

## Section 3 Awareness of the Elderly Living Alone

The number of households with a person aged 65 or over was 22.42 million in 2013. This figure corresponds to 44.7 % of the total number of households (50.112 million). The numbers of elderly men and women living alone are on a sharp increase. In 1980, the numbers of men and women aged 65 and over living alone were approx.190,000 and 690,000, or 4.3 % and 11.2 % of the total populations of men and women in the same age group, respectively. However, in 2010, the numbers of men and women in the same age group living alone were approx. 1,390,000 and 3,410,000, or 11.1 % and 20.3 % of the total populations of men and women in the same age group, respectively.

This increase in the number of the elderly living alone necessitates measures to ensure their safety and comfort, prevent their social isolation and reconstruct local communities by revitalizing community activities. This section describes the awareness of the elderly living alone of worries and difficulties in their life.

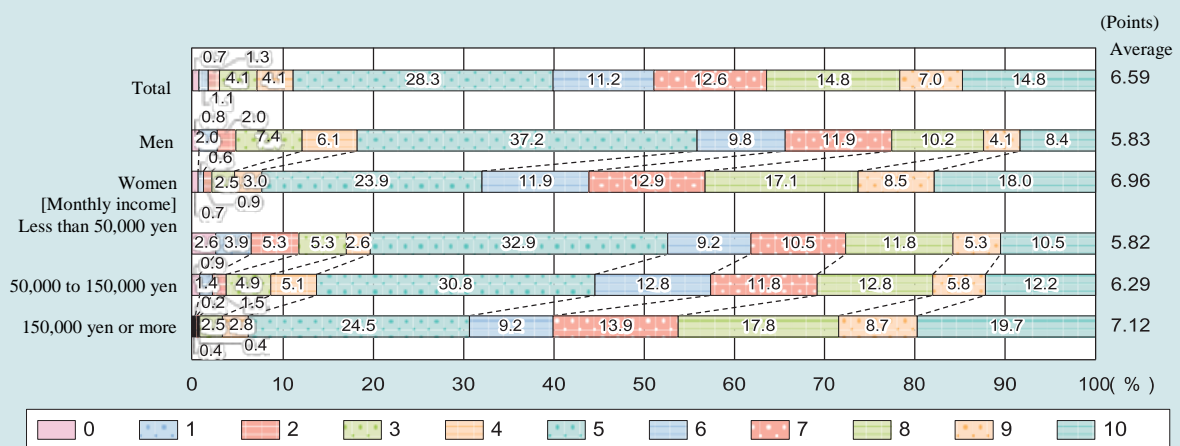
### 1 Awareness of happiness and worries

#### (1) The number of males who have high degree of happiness is half the number of that females

The elderly aged 65 and over were asked to evaluate how happy they were at present on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the “extremely happy” and 0 being the “extremely unhappy.” The average of the marks that they had given was 6.59. Eleven point three percent (11.3 %) of them evaluated their happiness between 0 and 4, whereas the largest percentage (28.3 %) evaluated it at 5. While nearly half (43.6 %) of the elderly women evaluated their happiness at 8 or above (18.0 % at 10, 8.5 % at 9 and 17.1 % at 8), only about half this percentage (22.7 %) of the elderly men evaluated their happiness at 8 or above (8.4 % at 10, 4.1 % at 9 and 10.2 % at 8).

The data in the chart below show that the elderly with larger incomes are likely to be happier than those with smaller incomes. (Chart 1-3-1).

