

# The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan: Aiming to Build a Society in Which People Who Want to Get Pregnant Can Do So

Health and Global Policy Institute

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## 1. Executive summary

The HGPI Women’s Health Project conducted a nationwide online survey of 10,000 men and women ages 25 to 49 to identify and propose specific measures that will be important and effective for creating a society in which anyone who wants to conceive is able to do so. The survey results showed there is room for improvement in health literacy for all of society regarding topics like fertility and infertility in men and women as well as women specific health concerns. Results also suggested factors that are related to having children among people who want them include: history of diagnosis and treatment for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS); age of initial gynecological examination; annual income and employment status; and relationships in communities during childhood and relationships with nearby children later in life. As the results of this survey demonstrate, national policies that support women’s health over the life course and foster understanding toward reproductive health and rights and women’s health throughout society and across genders and generations must be established so every individual can enjoy reproductive health and rights.

### Key findings

#### **(Health literacy)**

- ✧ **Almost half of women and over 60% of men did not know it is possible to treat symptoms experienced before or during menstruation.**
- ✧ **Almost half of women and over 60% of men did not know that amenorrhea or organic diseases like endometriosis and uterine fibroids can cause infertility if left untreated.**

#### **(Gynecologic diseases)**

- ✧ **The proportion of respondents with a history of diagnosis or treatment for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, or PCOS was greater among those currently expecting their first child compared to those with children.**

#### **(Socioeconomic activity)**

- ✧ **Among respondents who said “I have no income” or “My annual income is under 5 million yen” when asked about their annual income, there was a significant difference between men with children (37.4%) and men without children (63.9%).**
- ✧ **Among male respondents with full-time employment (including both full-time and temporary assignments), there was a significant difference between those with children (95.7%) and those without children (76.8%).**
- ✧ **When asked about what forms of support or systems are necessary to enable people who want to have children to be able to do so, many respondents said tax measures that reduce burdens on families with children, employment measures, and opportunities for stable employment.**

#### **(The surrounding environment)**

- ✧ **Respondents without children tended to have fewer opportunities to interact with children in everyday life than respondents with children had before becoming parents.**

### Four perspectives gathered from survey results

**Perspective 1: Reinforce support to improve health literacy.**

**Perspective 2: Establish a system to improve access to gynecologists.**

**Perspective 3: Provide economic support to people who want to have children and advance work style reforms.**

**Perspective 4: Provide people with opportunities to interact with children and promote the creation of mechanisms for mutual support in communities.**

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Since Japan's total fertility rate fell to a record low of 1.57 births per woman in 1990, an event known as the "1.57 Shock," the Government of Japan has worked to reverse the declining birthrate through various laws and measures.<sup>1 2</sup> The "Outline of Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate" enacted by Cabinet Decision in May 2020 set a specific numeric target of 1.8 births per woman and included measures for reviewing child-rearing allowances and eliminating daycare waiting lists, improving working conditions for young people, and providing parental leave to men.<sup>3</sup> However, statistics presented in June 2021 reported the total fertility rate for 2020 was 1.34, or 0.02 points lower than the previous year, making it the fifth consecutive year of decline.<sup>4</sup> New measures to address the declining birthrate were implemented in response, including expanded subsidies for fertility treatments. Discussions on expanding insurance coverage for fertility treatments are currently underway, but many people feel these measures do not sufficiently reflect the needs of members of the generation who wish to conceive.<sup>5</sup>

In a survey of 2,000 working women conducted by HGPI in 2018, only 46.7% of the 738 women who wanted to conceive said they had been able to do so at their desired timing.<sup>6</sup> When the 393 women who had not been able to conceive when they wanted to were asked which measures or systems they wish had been in place to help them conceive at their desired timing, many said, "A flexible paid leave system at work," "A better work environment," and "Teaching suitable times for pregnancy and fertility during school education." Although that survey's results suggested several potential methods of addressing this issue, this question was only asked to women who wanted to conceive and could not do so at the time they wanted, limiting opinions expressed to that group. This highlighted the importance of examining the issue in greater depth.

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1 厚生労働省, 1999, 「少子化対策推進基本方針について」. [https://www.mhlw.go.jp/www1/topics/syoushika/tp0816-2\\_18.html](https://www.mhlw.go.jp/www1/topics/syoushika/tp0816-2_18.html) (2022年3月1日アクセス)

2 厚生労働省, 2002, 「少子化対策プラスワン-少子化対策の一層の充実に関する提案」. <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/houdou/2002/09/h0920-1.html> (2022年3月1日アクセス)

3 内閣府, 2020, 「少子化社会対策大綱～新しい令和の時代にふさわしい少子化対策へ～」. [https://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/law/pdf/r020529/shoushika\\_taikou.pdf](https://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/law/pdf/r020529/shoushika_taikou.pdf) (2022年3月1日アクセス)

4 内閣府, 2021, 「令和2年度少子化の状況及び少子化への対処施策の概況(令和3年度版少子化社会対策白書)」. (<https://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/whitepaper/measures/w-2021/r03pdfgaiyoh/pdf/03gaiyoh.pdf>) (2022年3月1日アクセス)

5 厚生労働省, 2021, 「不妊治療に関する支援について」. <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000901931.pdf> (2022年3月1日アクセス)

<sup>6</sup> Health and Global Policy Institute, 2018. "Survey on Health Promotion and Working Women 2018." <https://hgpi.org/wp-content/uploads/1b0a5e05061baa3441756a25b2a4786c.pdf> Last retrieved May 1, 2022.

It has been pointed out that falling marriage rates and later marriages for both men and women are key factors for Japan's declining fertility rate.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, rather than only focusing on married people when examining factors related to pregnancy, factors that prevent people from wanting to get married should be treated as preconditions and also analyzed. Recognizing this, we conducted a nationwide online survey of 10,000 men and women ages 25 to 49 to identify and propose specific, necessary, and effective measures for making society a place where anyone who wants to conceive is able to do so.

Certain countries like France and Sweden have successfully improved total fertility rates by reclassifying out-of-wedlock births among couples who are not legally married (such as people cohabiting or in de facto marriages) to be equivalent to legitimate births.<sup>8</sup> From the perspective of reproductive health and rights, it is important that we broaden recognition of various forms of partnerships and childrearing practices, and we hope similar discussions gain momentum in Japan.

In addition, this survey was conducted based on the principle that reproductive health and rights (or sexual and reproductive health and rights, SRHR) are fundamental rights belonging to all individuals and couples (as outlined in the Programme of Action Plan presented in 1994 by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)), and that population is not a matter that regards the number of people, but is an issue concerning dignity and quality of life for each individual.

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<sup>7</sup> Cabinet Office, 2015. "Why Is Japan's Falling Birthrate Accelerating?" [https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai-shimon/kaigi/special/future/sentaku/pdf/p030102\\_01.pdf](https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai-shimon/kaigi/special/future/sentaku/pdf/p030102_01.pdf) Last retrieved March 3, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Kanae Karita, Mari Kitada, 2018. "Political Measures against Declining Birthrate—Implication of Good Family Policies and Practice in Sweden or France," *The Japanese Journal of Hygiene*, 73, 322-329.

### **3. Survey overview**

#### **3.1. Research design**

Cross-sectional study

#### **3.2. Respondents**

The survey was administered to 10,000 men and women ages 25 to 49 throughout Japan selected from the monitor panel of the company that assisted with the research. The breakdown of respondent demographics is shown in Figures 1 through 7. Respondents were selected by region, age, and sex in ratios in that correspond to the demographics of the total population of Japan.

#### **3.3. Survey method**

From August 27, 2021 to August 31, 2021, an online survey was conducted among 10,000 respondents.

#### **3.4. Ethical considerations**

Since this survey involved highly private topics, we provided an advance written explanation of the research purpose, our methods of protecting personal information, potential disadvantages, the voluntary nature of cooperation, and participants' freedom to withdraw consent during the survey process. The survey was administered only to those who gave consent. The survey did not include any question that could identify individual respondents, such as respondent name, and the data we collected was stored and analyzed in a manner to prevent any risk of personal information being leaked. The survey was conducted after receiving approval from the Ethics Review Committee of the Health Outcome Research Institute.

#### **3.5. Analytical method**

Responses to survey questions were divided into the following categories: "Gynecological diseases, examination-seeking behaviors, and responses," "Health literacy," "Socioeconomic activities," "Attempts to conceive and life planning," "Marriage-related topics," "Gender-related topics," "Topics related to surroundings and the social environment," and "COVID-19 impact on life planning," after which descriptive statistics were calculated and partial cross tabulations were conducted. Analysis of covariance and logistic regression analysis (or log-binomial regression analysis when event occurrence proportion exceeded 10%) were also conducted, with each indicator as a dependent variable. Adjustment variables were selected as potential confounding factors in each analysis. Each analysis was stratified by gender and age group, when appropriate. In all analyses, results were considered significant if p-value was less than 0.05.

#### **3.6. Limitations**

In recent years, there has been a decline in the efficacy of traditional survey methods due to factors such as decreased response rates for mail-in surveys or in-person interviews and expansions in survey restrictions, which has led to higher expectations for internet surveys. However, the conduction of a survey on the internet introduces a fixed sampling bias in that it selects only for respondents who can use the internet,

and hence have a certain level of education, as internet literacy is generally correlated with education level.<sup>9,10,11,12,13</sup> It is important to take this limitation into account when interpreting the results of this survey. Given the nature of this research as a cross-sectional study, causal relationships cannot be inferred.

### 3.7. Conducting organizations

With advice from advisory board members and special advisors and global coordination members,<sup>14</sup> which consist of outside specialists, efforts to design the overall survey, develop survey items, administer the survey, conduct statistical analysis, and compile policy recommendations were centered around the HGPI Women’s Health Project Team. As such, the policy recommendations in this document do not represent the opinions of any individual advisory board member, special advisor, or global coordination member.

(Titles omitted; in alphabetical order)

#### **Advisory board**

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<sup>9</sup> Smith MA, Leigh B, 1997, Virtual subjects: Using the Internet as an alternative source of subjects and research environment. *Behav Res Meth Instrum Comput*, 29, 496–505.

<sup>10</sup> Osomi N, Maeda T, 2007, Problems with online surveys - Observations from experimental investigations (Part 1) (From members). *Japan Association for Public Opinion and Research Newsletter Yoron*, 100, 58-70.

<sup>11</sup> Osomi N, Maeda T, 2008, Problems with online surveys - Observations from experimental investigations (Part 2) (From members). *Japan Association for Public Opinion and Research Newsletter Yoron*, 101, 79-94.

<sup>12</sup> Miura A, Kobayashi T, 2015, Monitors are not monitored: How satisficing among online survey monitors can distort empirical findings. *Japanese Journal of Social Psychology*, 31, 1–12.

<sup>13</sup> Hanibuchi N, Muranaka A, Ando M, 2015, Challenges of Data Collection through Internet Research: Analysis of “Frivolous” Responses, Response Time, and Geographical Pattern. *E-journal GEO*, 10 (1), 81-98.

