

# Present Situation of Group Homes for the Elderly with Dementia in Tokyo and Advisable Fire Protection Measures

Ayaka Tobarī (K110613)

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The purpose of this study is to develop advisable fire protection measures for group homes of the elderly with dementia in consideration of harmonization of fire safety and the quality of life through clarifying the present situation such as actual condition of fire protection measures together with features of residents and staffs in group homes in Tokyo. For investigating into the current state of group homes, the two types of survey were conducted interview and questionnaire. The subjects for investigation were selected out of 300 facilities of group homes in Tokyo, which have received an external valuation of third-party accreditation organization in 2009. Then, 18 group homes were chosen for the interview survey and 78 group homes responded to our questionnaire survey.

The survey results show that the installation rates of fire protection equipment such as automatic reporting system to fire station, automatic fire alarm system, and sprinkler system are fairly high and beyond our expectation. But, on the other hand, there are very few facilities that conduct sufficient evacuation drills with realistic situation such as a fewer staff in the night time and/or a fire scenario having the fire breakout inside a private room of tenants. It was found that some group homes are run in the facilities that were converted from detached houses to a group homes and there is a difference in atmosphere between those facilities and new-built group homes. Also, the living conditions of residents vary from one facility to another.

Next, the facilities, surveyed are classified into six groups of the construction type and the plan type respectively, and are further divided into a total of 36 classifications. And, a fire prevention check list which has five elements of fire risks along with a comparison of fire safety were crafted. On the whole, there are some unresolved problems such as that the number of the night staffs is critically low relative to the total number of residents who cannot evacuate by themselves. It is necessary to review the fire protection measures that are not overly dependent on man-power. Moreover, thinking of service status that the residents enjoy as a quality of life and seeing the relation between fire safety and a living condition indicates to us that facilities with improved fire safety do not necessarily provide the high quality of a life.

Therefore, one should provide further insights into the maintenance on the quality of not only fire safety but also living condition of residents for the future. As for fire drill, contents should be reviewed to reflect the reality of fire situation they may probably face in the night and without support by people in the neighborhood, and it is desired to verify to making the use effect of fire protection equipment. In the last, although group homes in Tokyo were studied this time, there may be the difference of group homes between in Tokyo and in the local region from the viewpoint of the construction type and/or the condition of neighborhood. It is necessary to conduct further study of actual conditions of group homes including those in local region and other different types of group homes than those which we have studied this time.