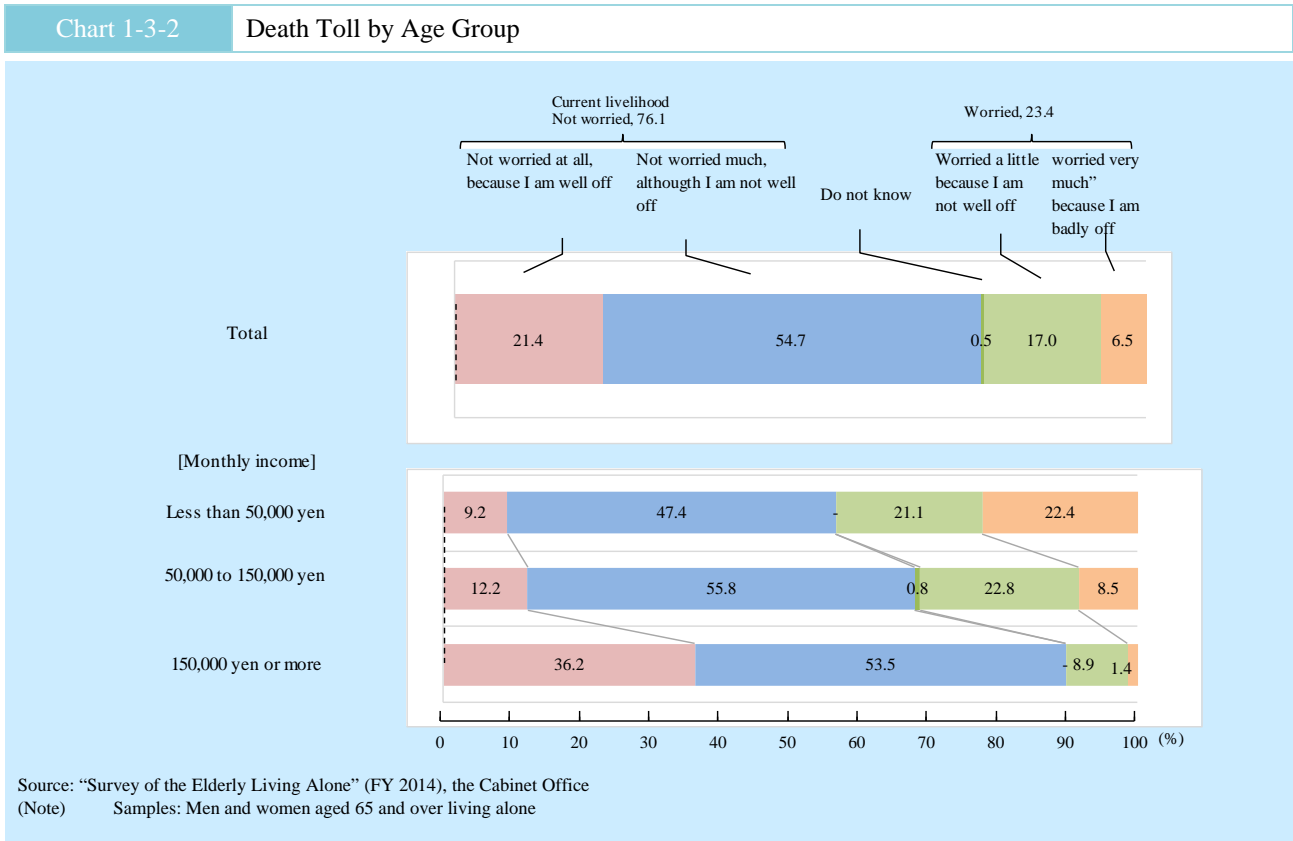
Chart 1-3-1 Level of happiness that the elderly living alone feel



Source: “Survey of the Elderly Living Alone” (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone

**(2) Three quarters of the elderly do not worry about their livelihood**

The percentage of the elderly who “are not worried” about the current economic condition (those who are “not worried at all” because they are well off and those who are “not much worried,” although they are not so well off combined) is 76.1 %. This chart is far larger than 23.4 %, the percentage of the elderly who are “worried a little” because they not well off and who are “worried very much” because they are badly off. The percentages of the elderly who are “not worried” among those with monthly income of less than 50,000 yen, between 50,000 and 150,000 yen and more than 150,000 yen were 56.6 %, 68.0 % and 89.7 %, respectively. (Chart 1-3-2)

