5	21.5	8.6	8.8

Notes: Japan's population peaked in 2004 with 126,266,000 people. In 2055 the population is forecasted to be about 90 million, and 40% of these will be 65 years or better. In 1970 there were only 310 centenarians, in 2008 there were 36,276, of which 86% were women.

The number of births has declined steadily while deaths increased. Thus, there is now an annual decrease in the population. Low fertility rate equals low birth rate. In 1970 the fertility rate was 2.13, in 2008 it was 1.37.

Late marriages equal fewer children. In 1970 the mean ages for grooms and brides were 26 and 24. In 2007 they were 30 and 28. The mortality rate per 1,000 population hit a low point in 1980 with 6.2 deaths per 1,000 population.

Disease Patterns and Cost

Year	National health expense		
	¥ per capita	% of national income	Value (billion yen)
1970	24,700	4.1	2,496
2007	262,000	9.0	33,400

Notes: Expenditures per capita in 2007 were ¥161,000 for persons younger than 70, but ¥757,000 for those 70 or better.

The six leading causes of death are:

Cause of death	% of all deaths (2007)
Malignant neoplasms	30.4
Heart disease	15.8
Cerebrovascular	11.5
Pneumonia	9.9
Accidents	3.4
Suicide	2.8

Since 1975 the following disease death rates have:

Increased	Decreased
Malignant neoplasms	Tuberculosis
Diabetes mellitus	Hypertension
Heart diseases	Cerebrovascular diseases
Pneumonia	Liver disease
Suicide (in men)	Accidents (in men)

Patients (2005) (unit: 1,000 persons)

Total/day	Inpatients	Outpatients
8,555.2	1,462.8	7,092.4
% in hospitals	95.1	26.3
% in clinics	4.9	55.7
% in dental clinics	-	18.0
% First visit		17.0
% Following visit		83.0
% 65+	64.1	43.4
% Male	46.0	42.3
% Female	54.0	57.7

In short, the majority of inpatients are female age 65 years or better. The majority of outpatients are females seeing a doctor for a follow up visit.

Patients are most satisfied with:

- Nursing care and help from nurse and staff
- Question to and counseling from doctor
- Consultation and treatment

Patients are most dissatisfied with:

- Waiting time
- Cost
- Meals

Percent of waiting time for consultation in hospitals:

Less than 15 minutes	22.8
15 minutes + but less than 30 minutes	23.3
30 minutes + but less than 1 hour	21.8
1 hour + but less than 1.5 hour	11.2

Health care providers (2007)		Trend
Hospitals	8,862	Decrease
Mental	1,076	Straight increase
General	7,785	Decrease
Long term care hospitals	4,135	Rapid increase
Clinics	99,532	Increase
With beds	12,399	Decrease
Without beds	87,133	Increase
Dental Clinics	67,798	Increase
Total beds	1,775,481	Decrease
General hospitals	913,234	Decrease
General clinics	155,143	Decrease
Long term care (clinics)	18,993	Increased, now stable
Length of stay (days)		
Psychiatric beds	317.9	Decrease
Long term care beds	177.1	Increase
General beds	19.0	Decrease
% of hospitals (# of beds)		
20 to 99	38.3	Decrease
100 to 199	30.7	Stable
200 to 499	25.7	Slight increase
500 -	5.3	Stable
Physicians	277,927	Steady increase
% in hospitals	60.1	Decrease
% in clinics	34.3	Increase
Female	17.2	Increase
Pharmacists ('06)	234,447	Increase
Nurses ('06)	1,194,121	Increase

Notes:

The total number of patients is not increasing but they are older and suffer from chronic versus acute diseases.

Patients are treated by more doctors and nurses in fewer hospitals but in more clinics. Often they require long term institutionalized care. Thus, long hospital stays are common.

Small hospitals, less than 100 beds, are decreasing as consolidation occurs, costs increase, and expenditures are curtailed.

Pharma industry (2007)		Trend
Prescription pharmacies	52,539	Increase
Drug wholesalers	126	Decrease

Pharma manufacturers ('05)	972	Decrease
With NHI listed drugs	403	Decrease
Top 30 companies share of sales	74.9	Increase
Employment	188,954	Decrease
Wholesaler MS ('06)	20,800	Decrease
Manufacturer MR ('06)	56,168	Increase

Notes: 1 MR for 4.9 doctors
1 MS for 13.4 doctors

Notes:

Pharmacies are increasing but more are "chain stores" versus independently owned.

Wholesaler consolidation has been drastic, while manufacturer consolidation is beginning, and at the same time going international.

Miscellaneous

Average height ('06)	Male	Female
Age 26-29	171.9	158.4
60-69	164.0	151.4
70-	160.5	146.8

Note: In three generations average height significantly increased.

Households (000) ('07)		Trend
% with children	26	Decrease
% without children	74	Increase
% of one person householders	25	Increase
Monthly income/household	¥528,762	Increase
% saved	15.3	Decrease

Note: So called "nuclear families" significantly decreased.

		Trend
Foreign residents in Japan	2,152,973	Increase
Japanese living overseas	1,085,671	Rapid increase

Note: Most foreign residents in Japan are Chinese and South Korean (55.8%).

So, commit all these statistics to memory and use them with the next audience you face here or abroad. You will impress their socks off. Or, be considered a complete bore. Hey, either way you will be remembered.

P. Reed Maurer barely squeaked through his math classes in school.