<sup>14</sup> Global coordination members provide recommendations and make adjustments according to global perspectives.

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#### 4. Survey results

##### 4.1. Respondent attributes

Respondent attributes

Figure 1

### Respondent attributes (Sex)

(August 2021, n=10000)

Biological sex		Gender identity	
• Male	50.4%	• Male	50.1%
• Female	49.6%	• Female	49.8%
		• Other	0.2%

The biological sex ratio of respondents corresponds to the demographics of the total population of Japan. "Gender identity" and "Biological sex" differed for 1.8% of all respondents. Please note that on following pages, "Male" and "Female" or "Men" and "Women" refer to biological sex.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 2

### Respondent attributes (age and area of residence)

(August 2021, n=10000)

Age		Area of residence	
• 25 to 29	15.8%	• Hokkaido – Tohoku	11.2%
• 30 to 34	16.5%	• Kanto	39.9%
• 35 to 39	22.1%	• Chubu	11.2%
• 40 to 44	18.6%	• Kinki	17.6%
• 45 to 49	26.9%	• Chugoku – Shikoku	8.7%
		• Kyushu	11.4%

Ratios of ages and areas of residence (by region) of respondents correspond to the demographics of the total population of Japan.

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 3

### Respondent attributes (marital status and nationality of partner)

(August 2021, n=10000)

Marital status		Nationality of partner	
• Married	45.7%	• Japan	95.0%
• De facto married (same-sex)	0.4%	• Other	5.0%
• De facto married (other)	0.7%		
• Unmarried (never married)	43.5%		
• Unmarried (with marriage history)	9.7%		

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 4

**Respondent attributes (presence of children, breakdown of parents and non-parents)**

(August 2021, n=10000)

Presence of children		Breakdown of parents and non-parents	
• Yes* <sup>1</sup>	32.4%	• Parents (with biological children* <sup>2</sup> )	32.0%
• No	67.6%	• Parents (no biological children* <sup>3</sup> )	0.4%
		• Non-parents (currently attempting to conceive* <sup>4</sup> )	2.5%
		• Non-parents (not attempting to conceive)	65.1%

\*<sup>1</sup> Includes biological children, step-children, and children adopted through the special adoption system

\*<sup>2</sup> One or more biological children

\*<sup>3</sup> Includes only step-children and children adopted through the special adoption system

\*<sup>4</sup> We asked respondents, "For those who are not currently pregnant, do you want to conceive in the future?" Response options were "I am currently trying," "I do not want a child now, but do someday," "I do not want a child now or in the future," and "Unsure." This figure includes only those who selected "I am currently trying."

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 5

**Respondent attributes (educational background, occupation, employment status)**

(August 2021, n=10000)

Educational background		Occupation		Employment status* (n=6506)	
• Middle school	3.0%	• Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	1.0%	• Permanent employee (full-time)	68.3%
• High school	24.9%	• Trade worker or laborer	10.9%	• Permanent employee (part-time)	1.0%
• Vocational high school	1.7%	• Service and sales	15.7%	• Part-time	20.4%
• Technical college	13.1%	• Office/administrative support	24.4%	• Contract/temporary employee	5.7%
• Junior college	8.3%	• Professional	13.1%	• Dispatch employee	3.6%
• University	43.1%	• Management	3.1%	• Home piecework	0.2%
• Graduate school	5.9%	• Business owner	4.2%	• Other	0.9%
• Other	0.1%	• Homemaker	12.3%		
		• Student	0.4%		
		• Unemployed	11.1%		
		• Other	4.0%		

\*We asked respondents, "Which of the following describes your occupation? Please select the option that fits best. For those with multiple jobs, please select the main one." This breakdown includes those who did not select, "Management," "Business owner," "Homemaker," "Student," "Unemployed," or "Other" (n=6506).

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 6

**Respondent attributes (household income)**

(August 2021, n=10000)

**Household income**

• None	2.1%	• 5 million to under 6 million yen	9.5%
• Under 1 million yen	2.2%	• 6 million to under 7 million yen	7.4%
• 1 million to under 2 million yen	4.0%	• 7 million to under 8 million yen	6.8%
• 2 million to under 3 million yen	7.5%	• 8 million to under 9 million yen	4.4%
• 3 million to under 4 million yen	10.2%	• 9 million to under 10 million yen	4.0%
• 4 million to under 5 million yen	10.8%	• 10 million yen or more	7.9%
		• Unsure/Declined to answer	23.2%

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Respondent attributes

Figure 7

**Respondent attributes (history of diagnosis or treatment)**

(August 2021, n=10000)

**History of diagnosis or treatment by disorder type\***

• None in particular	70.1%	• Digestive	4.0%
• Endocrine/metabolic	5.2%	• Cardiovascular	2.9%
• Respiratory	3.9%	• Musculoskeletal	1.6%
• Urogenital	1.3%	• Anemia	5.9%
• Psychiatric	9.7%	• Gynecological	6.1%
• Neurological	0.5%	• Other	1.9%

\* Based on responses to the question, "Has a physician diagnosed or treated you for any disorders or symptoms listed below?" Options provided were, "None in particular," "Endocrine and metabolic disorders (diabetes, cholesterolemia, thyroid problems, etc.)," "Respiratory disorders (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, etc.)," "Urogenital disorders (kidney disease, benign prostatic hyperplasia, etc.)," "Psychiatric disorders (depression or other mental disorders)," "Neurologic disorders (dementia, Parkinson's disease, etc.)," "Digestive disorders (diseases of the stomach, duodenum, liver, gall bladder, etc.)," "Cardiovascular disorders (hypertension, stroke, angina pectoris, myocardial infarction, etc.)," "Musculoskeletal disorders (gout, rheumatoid arthritis, arthropathy, osteoporosis, etc.)," "Anemia," "Gynecological diseases," and "Other."

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

#### 4.2. Gynecological diseases, examination-seeking behaviors, and coping actions

- **Compared to respondents with children,<sup>15</sup> respondents who are currently attempting to conceive their first child<sup>16</sup> tended to have higher rates of diagnosis or treatment history for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).**
  - ✓ When asked about their history of diagnosis or treatment for gynecological disorders, 73.7% of all women responded “None in particular.” This was followed by “premenstrual syndrome” (8.4%), “uterine fibroids” (7.7%), “menstrual symptoms” (4.9%), and “endometriosis” (4.7%) (Figure 8).
  - ✓ A higher proportion of respondents currently trying for their first child reported histories of diagnosis or treatment compared to those with children, particularly for “uterine fibroids” (10.7%), “endometriosis” (10.0%), and “PCOS” (5.0%) (Figure 9). Also, those trying for their first child had higher rates of treatment or diagnosis for endometriosis compared to the group with children to a statistically significant degree (Figure 10).<sup>17</sup>
  - ✓ When asked about menstrual symptoms, 36.4% of the respondents reported experiencing “Strong premenstrual symptoms” while 31.7% reported “Strong symptoms during menstruation” (Figure 11). These were the most common responses for both groups, but rates were particularly high among those trying for their first child (Figure 12).
  - ✓ When experiencing menstrual symptoms, the most popular coping action for menstrual pain was “painkillers” (56.0%), but for other symptoms, a high percentage of respondents said “I do not know how to cope” or “I put up with the symptoms” (Figure 13).

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<sup>15</sup> “Respondents with children” refers to people who have one or more children.

<sup>16</sup> “Respondents currently expecting their first child” refers to people without children who are currently attempting to conceive their first child.

<sup>17</sup> Results obtained from age-adjusted logistic regression analysis ( $p < 0.01$ )

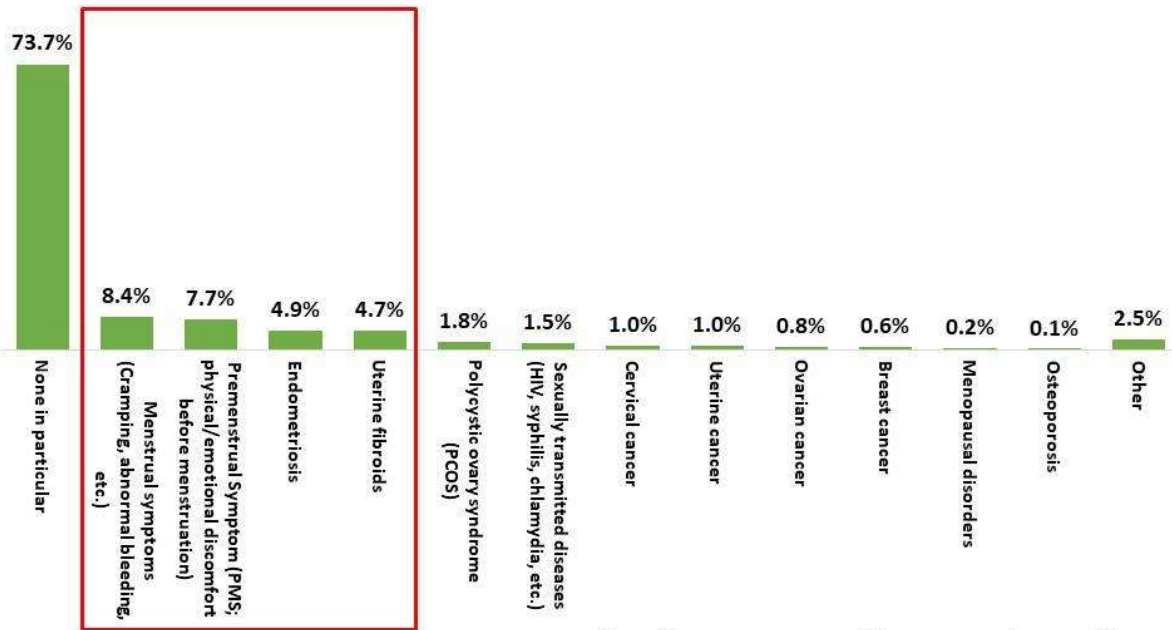
Women specific diseases

Figure 8

When asked about history of diagnosis or treatment for gynecological disorders, the most common response was “premenstrual syndrome” (8.4%), followed by “uterine fibroids” (7.7%), “menstrual symptoms” (4.9%).

(August 2021, n=4959)

Please tell us in detail about your experience with women specific health concerns. Among the following diseases and symptoms, for which have you been diagnosed with or treated for by a physician?