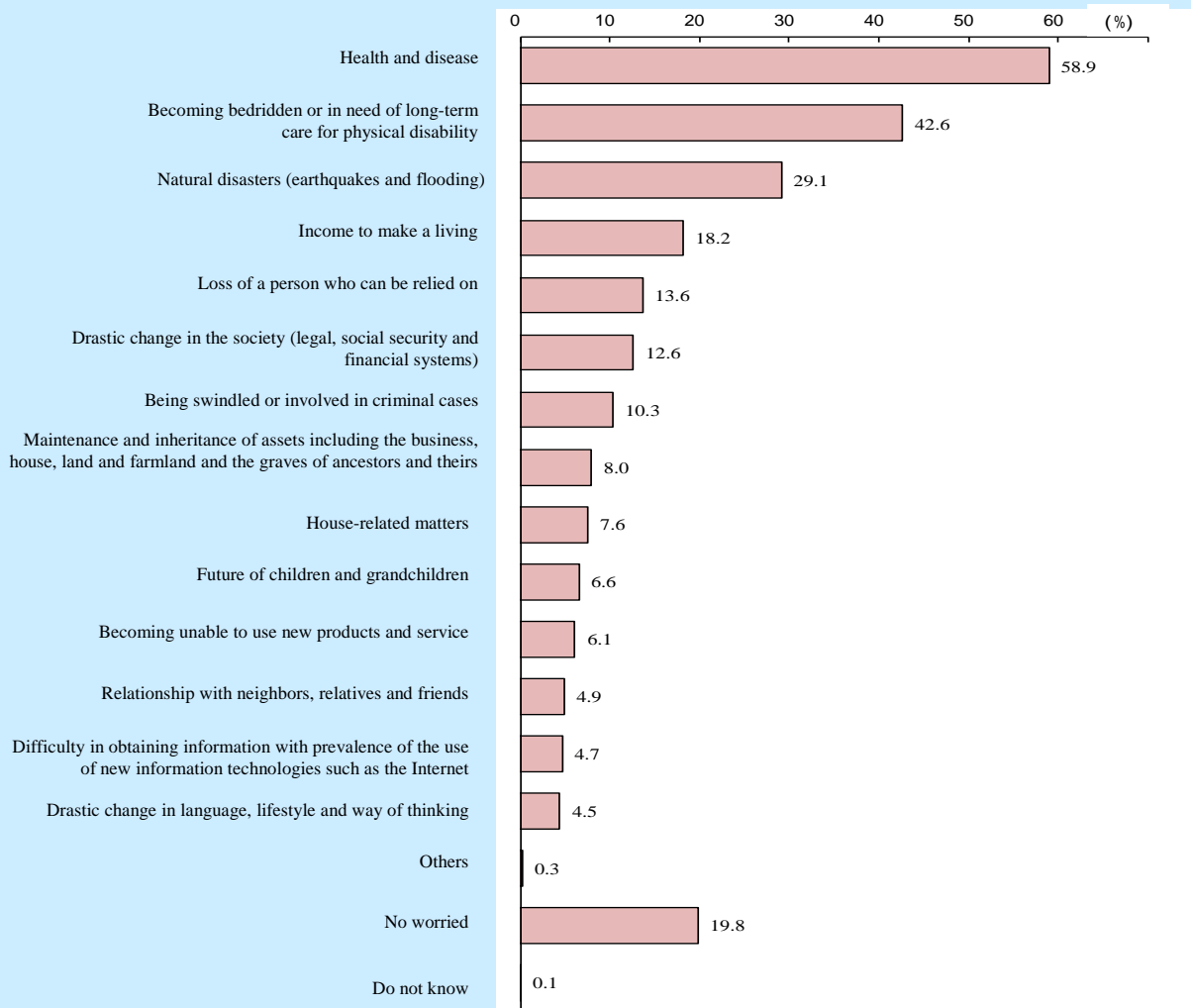


**(3) What the elderly are worried about most in daily life is health and diseases**

To the question on the worries in daily life, the largest percentage (58.9%) of the elderly mentioned that they were worried about their health and diseases. Forty-two point six percent (42.6 %), 29.1 %, 18.2 % and 13.6 % of the elderly are worried about becoming bedridden or in need of long-term care because of physical disability, natural disasters, income to make a living and loss of a person on whom they can rely, respectively. The survey has revealed that the elderly have worries concerning “long-term care,” “social isolation” and “poverty” which are considered as the risk factors for the elderly living alone and that health is the greatest worry among those risk factors. (Chart 1-3-3)

Chart 1-3-3

Worries in daily life (multiple responses allowed)



Source: "Survey of the Elderly Living Alone" (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone

Many elderly people living alone are worried about becoming sick or in need of long-term care and damage caused by natural disasters in their daily life. In order to alleviate these worries of theirs and enable them to live a safe and peaceful life, various types of support including examination of their physical conditions as a part of community activities and assistance in evacuation at the time of disasters will be required.

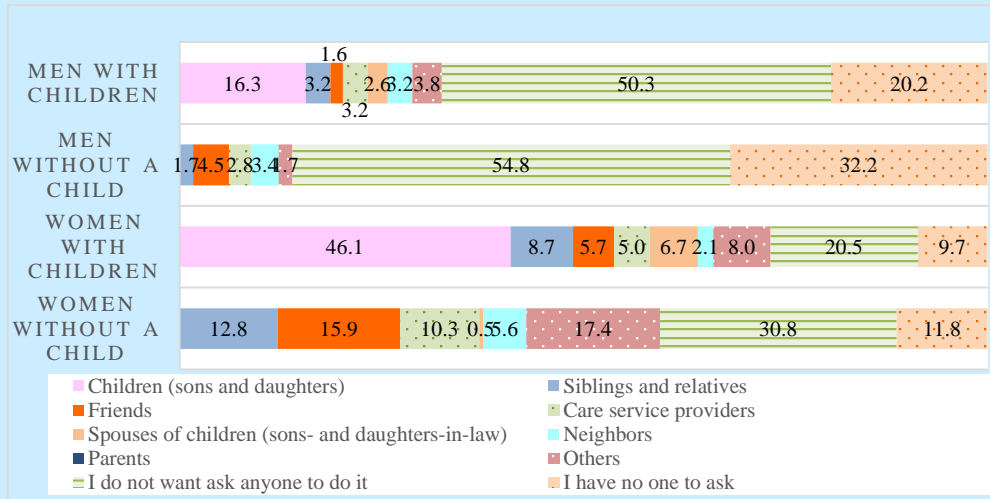
## 2 Attitude toward relationship with other people

