

# Necessity of a clinical psychological approach to patients with SMON

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## Abstract

We adopted a psychological approach based on "consultation on problems" at the time of mass screening for patients with SMON. Specifically, we investigated whether there were problems, the desire for consultation, the content of the consultation, and whether counseling was given to those who wanted consultation. For those who did not want to talk, we listened to the reasons, and lastly we conducted a satisfaction survey on the participants. As a result, those who had problems and desired consultation with a psychologist confirmed that the field of vision expanded through counseling and that they were trying to positively position themselves. On the other hand, if there was no problem, there were people who were being supported by others, and people who were giving up on the present situation. By holding psychologists' troubleshooting consultation meetings, it was possible to grasp and analyze the psychology of SMON patients, and to encourage the recognition and acceptance of mental stress by the patients themselves.

**Key words :** mental health of SMON patients, psychological approach

## Introduction

In recent years, it has been pointed out that the mental condition of a patient with SMON is closely related to the manifestation of symptoms <sup>1)~3)</sup>. However, it is not easy to accurately evaluate mental stress in current SMON patients whose aging is advanced and when various symptoms accompany each other.

In the study, psychologists focused on checking SMON, and conducted a "consultation on problems" in parallel therewith. Generally, elderly people do not want to say mental stress to others. Moreover, it is difficult to accurately express it, and even when there is a problem, they are often unaware of its existence. Based on these facts, at the "problem consultation meeting" we investigated the existence of problems and whether there was a desire for a consultation. In both cases, the clinical psychologist listened to the reason for and content of the interview and counseled as necessary. In addition, psychological analysis was performed on information obtained in a series of processes, and the usefulness of the "problem consultation meeting" was examined by clinical psychologists.

## Subjects and methods

The subjects were 26 males and females aged 68 to 96 who participated in the 2017 degree Tokuma prefecture Sumon group checkup. First, as regards problem investigation, those who responded that there was a problem were asked whether they hoped for a consultation, and those who wanted a consultation heard consultation contents. Psychological counseling was conducted by psychologists when the consultation revealed mental problems. If the consultation did not reveal a mental problem, other job types responded to consultation according to the contents. We asked the reason for not wanting a consultation. After the problem consultation, we conducted a satisfaction survey. (Figure 1)

## Results

Among those with problems, five wanted a consultation, and the contents of consultation were mental problems received psychological counseling by psychologists. For those who did not want a

consultation, the reasons given included that the contents of consultation were patterned, and that the family had stopped due to the mental illness of the patient.

Three of the respondents who said that psychologists responded to their problems and they did not have any problem were able to listen to each situation. When the psychologist interviewed them, language encouragement was urged, and their present condition and feelings were expressed. Among them, they had daily opportunities to consult, or had the feeling of "giving up" on the present situation. Analysis of psychological counseling clarified the resources that each consultant had during the counseling process. In addition, through counseling, consultants who were prone to focusing on negative aspects were also aware that positive attention was also given to positive aspects and the field of vision spreading. In these processes, it was confirmed that the consultants talked about while recollecting their lives.

In the satisfaction survey, it was stated that it was as pleasure to talk to the psychologist as to talk with family and patients, and that it led to new discoveries.

## Discussion

In previous studies of SMON, it was suggested that mental stress affects ADL and neurological symptoms etc. 1) -3). Reduction of psychological stress is thought to be extremely important for patients with SMON to ensure as comfortable and self - sustaining daily life.

Therefore, we planned a survey on mental health of SMON patients in Tokushima prefecture. However, in SMON patients, one must consider the cultural background of the Japanese who tend to avoid consultations on mental disorders. In addition, the deterioration of cognitive function accompanying aging and the presence of consciousness that it is a phytotoxic victim have complicated effects on psychological state. Therefore, in order to investigate this situation, basically psychologists interviewed SMON patients and planned to grasp their psychological state through dialogue.

As a result of the psychological analysis, it turned out that those who wanted consultation had diverse resources. In addition, counseling widened the field of view of the consultant, and I was able to look back on my situation positively. From considering the reasons why they do not want consultation and

the dialogue with those who do not have problems, the feeling of "giving up" on the present situation seems to induce a passive attitude toward consultation. In other words, it is thought that the response suppressed by giving up on the present situation led to the answer "no problem".