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

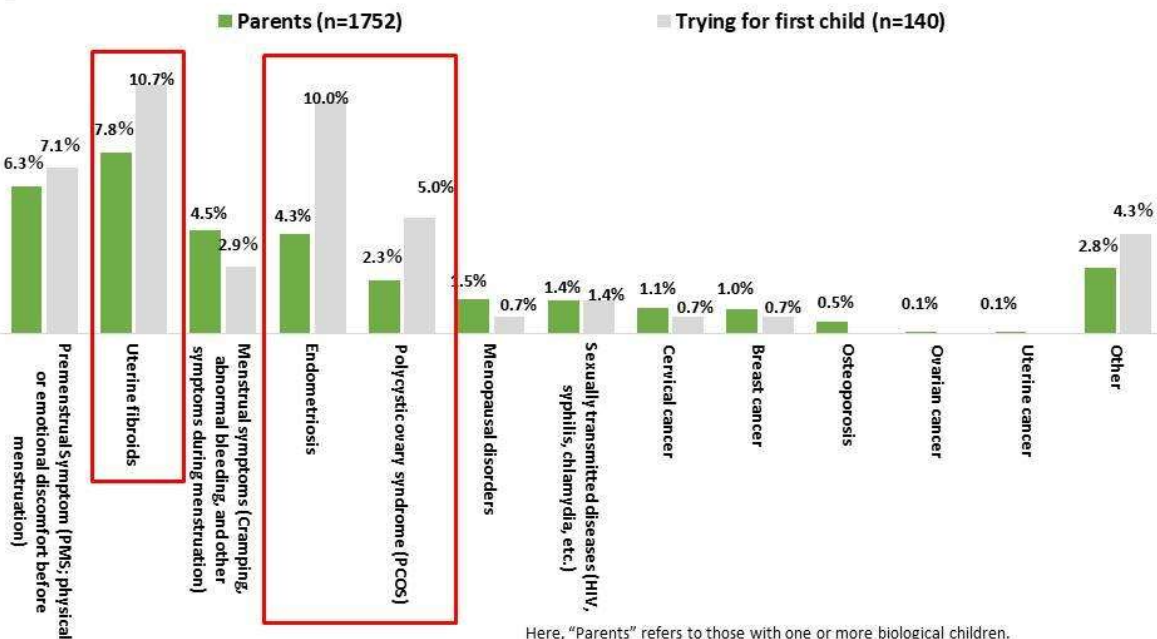
Women specific diseases

Figure 9

Among respondents currently attempting to conceive their first child, 10.7% have been diagnosed to treated for uterine fibroids and 10.0% for endometriosis.

(August 2021, n=4959)

Please tell us in detail about your experience with women specific health concerns. Among the following diseases and symptoms, for which have you been diagnosed with or treated for by a physician?



Here, “Parents” refers to those with one or more biological children.

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan (Preliminary Report)” (HGPI, 2021)

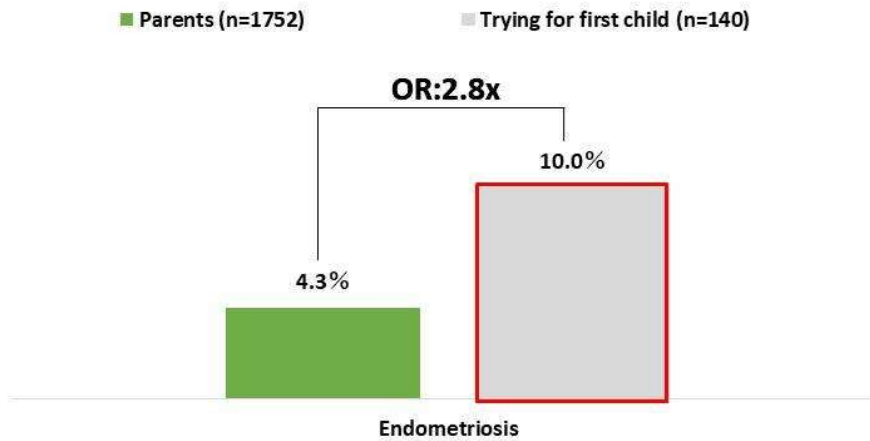
Women specific diseases

**Compared to parents, respondents currently trying to conceive their first child had higher rates of diagnosis and treatment for endometriosis.**

Figure 10

(August 2021, n=4959)

Please tell us in detail about your experience with women specific health concerns. Among the following diseases and symptoms, for which have you been diagnosed with or treated for by a physician?



Adjusted for current age, the group currently attempting to conceive their first child had a history of diagnosis or treatment for endometriosis 2.8 times more frequently than those with children. (Logistic regression analysis; [OR (95% CI): 2.78 (1.50-5.14)])

Here, "Parents" refers to those with one or more biological children.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan (Preliminary Report)" (HGPI, 2021)

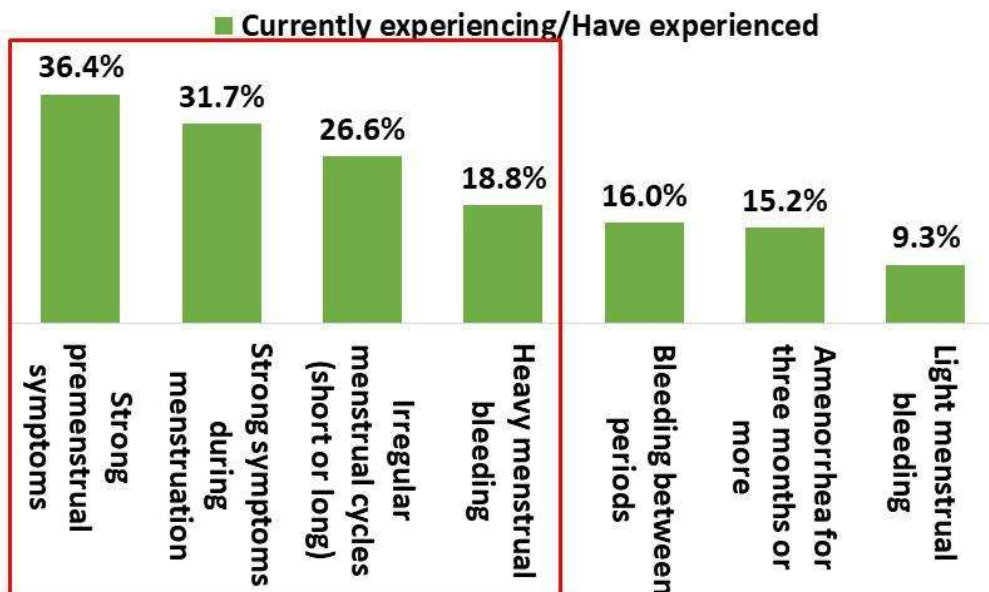
Menstrual symptoms

**Over one-third of respondents have experienced strong premenstrual or menstrual symptoms**

Figure 11

(August 2021, n=4959)

Please select the option that best applies to you for each of the following menstrual symptoms.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

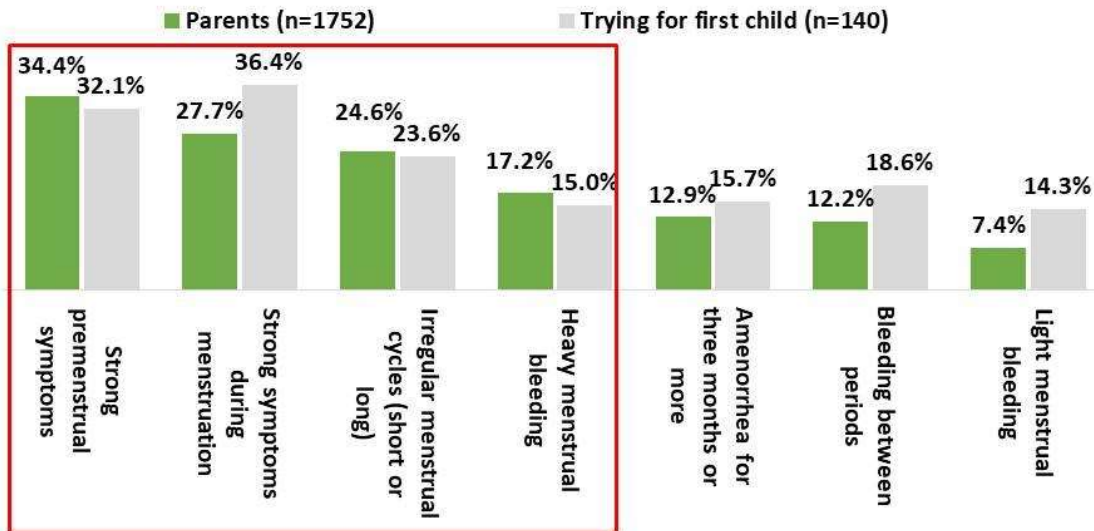
Menstrual symptoms

Figure 12

**Menstrual symptoms (by presence or absence of children)**

(August 2021, n=1892)

Please select the option that best applies to you for each of the following menstrual symptoms.



Proportions represent percentage of respondents who answered "I currently have these symptoms" or "I have had these symptoms in the past, but not now."

Here, "Parents" refers to those with one or more biological children.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

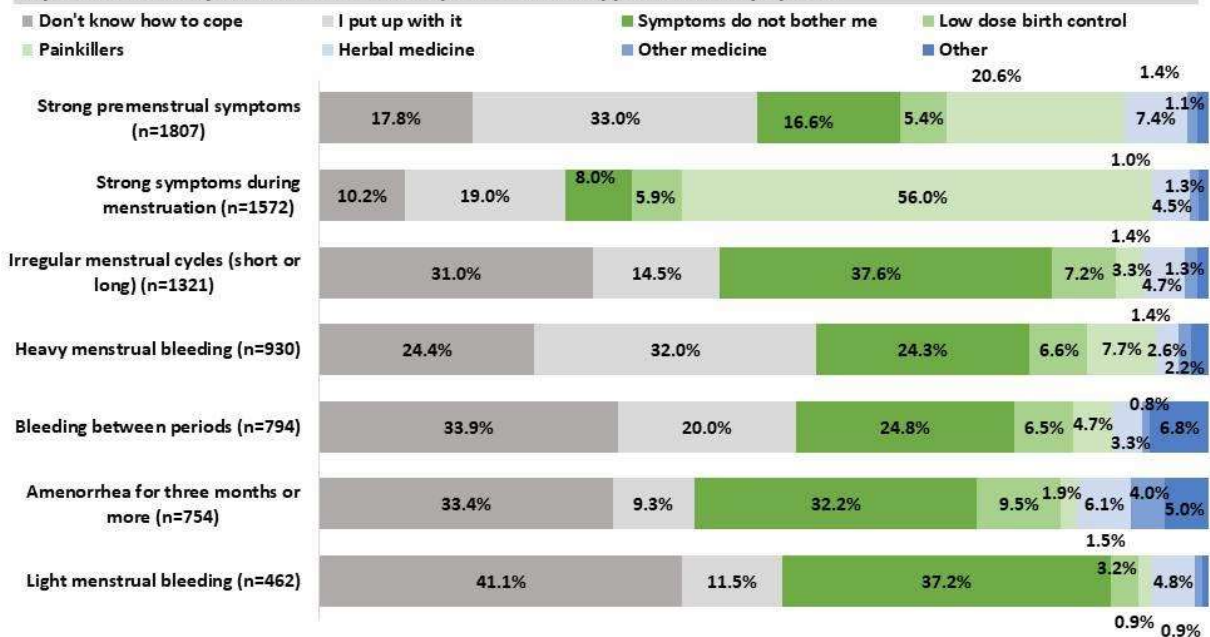
Health seeking behavior

Figure 13

The most common response for strong menstrual pain was "painkillers" (56.0%), but for other menstrual symptoms, 30% to 50% of respondents said "I do not know how to cope" or "I put up with them."