### (1) Many elderly men do not want to ask others to do a small task for them or do not have any one to ask

To the question on whom they would ask to do a small task for them, the largest percentage of women who have children responded "children" (46.1 %), followed by those who responded "I do not want to ask anyone to do it" (20.5 %). The largest percentage of elderly women who have no child responded, "I do not want to ask anyone to do it" (30.8 %). Their responses to the question are diverse, including "others" excluding relatives and friends (17.4 %), "friends" (15.9 %) and "siblings and relatives" (12.8 %). Meanwhile, the largest percentage of elderly men, regardless of whether they have children or

not, responded “I do not want to ask others to do it” (50.3 % and 54.8 % for men with and without children, respectively), followed by those responded, “I have no one to ask,” (20.2 % and 32.2 % for men with and without children, respectively). (Chart 1-3-4)

Chart 1-3-4 Person whom you ask to do a small job

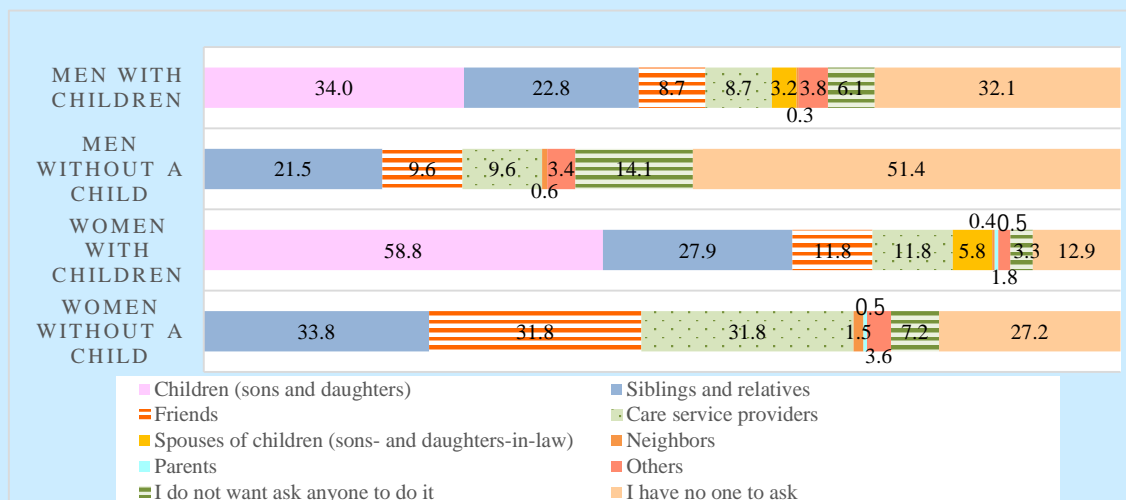


Source: “Survey of the Elderly Living Alone” (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone

**(2) Many elderly people feel comfortable when they are with their children. Many elderly women also feel comfortable when they are with their siblings, whereas many elderly men “do not have anyone” with whom they feel comfortable.**

The largest percentages of both elderly men and women with children chose “children” as people with whom they feel comfortable (34.0 % and 58.8 %, respectively). The next largest percentage of men with children chose, “I do not have anyone” (31.9 %), whereas the next largest percentage of elderly women with children chose, “siblings and relatives” (27.9 %). On the other hand, more than half of elderly men without a child chose “I do not have anyone” (51.4 %) and women without a child chose a variety of responses including “siblings and relatives” (33.8 %), “friends” (31.8 %) and “care service providers” (31.8 %). (Chart 1-3-5)