Intervention by psychologists enabled us to understand and analyze the psychology of SMON patients, and encouraged them to recognize and accept mental stress. It can be said that the "psychological consultation" by psychologists was useful.

## Reference

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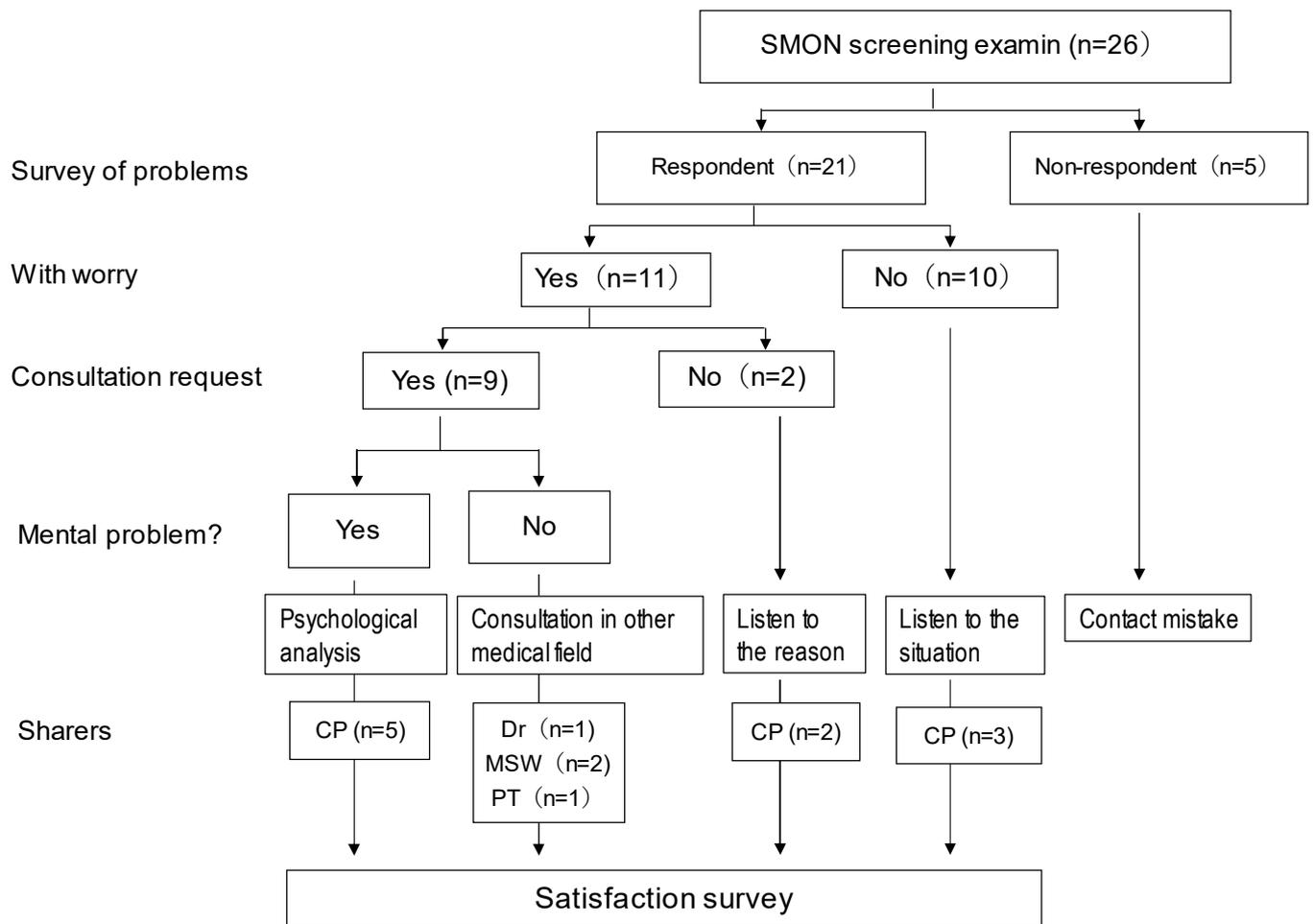


Figure 1. Process of each stage of troubleshooting consultation