(August 2021, n=4959)

Please share how you cope with menstrual symptoms from the last question that you are experiencing now or have experienced in the past. Please select the option that best applies to each symptom.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)



- **Average age of first gynecological visit tended to be higher among those currently attempting to conceive their first child compared to those with children**
  - ✓ Almost one-third (32.0%) of all women said they have never visited a gynecologist (Figure 14).
  - ✓ Among those who had visited a gynecologist, the average age of first visit was 24.1 for all women, 21.1 for those ages 25 to 29, and 26.3 for respondents ages 45 to 49 (Figure 15).
  - ✓ Among respondents who had visited a gynecologist, the average age at first visit tended to be significantly higher among those attempting to conceive their first child compared to the group with children.<sup>18</sup> The average age of first visit was 23.2 years for those with children and 25.7 years for those currently trying for their first child (Figure 16).
  - ✓ When we asked women who had visited a gynecologist in the past how often they visited gynecologists, 47.8% of respondents said, “I only visit when I have concerning symptoms,” making it the most common response. Meanwhile, 18.7% said “I have no concerning symptoms, but I visit a gynecologist for regular checkups” (Figure 17).

Health seeking behavior

Figure 14

**Almost one-third (32.0%) of all women said they have never visited a gynecologist.**

(August 2021, n=4959)

**How old were you for your first gynecological examination? For people who have never received one, please select “I have never received one.”**



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

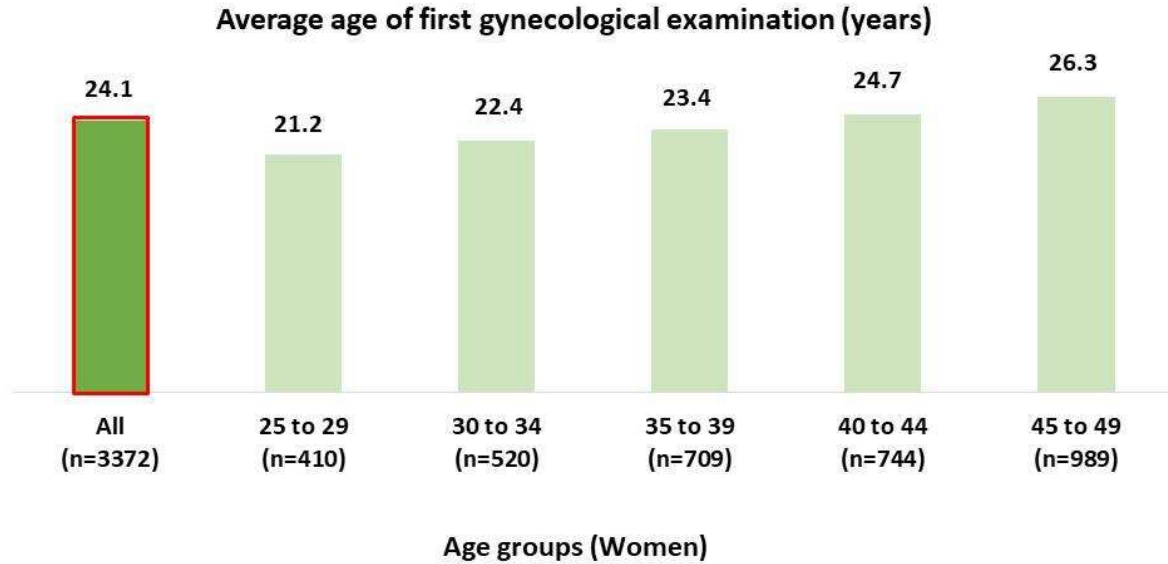
<sup>18</sup> Results from analysis of covariance ( $p < 0.01$ ). Current age and history of gynecological examinations were used as adjustment variables. This analysis excluded those whose pregnancy may have led to their first gynecological visit from the group with children.

Figure 15

**Average age of first gynecological examination for all women: 24.1 years**

(August 2021, n=3372)

How old were you for your first gynecological examination? For people who have never received one, please select "I have never received one."



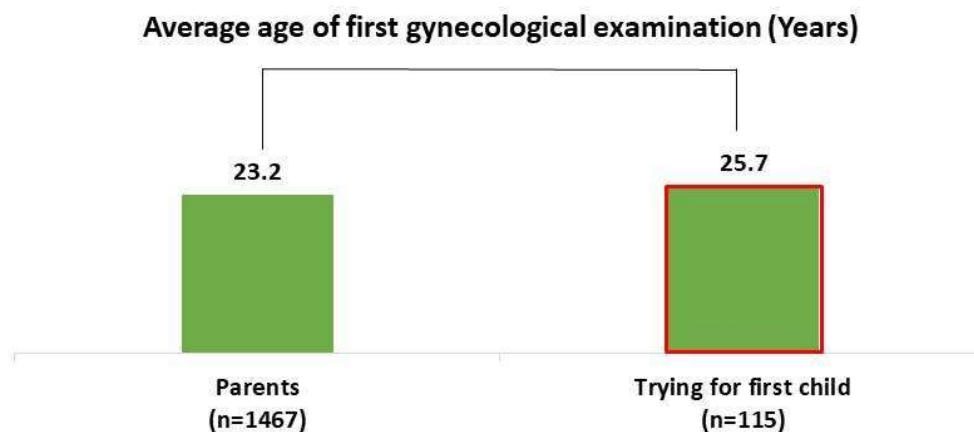
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan (Preliminary Report)" (HGPI, 2021)

Figure 16

**Average age at first visit was higher among those trying for their first child (25.7 years) compared to parents (23.2 years)**

(August 2021, n=1582)

How old were you for your first gynecological examination? For people who have never received one, please select "I have never received one."



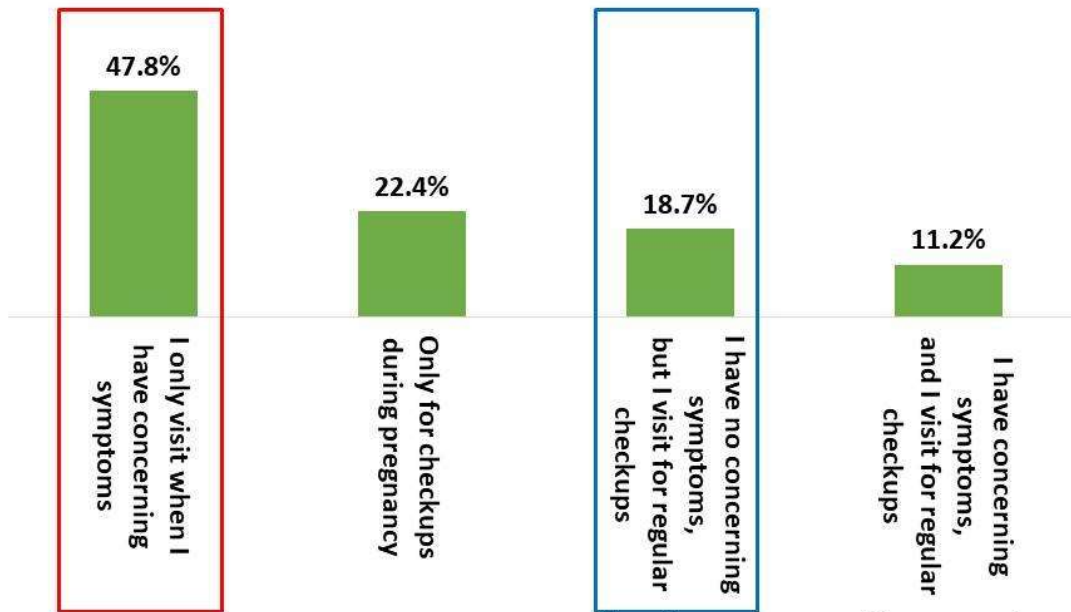
The average age of first gynecological visit tended to be significantly higher among those attempting to conceive their first child compared to parents (results from analysis of covariance). Current age and history of gynecological examinations were used as adjustment variables. Those whose pregnancy may have led to their first gynecological visit were excluded from the parent group.

Here, "Parents" refers to those with one or more biological children.  
 Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Regarding frequency of gynecological examinations, 47.8% of women only see a gynecologist when they have concerning symptoms while only 18.7% visit for regular checkups even without concerning symptoms.

(August 2021, n=3372)

How often do you see a gynecologist?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

- About 80% of women reported that they have never used low-dose birth control

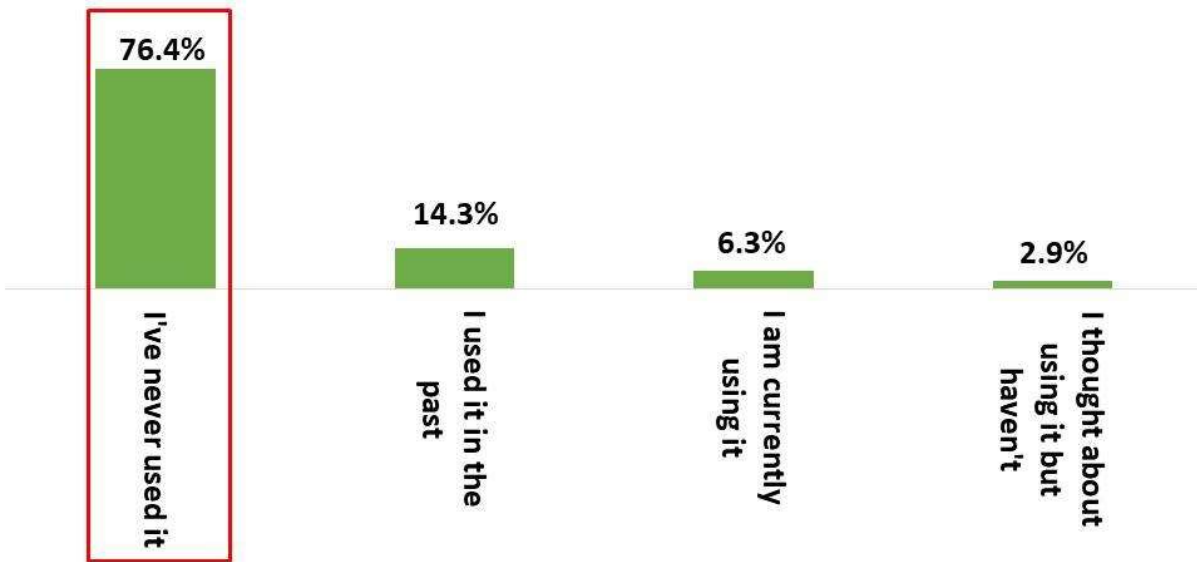
  - ✓ About 80% of women reported that they have never used low-dose birth control
  - ✓ When those who responded "I used it in the past" or "I am currently using it" were asked about their purpose of usage, 40.3% said "Dysmenorrhea treatment" and 38.9% said "Birth control" (Figure 19).