Chart 1-3-5 People with whom you feel comfortable

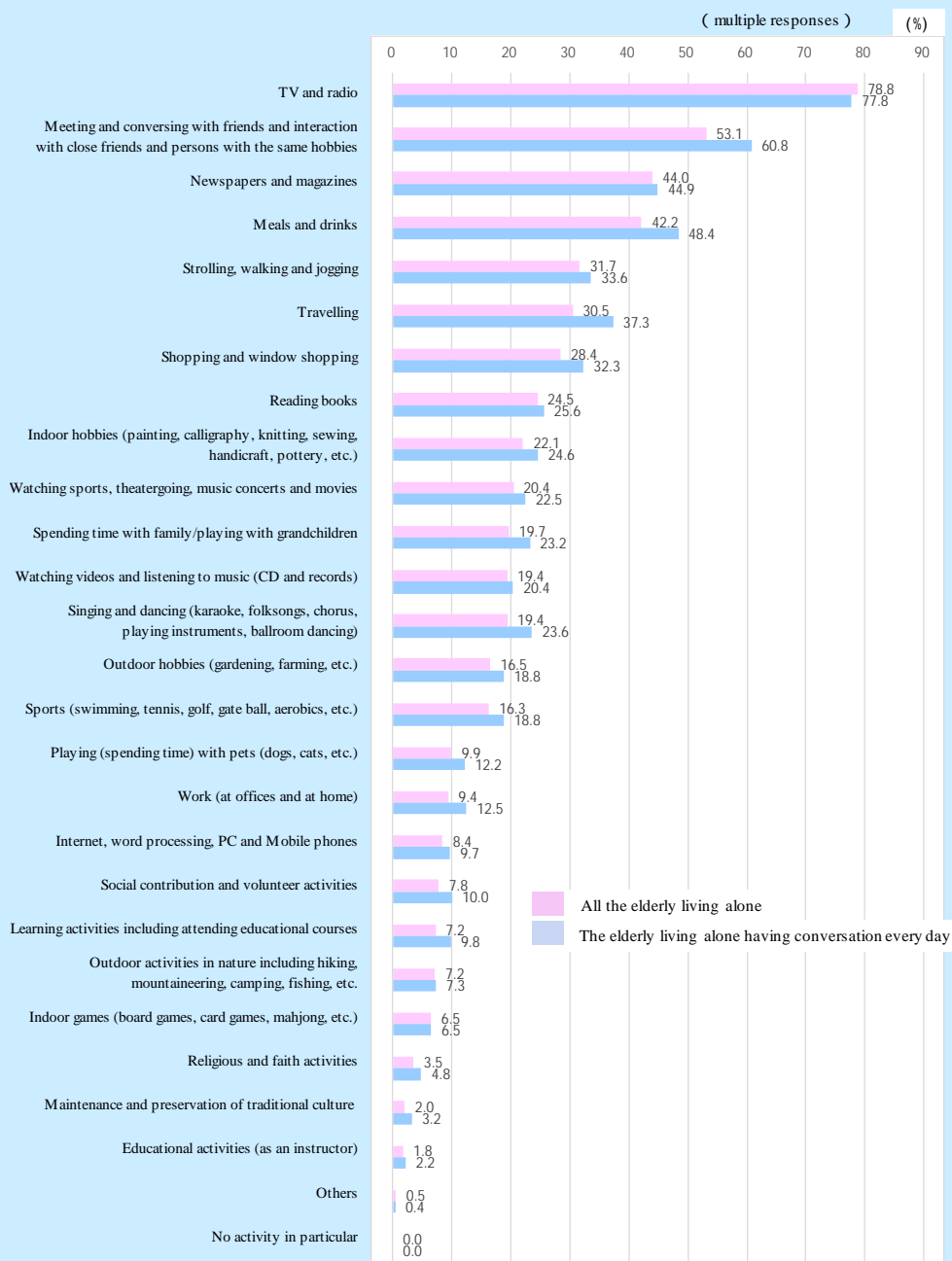


Source: “Survey of the Elderly Living Alone” (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone

**(3) The elderly who have conversation frequently have more fun.**

The elderly living alone enjoy “TV and radio” (78.8 %), “conversation with friends” (53.1 %), “newspapers and magazines” (42.2 %), “meals” (42.2 %) and “strolling, walking and jogging” (31.7 %) most. As those who are “having conversation every day” enjoy most of the activities mentioned in the figure below more than average, they are considered to be enjoying a wide variety of activities. While the fifth most enjoyed activity for the elderly living alone, as a whole, is “strolling, walking and jogging,” that for the elderly living alone and having conversation every day is “travelling” (37.3 %). (Figure 1-3-6)

Chart 1-3-6 Activities enjoyed (multiple responses)



