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Regional differences in the characteristics of the centenarians
and near-centenarians in Korea

Abstract:

This study aims to compare the health-related characteristics of centenarians living in urban, suburban, and rural areas of Korea. A total of 228 centenarians (aged 95 or older) from Gwangju (urban), Hwasun (suburban), and Gurye, Gokseong, Sunchang, and Damyang (rural) were included. Data on sociodemographic characteristics, chronic diseases, physical, mental, and cognitive functions, and activities of daily living (ADLs) were collected through semi-structured interviews. The centenarians living in urban areas had higher weights and BMIs than those in the other groups, although both were within the normal range. In physical activities, the suburban and rural groups had a longer time and wider range of activities compared to their urban counterparts. Additionally, suburban centenarians showed better performance in 2 activities of daily living (ADL) items (personal hygiene and dressing), but performed less well in 1 item (using the phone). The urban group had an average of 2.8 chronic diseases, which was higher than the other groups. Self-rated health status, the Geriatric Depression Scale and cognitive function showed no significant differences. The results show that centenarians living in suburban and rural areas are more physically active and have fewer chronic diseases. Suburban and rural areas have a higher proportion of centenarians than urban areas, suggesting that maintaining daily physical activity is associated with longevity.

Biography

Rooji Lee, completed his Master's degree at the age of 25 from Chonnam National University and is currently serving as a Clinical Assistant Professor at Chonnam National University Hospital, Hwasun. He is conducting research on centenarians in Korea as part of the Korean Centenarian Study Group.