Figure 18

**76.4% of women said they have never used low dose birth control (the pill)**

(August 2021, n=4959)

Are you using or have you ever used low dose birth control (the pill)?

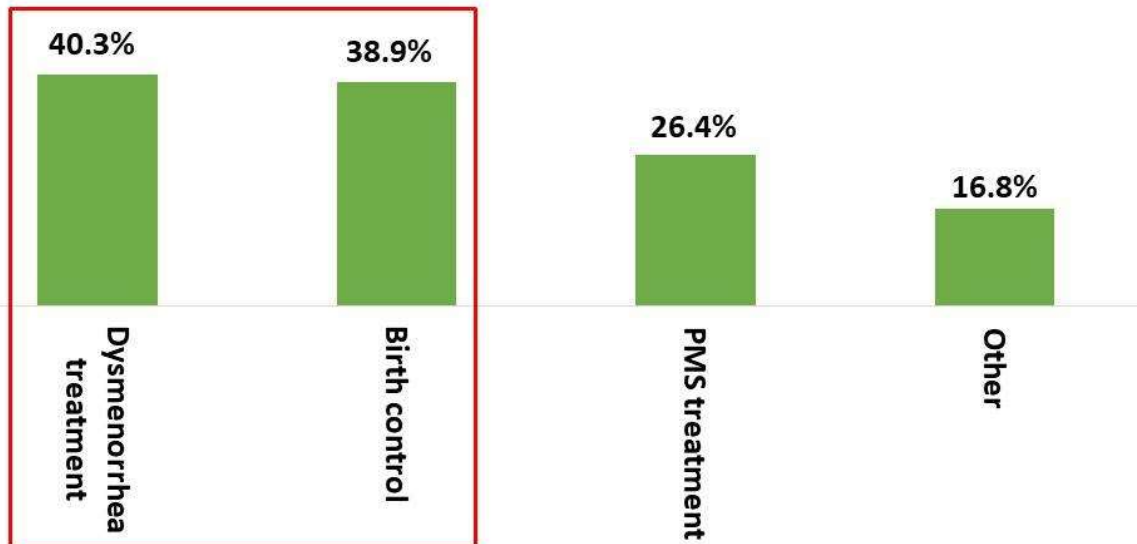


Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

**40.3% use the pill to treat dysmenorrhea, while 38.9% use it for birth control**

(August 2021, n=1022)

For those who selected, "I used it in the past" or "I am currently using it," please share the reason you use the pill.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

**Interpretations**

- ✓ The survey showed that compared to respondents with children, a higher percentage of respondents currently trying for their first child had a history of treatment or diagnosis for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, or PCOS. However, the only item with a statistically significant difference was endometriosis. It has been pointed out that diseases like endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and PCOS can be factors for infertility, and this survey obtained a similar result.<sup>19</sup>
- ✓ In addition, almost one-third of women said they have never visited a gynecologist, and even among those who have, fewer than 20% make regular visits. Furthermore, average age at first gynecological visit was significantly higher among respondents currently trying for their first child than those with children, indicating there may be a relationship between conceiving and visiting gynecologists early. This suggests undergoing regular gynecological examinations from a young age may be important.
- ✓ On the topic of menstrual symptoms, almost 60% of respondents said they take painkillers for menstrual pain, but many said they do not know how to cope with other symptoms, or that they have had symptoms but tolerated them. On the other hand, nearly 80% of women said they have never used low-dose birth control, suggesting they may need information on appropriate coping methods and broader treatment options other than painkillers.

<sup>19</sup> Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "Infertility." [https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content\\_id=15](https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content_id=15) Last retrieved December 20, 2021.

### 4.3. Health literacy

- **Over half of respondents said they do not know about menstruation, gynecological diseases, or other topics related to women’s health**
  - ✓ When asked if they knew that organic diseases like endometriosis and uterine fibroids carry the risk of infertility, 56.5% of all respondents (women, 46.7%; men, 66.1%) did not (Figures 20 and 21).
  - ✓ Among all respondents, 57.7% did not know amenorrhea can lead to infertility if left untreated (women, 47.2%; men, 68.0%) (Figures 22 and 23).
  - ✓ Among all respondents, 57.5% did not know symptoms experienced before and during menstruation can be treated (women, 48.9%; men, 65.9%) (Figures 24 and 25).

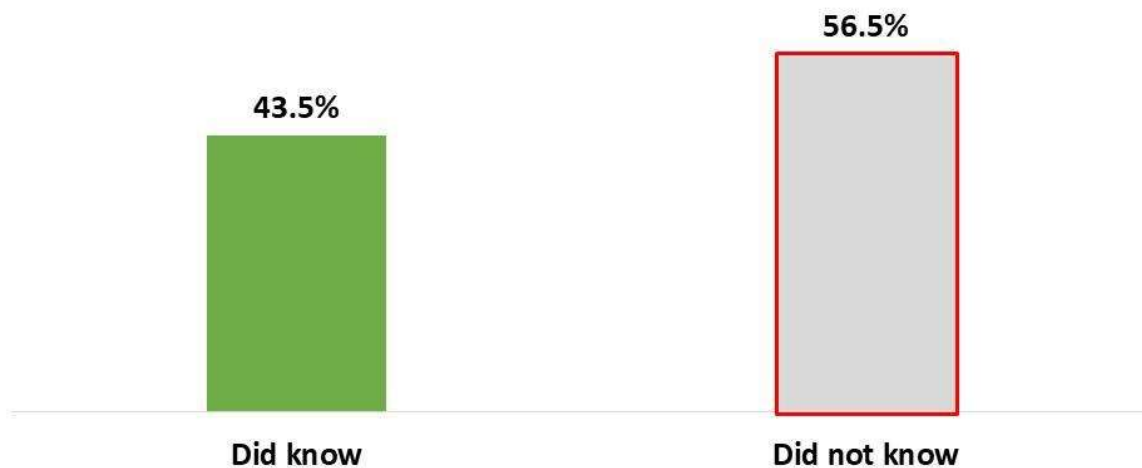
Health literacy

Figure 20

**Among all respondents, 56.5% said they did not know that organic disease like endometriosis and uterine fibroids can increase the risk of infertility.**

(August 2021, n=10000)

**Menstrual disorders (such as severe lower abdominal pain during menstruation or heavy menstrual bleeding) are sometimes caused by organic diseases like endometriosis or uterine fibroids. Did you know that organic diseases like endometriosis or uterine fibroids can increase the risk of infertility?**



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

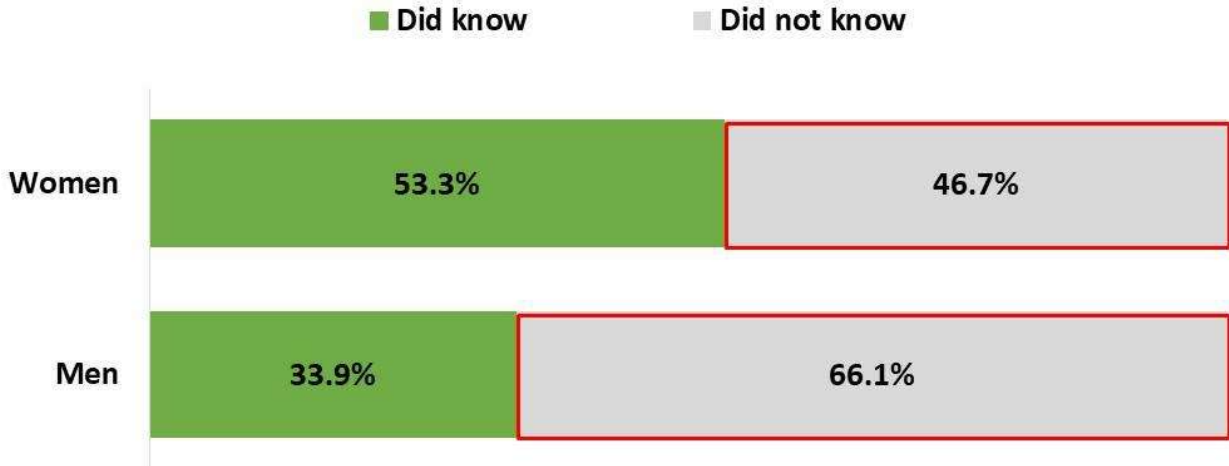
Health literacy

**46.7% of women and 66.1% of men said they did not know that organic diseases like endometriosis and uterine fibroids can increase the risk of infertility.**

Figure 21

(August 2021, n=10000)

Menstrual disorders (such as severe lower abdominal pain during menstruation or heavy menstrual bleeding) are sometimes caused by organic diseases like endometriosis or uterine fibroids. Did you know that organic diseases like endometriosis or uterine fibroids can increase the risk of infertility?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

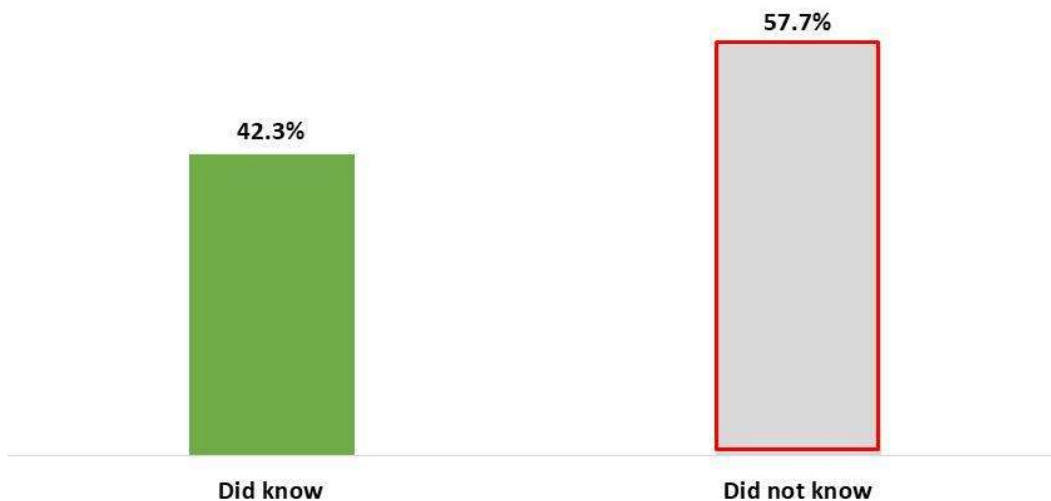
Health literacy

**Of all respondents, 57.7% reported not knowing that amenorrhea can cause infertility if left untreated.**

Figure 22

(August 2021, n=10000)

Did you know that amenorrhea can cause infertility if left untreated?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