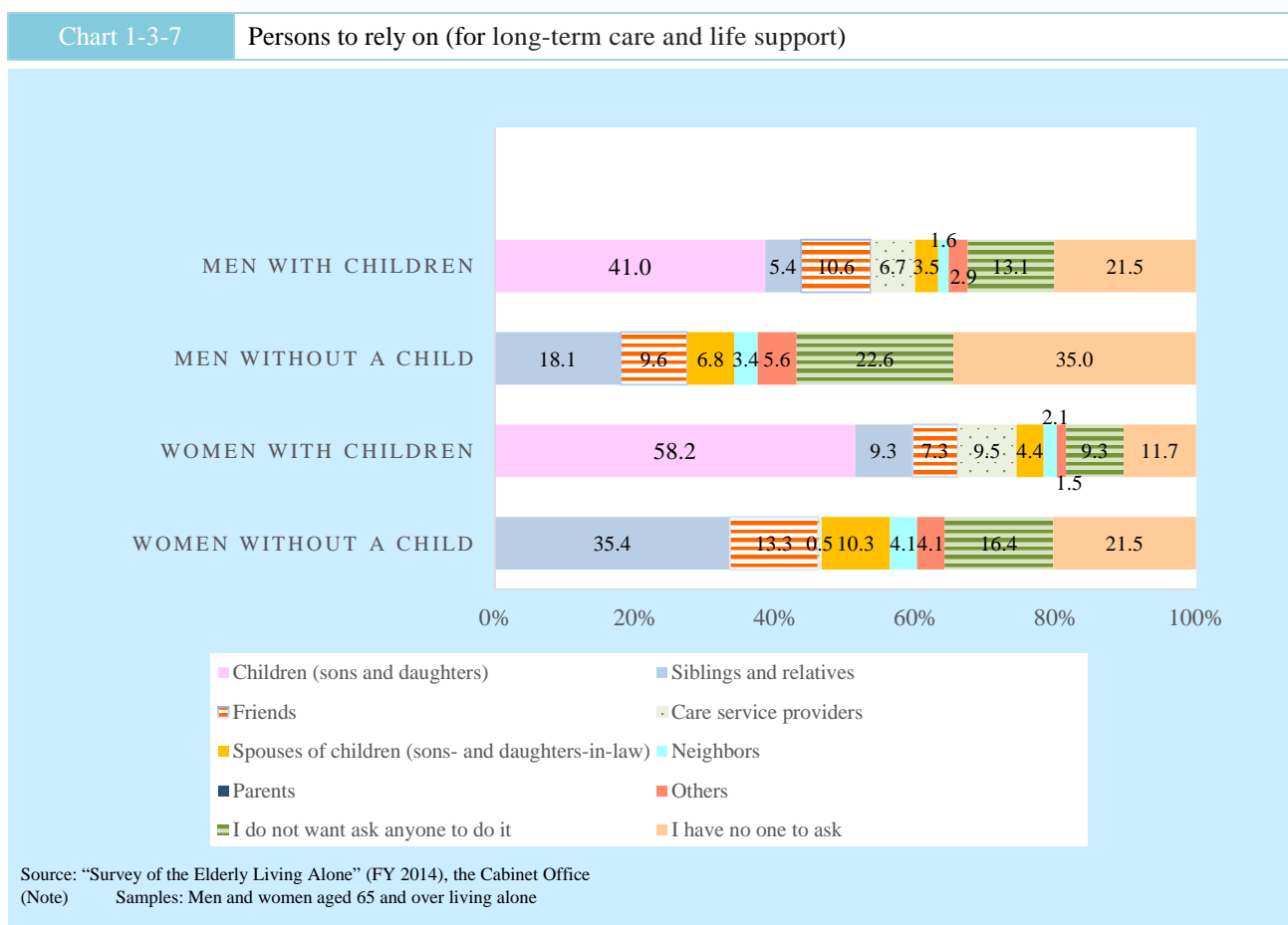
Source: “Survey of the Elderly Living Alone” (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone

Many elderly people, especially men, without a child living alone have no one with whom they feel comfortable or whom they can ask to do a small job in daily life. Therefore, it will be necessary to develop an environment in which they can interact with people in their community with little reservation as if they were their children, siblings or relatives.

### 3 Attitude toward the preparation for the future

#### (1) One third of elderly men without a child have no one whom they would like to ask for long-term care and life support

The largest percentages of both elderly men and women with children (41.0 % and 58.2 %, respectively) selected “children” as people that they would like to ask for long-term care and life support when they were sick. The largest percentage of elderly women without a child (35.4 %) chose “siblings and relatives” and 21.5 % of them chose “I have no one to ask.” Meanwhile, 35.0 % and 22.6 % of elderly men without a child chose, “I have no one to ask” and “I do not want to rely on anyone,” respectively, for long-term care and life support. (Chart 1-3-7)

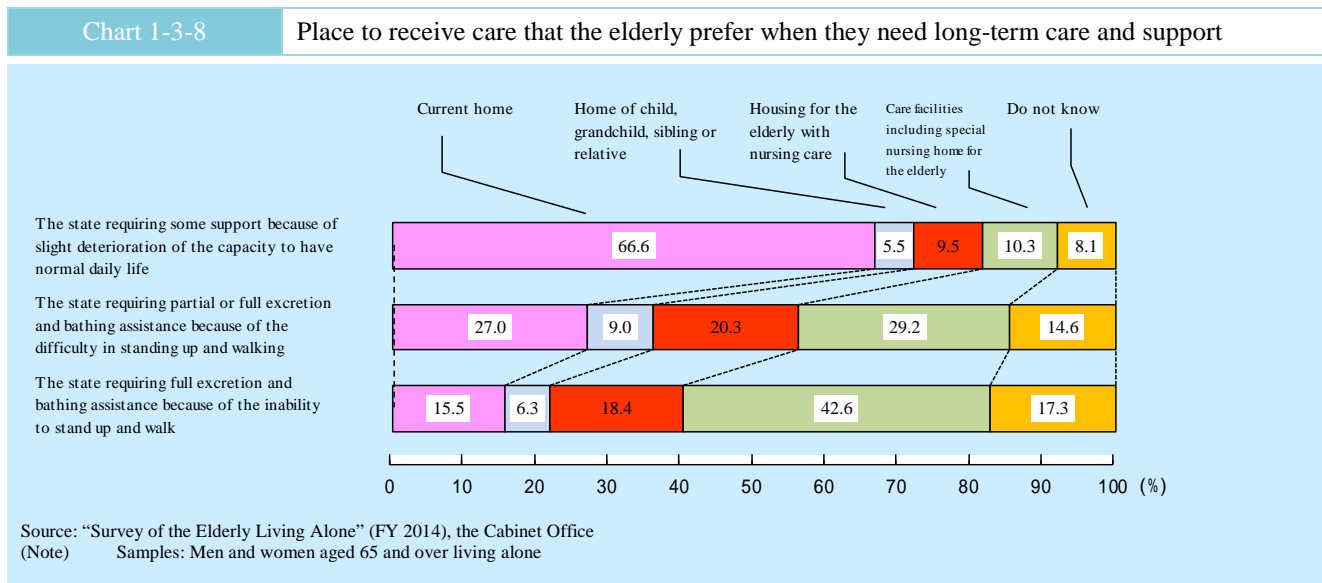


#### (2) Approx. two thirds of the elderly prefer nursing care at “their current homes” if the care level is low.

The largest percentage of the elderly (66.6 %) prefer the “current home” as a place to receive long-term care when their capacity is deteriorated slightly from the level of living an ordinary life. Approx. 10 % of them prefer “care facilities” (10.3 %) and “housing with care for the elderly” (9.5 %).

Approx. the same percentage of the elderly prefer “the current home” (27.0 %) and “care facilities” (29.2 %) as a place to receive long-term care when they are in need of partial or full excretion and bathing assistance. The elderly who prefer “care facilities” (42.6 %) as a place to receive long-term care outnumber those who prefer the “current home” when they are in the state requiring full excretion and bathing assistance because they have become unable to stand up, walk, go to toilet or take a bath by themselves. As the care level

increases, from the stage of requiring some support, to requiring partial and, then, full assistance, the number of the elderly who prefer long-term care at the “current home” decreases and the number of those who prefer long-term care at “care facilities” and “housing for the elderly with nursing care” increases. (Chart 1-3-8)