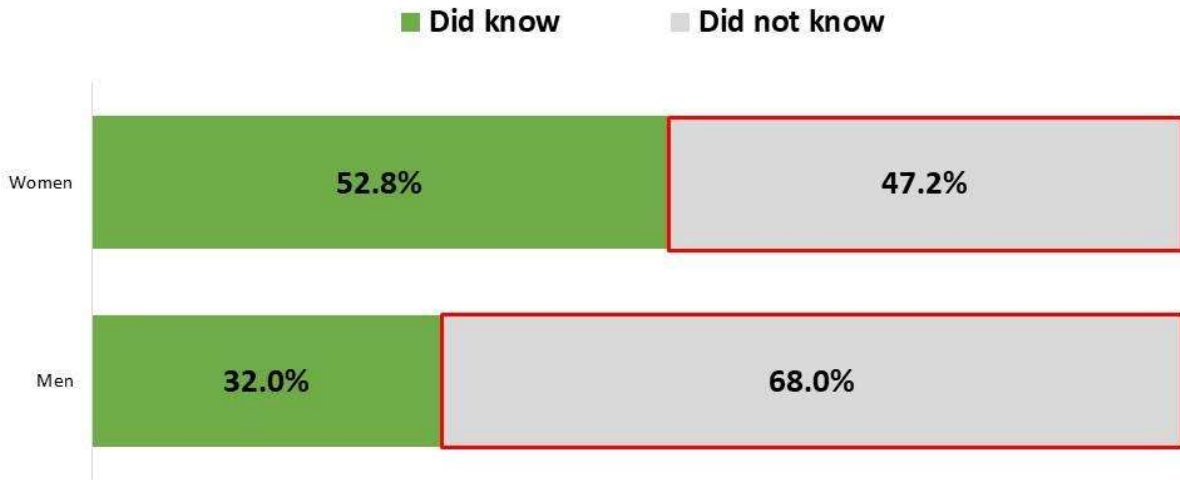
Health literacy

**47.2% of women and 68.0% of men said they did not know that amenorrhea can cause infertility if left untreated.**

Figure 23

(August 2021, n=10000)

**Did you know that amenorrhea can cause infertility if left untreated?**



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Health literacy

**Among all respondents, 57.5% did not know it is possible to treat premenstrual and menstrual symptoms.**

Figure 24

(August 2021, n=10000)

**Did you know it is possible to treat premenstrual symptoms (irritation, fatigue, sleepiness, tightness or pain in the chest, swelling, headache, etc.) and menstrual symptoms (pain in the lower abdominal pain, lower back pain, nausea, headache, etc.)?**



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)



Health literacy

**Among women, 48.9% did not know it is possible to treat premenstrual and menstrual symptoms. Among men, 65.9% did not know.**

Figure 25

(August 2021, n=10000)

Did you know it is possible to treat premenstrual symptoms (irritation, fatigue, sleepiness, tightness or pain in the chest, swelling, headache, etc.) and menstrual symptoms (pain in the lower abdominal pain, lower back pain, nausea, headache, etc.)?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

- **Almost one-third (32%) of all respondents said “Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age 40. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult.” Approximately 43% of all respondents said “Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult.”**
  - ✓ Almost one-third (32%) of all respondents (women, 27.5%; men, 36.8%) said, “Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age 40. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult” (Figures 26 and 27).
  - ✓ “Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult” was selected by 43.1% of all respondents, (women, 44.8%; men, 41.4%) (Figures 28 and 29).

Health literacy

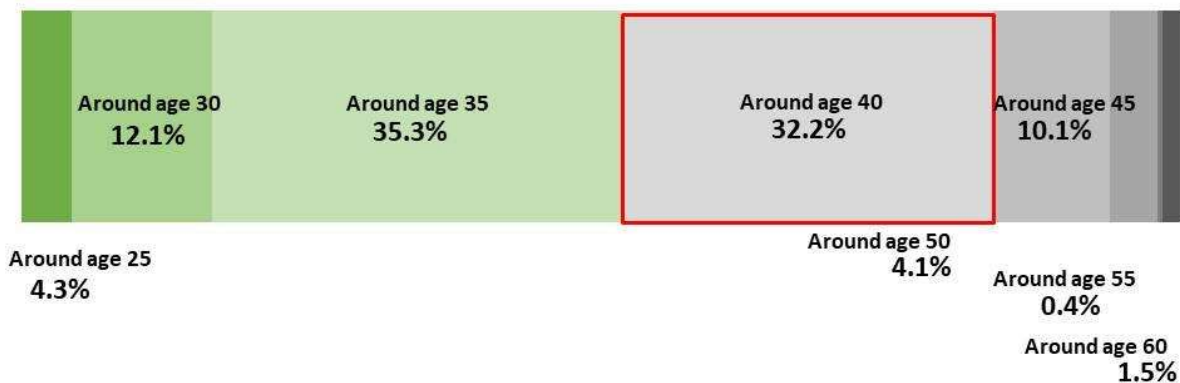
Figure 26

**Almost one-third (32.3%) said, “Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age 40. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult.”**

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the number that best fits the blank: Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age \_\_. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult.

■ 25   ■ 30   ■ 35   ■ 40   ■ 45   ■ 50   ■ 55   ■ 60



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

Health literacy

By sex, 27.5% of women and 36.8% of men thought women can conceive through natural sexual intercourse until around age 40, but it becomes extremely difficult after that.

Figure 27

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the number that best fits the blank: Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age \_\_. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

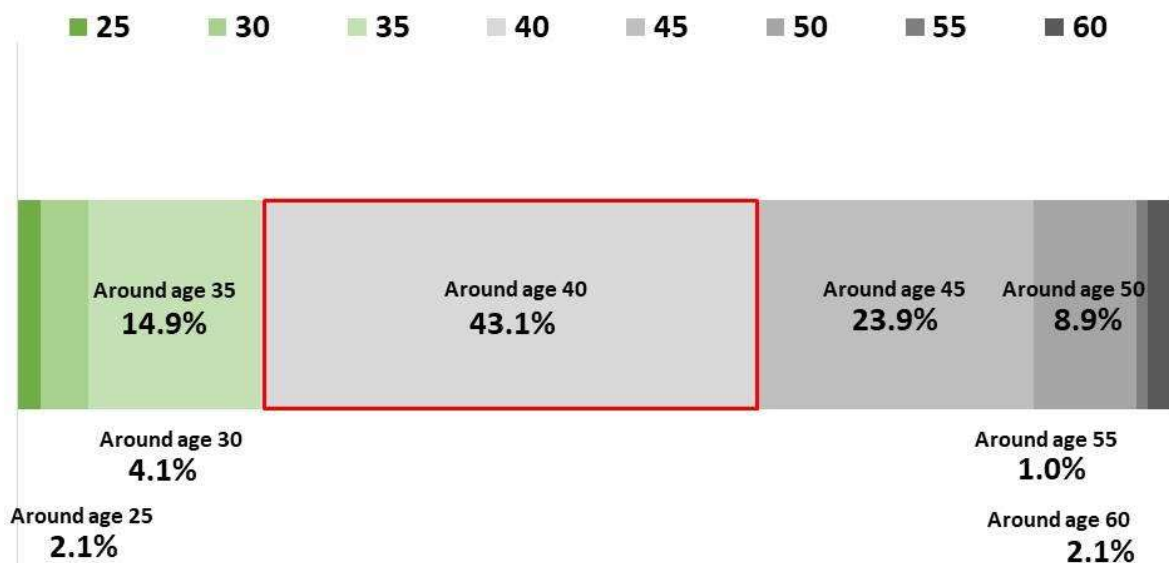
Health literacy

Among all respondents, 43.1% replied, "Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult."

Figure 28

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the number that best fits the blank: Women can still conceive at around age \_\_ by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Health literacy

Figure 29

By sex, 44.8% of women and 41.4% of men responded, “Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult.”

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the number that best fits the blank: Women can still conceive at around age \_\_ by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult.



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

- **Almost 90% of respondents said causes of infertility are more or less shared equally among men and women.**
  - ✓ When asked about reasons for infertility, 86.5% of all respondents (89.0% of women and 84.1% of men) said half are due to the male and half are due to the female (Figure 30 and Figure 31).

Health literacy

**Regarding reasons for infertility, 86.5% of respondents said causes are more or less shared equally among men and women.**

Figure 30

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the option that most closely fits your opinion regarding causes of infertility.

- It is mostly due to women
- It is mostly due to men
- The reasons are mostly shared equally among men and women



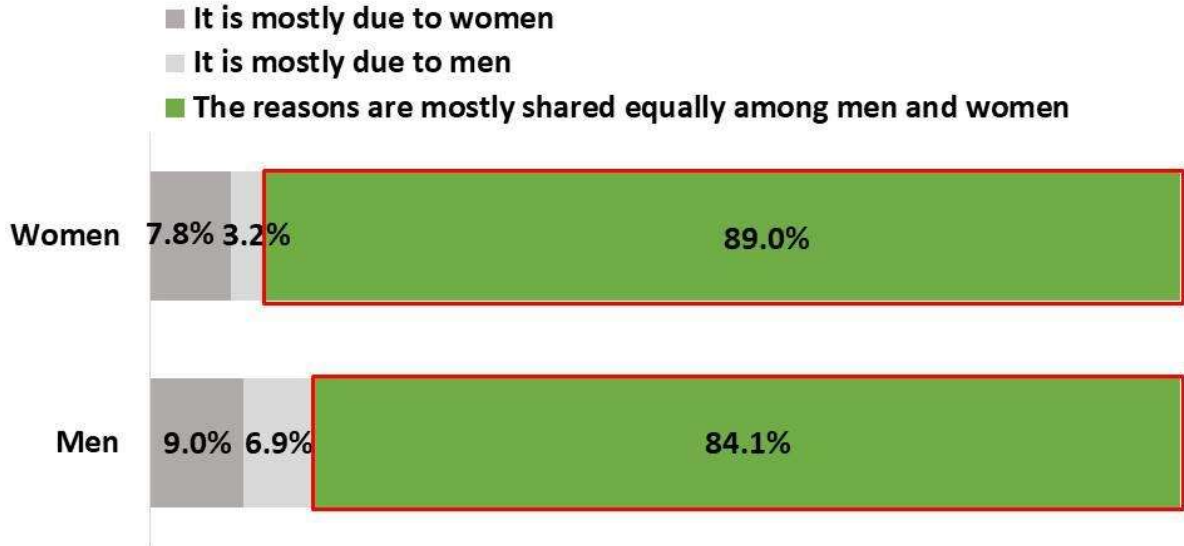
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

**Regarding reasons for infertility, 89.0% of women and 84.1% of men thought causes are more or less shared equally among men and women.**

Figure 31

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the option that most closely fits your opinion regarding causes of infertility.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

- **Approximately 70% of the respondents reported they have no knowledge about women's health or reproductive health and rights**
  - ✓ When asked about knowledge related to women’s health and reproductive health and rights, 70.5% of all respondents (61.9% of women and 79.0% of men) reported having none (Figures 32 and 33).

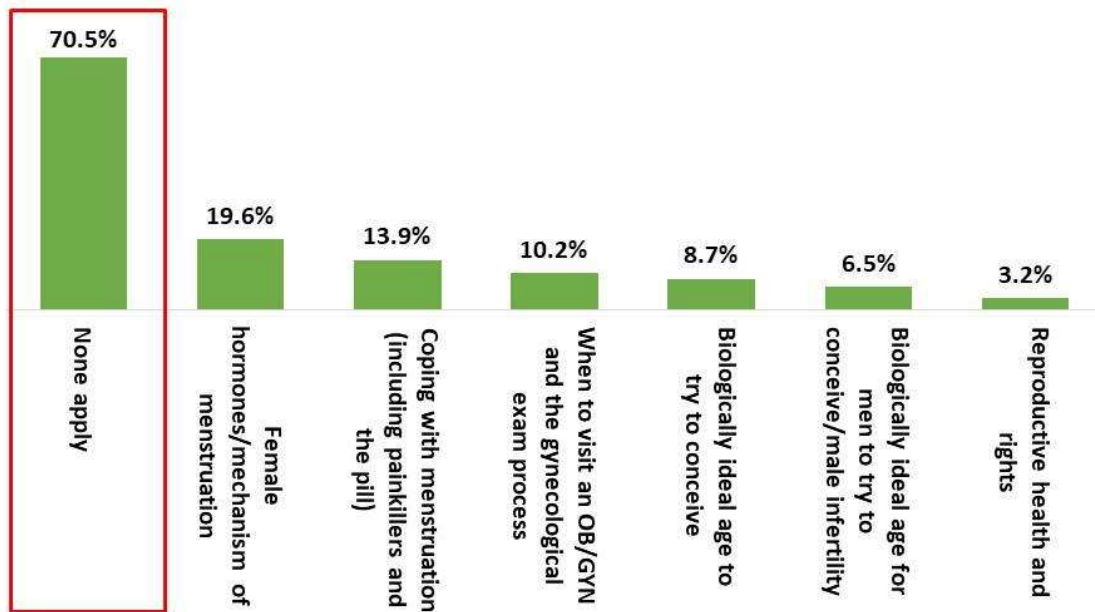
Health literacy

**When asked about their knowledge regarding women’s health or reproductive health and rights, 70.5% of respondents said they had none.**

Figure 32

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select each of the following topics on which you think you have detailed knowledge.



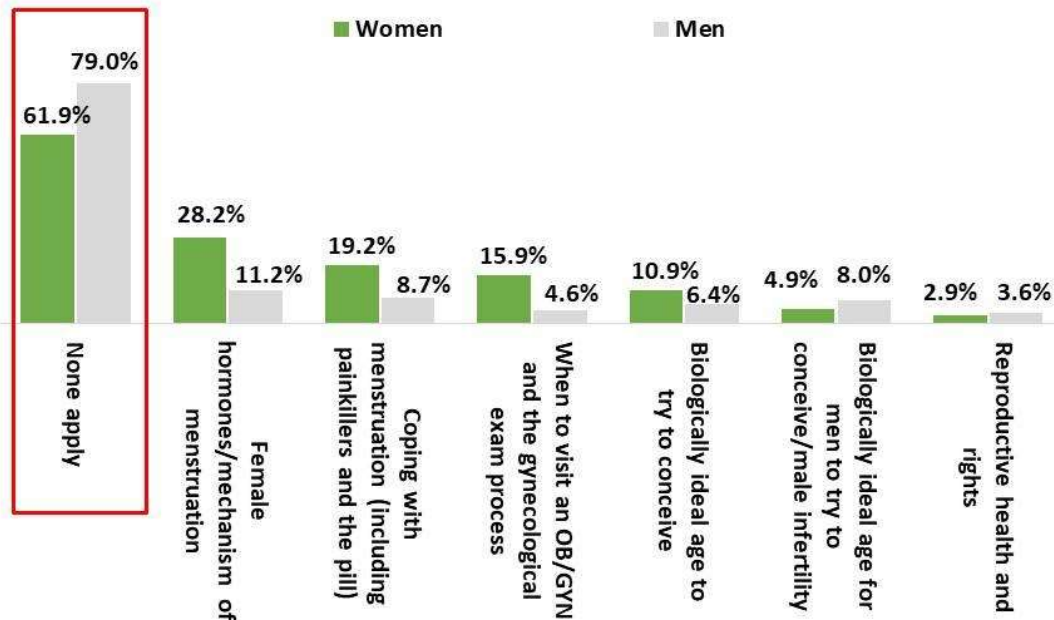
Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

**When asked about their knowledge regarding women’s health or reproductive health and rights, 61.9% of women and 79.0% of men said they had none.**

Figure 33

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select each of the following topics on which you think you have detailed knowledge.



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

- Most respondents said they do not remember where they learned about topics like women’s health or reproductive health and rights. Many of those that did said they learned at school or through internet searches.
  - ✓ When asked about where they learned about women’s health and reproductive health and rights, the largest group of respondents said “I don’t remember” (33.7%), followed by those who learned in an elementary or middle school class (15.5%), at university, junior college, vocational school, or other institute of higher education (14.6%), or a high school class (12.7%) (Figure 34).
  - ✓ When asked where they obtained knowledge regarding female hormones and the menstrual cycle, the most common response was “Elementary or middle school class” (39.1%) followed by “Internet search” (14.3%) (Figure 35).
  - ✓ We asked respondents where they learned about methods of coping with menstruation (including painkillers and low-dose birth control), the biologically ideal age to try to conceive for both men and women, and male infertility. The most frequently-selected response was “I don’t remember” followed by “Internet search” (Figures 36, 38, and 39).
  - ✓ When asked where they learned about when to visit an OB/GYN and the gynecological examination process, the most frequently-selected responses were “I don’t remember” (31.6%) and “A healthcare professional” (17.5%) (Figure 37).



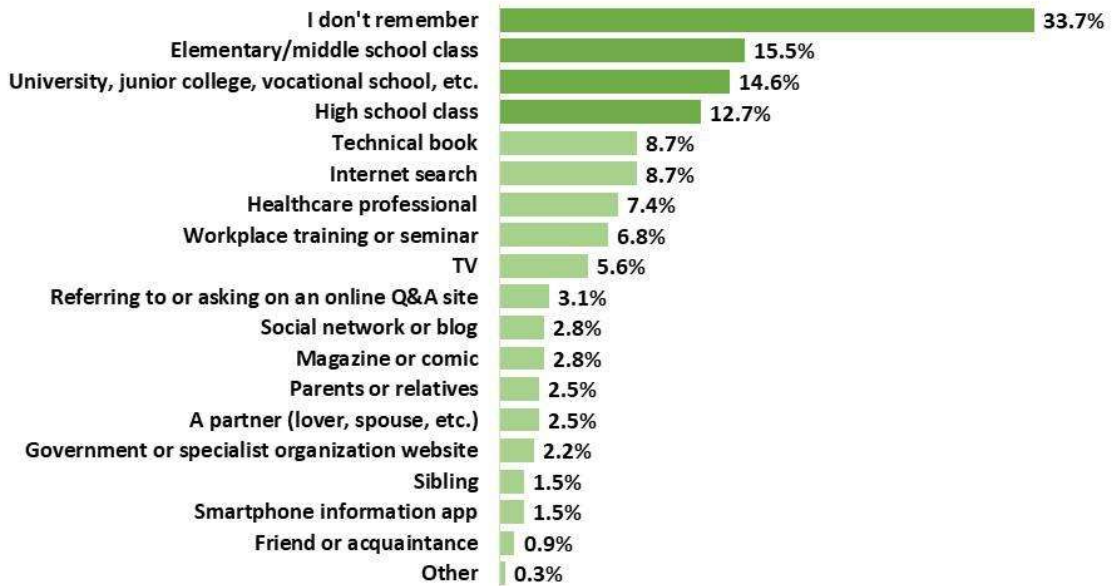
Health literacy

**When asked if they knew about reproductive health and rights, many said they knew something but did not remember where they learned it, or that they learned about it in school**

Figure 34

(August 2021, n=323)

**Where did you learn about reproductive health and rights?**



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

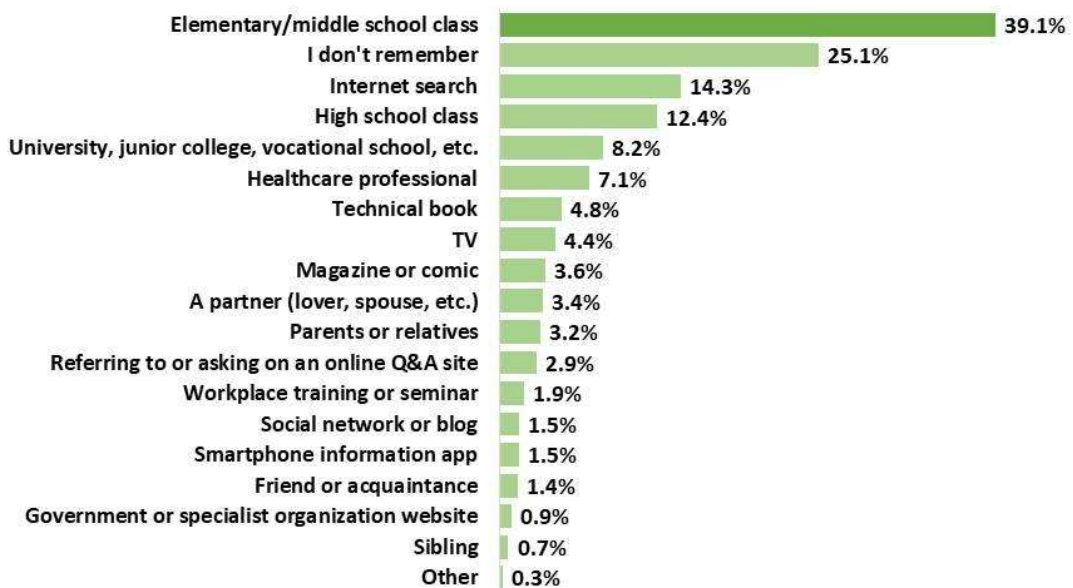
Health literacy

**The most respondents learned about female hormones and the mechanisms of menstruation in classes at elementary or middle school**

Figure 35

(August 2021, n=1962)

**Where did you learn about female hormones and the mechanisms of menstruation?**



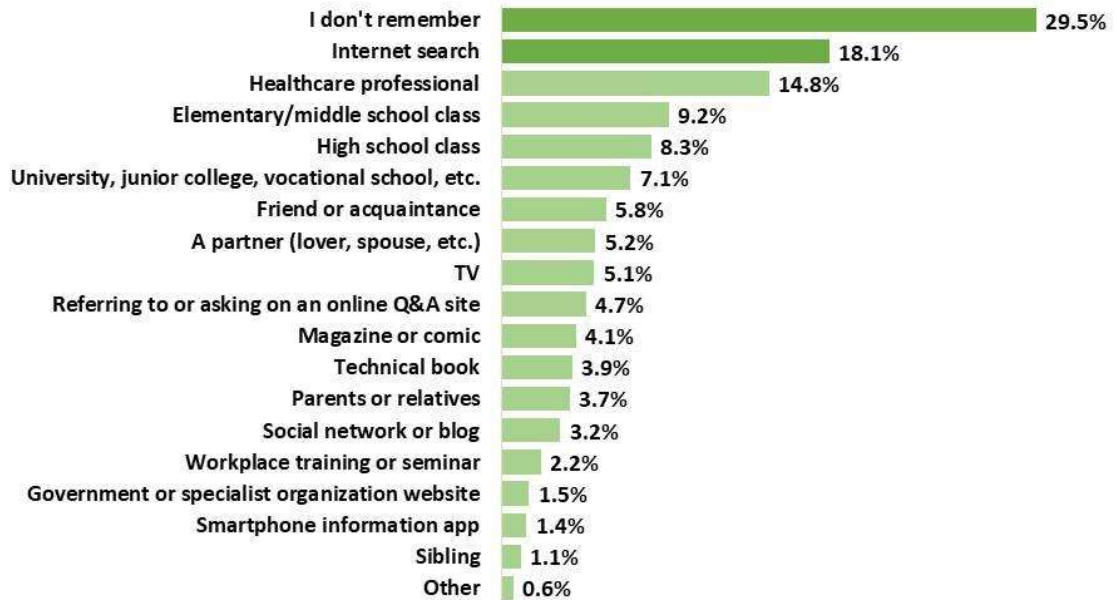
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Health literacy