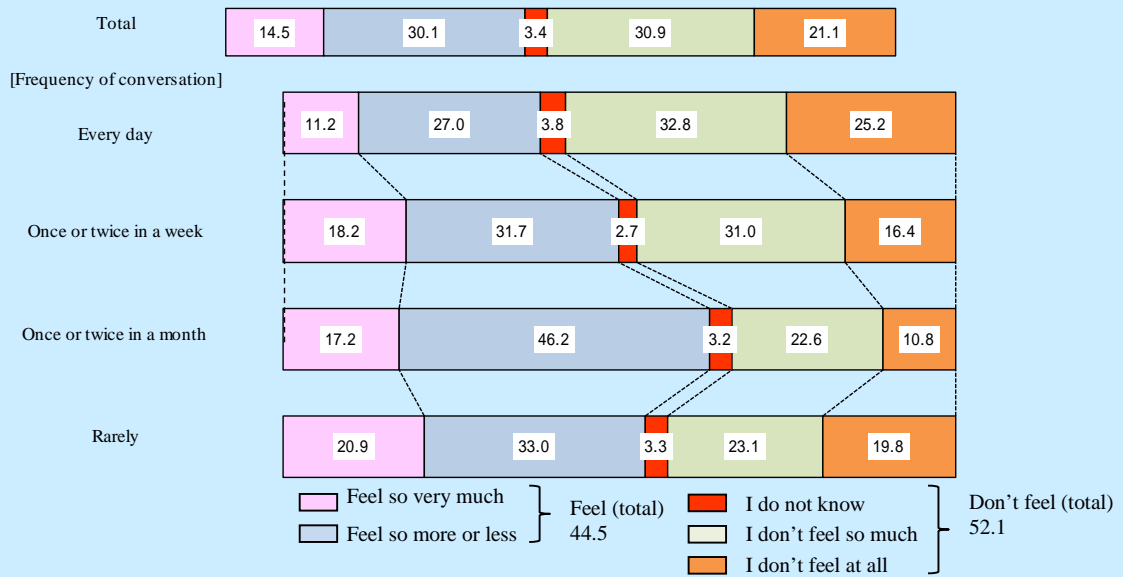
**(3) Approx. 40 % of the elderly living alone are seriously worried about dying alone**

Forty-four point five percent (44.5 %) of the elderly living alone are “seriously worried” (“very seriously worried” and “somewhat seriously worried” combined) about dying alone and 52.1 % of them are “not seriously worried” (“not much worried” and “not at all worried” combined).

The elderly who have conversation with others once or twice in a month are approximately twice more likely to be worried about dying alone seriously than those having conversation every day (63.4 % vs. 38.2 %). (Chart 1-3-9)

Chart 1-3-9

Percentage of the elderly living alone who are seriously worried about dying alone



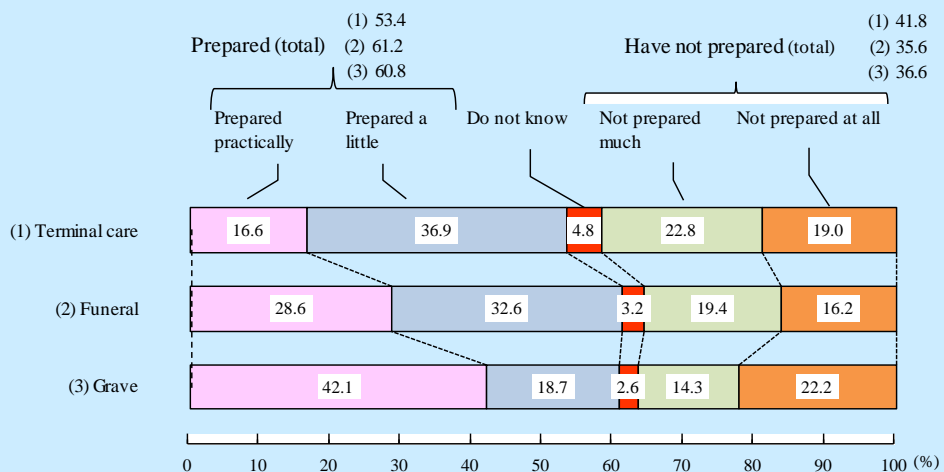
Source: "Survey of the Elderly Living Alone" (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone  
 \* The definition of "solitary death" in this survey is "death discovered after having died without anyone present."

**(4) Approx. 40 % of the elderly living alone have made no preparation for their terminal care, funerals or graves**

The percentages of the elderly living alone who "have not prepared" ("not prepared at all" and "not prepared much" combined) for their terminal care, funerals and graves are 41.8 %, 35.6 % and 36.6 %, respectively. In other words, approx. 40 % of the elderly have made no preparation for their terminal care, funerals or graves. (Chart 1-3-10)

Chart 1-3-10

Preparation for the future



Source: "Survey of the Elderly Living Alone" (FY 2014), the Cabinet Office  
 (Note) Samples: Men and women aged 65 and over living alone



Even if an elderly person may not have an actual problem at present, s/he has a great concern over what could happen to her/him in future including illness and need for assistance in daily life. Various measures can be taken to alleviate the concern. There are cases in which the people involved in long-term care of the elderly in communities have created innovative measures appropriate for the conditions in the communities concerned in cooperation and taken those measures.