**Many learned about methods of coping with menstruation (including painkillers and the pill) through internet searches or from sources they do not remember**

Figure 36

(August 2021, n=1391)

**Where did you learn about methods of coping with menstruation (including painkillers and the pill)?**


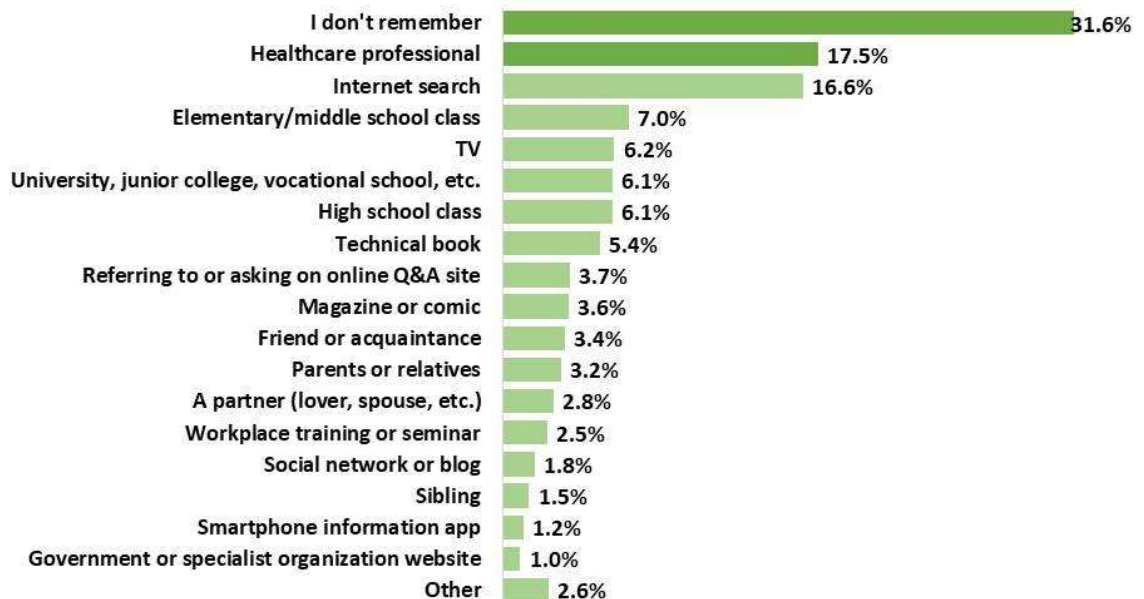
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Health literacy

**Many learned about when to visit an OB/GYN and the gynecological examination process from healthcare professionals or did not remember**

Figure 37

(August 2021, n=1019)

**Where did you learn about when to visit an OB/GYN and the gynecological examination process?**


Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

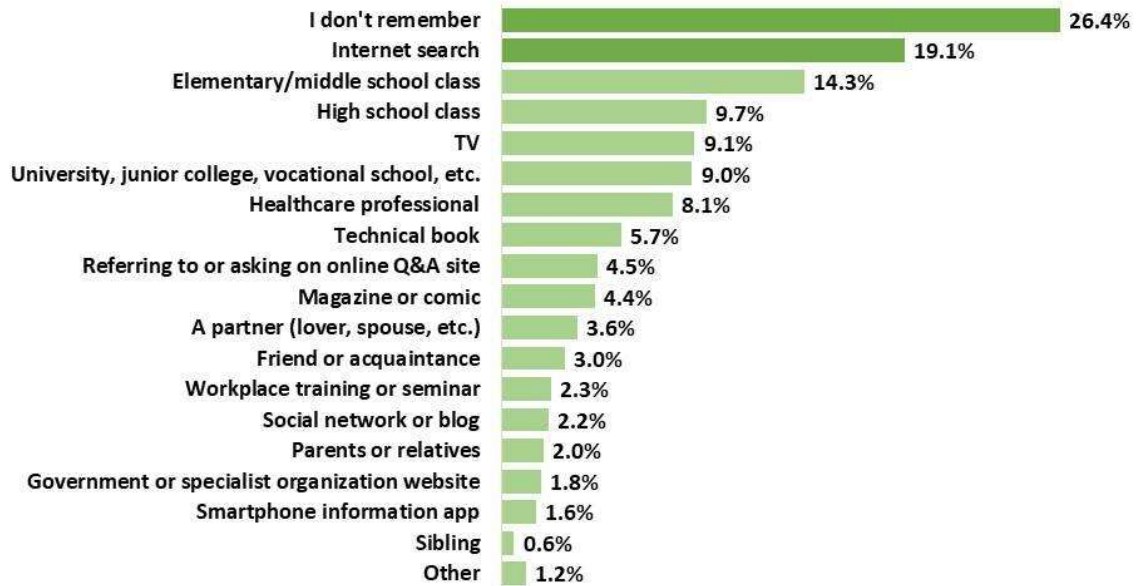
Health literacy

Figure 38

Many people said they do not remember where they learned about the biologically ideal time for women to conceive, or that they learned it from searching the internet

(August 2021, n=866)

Where did you learn about the biologically ideal age for women to get pregnant?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

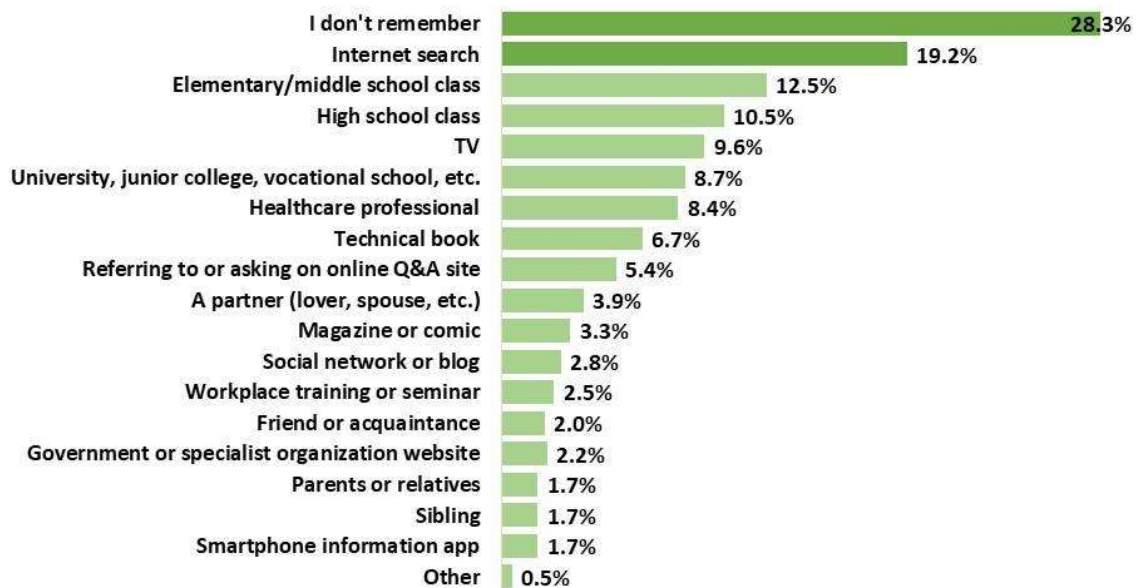
Health literacy

Figure 39

Many did not remember where they learned about the biologically ideal age for men to try to conceive or about male infertility, or they learned about these topics from searching the internet

(August 2021, n=646)

Where did you learn about the biologically ideal age for men to conceive, or about male infertility?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

## Interpretations

- ✓ Approximately half of women and 60% to 70% of men reported that they did not know that symptoms experienced before and during menstruation are treatable or that organic diseases like endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and amenorrhea can result in infertility. Said symptoms and diseases can influence how people shape their life plans, even for those who currently do not want to have children, so it is desirable that they obtain accurate knowledge.
- ✓ Almost one-third (32%) of survey respondents said, “Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age 40. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult.” Furthermore, about 43% of all respondents said “Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult.” These results highlight the possibility of insufficient recognition toward the fact that fertility declines with age for both men and women, which is supported by clear scientific evidence.<sup>20</sup>
- ✓ In addition, approximately 70% of respondents said they do not possess specific knowledge regarding women’s health and reproductive health and rights. In particular, fewer than 10% of respondents said they knew about reproductive health and rights, the biologically ideal age for pregnancy, and male infertility, demonstrating that reproductive health knowledge on topics like women’s health and pregnancy is lacking. Many respondents also named internet searches as a key resource for learning about fertility or male infertility.
- ✓ Reproductive health and rights are fundamental rights for all individuals and couples. It is important to continue exploring ways to disseminate information so everyone can obtain basic knowledge on reproductive health and rights that is based on scientific evidence, regardless of the health literacy of the people receiving that information, thus enabling them to lead lives in which they enjoy full reproductive health and rights.

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<sup>20</sup> Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. “Infertility.” [https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content\\_id=15](https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content_id=15) Last retrieved March 1, 2022.

#### 4.4. Socioeconomic activities

- **Marital status and presence of children tended to vary according to income and employment status for men in all age groups**

  - ✓ There was a significant difference<sup>21</sup> in selection rates for “No income” or “Under 5 million yen” among married men (49.4%) and unmarried men (with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) (82.5%) (Figure 40).
  - ✓ For those who selected “No income” or “Under 5 million yen” when asked about annual personal income, there was a significant difference<sup>22</sup> among respondents with children (37.4%) and respondents without children (63.9%) (Figure 41).
  - ✓ Regarding current employment status, there was a significant difference<sup>23</sup> in selection rates for “Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)” among married men (93.2%) and unmarried men (with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) (70.5%) (Figure 42).
  - ✓ Regarding selection rates for “Permanent employee (full-time or part-time),” there was also a significant difference<sup>24</sup> among men with children (95.7%) and men without children (76.8%) (Figure 43).
  - ✓ There was also a significant difference<sup>25</sup> among married women (87.7%) who selected “No income” or “Under 5 million yen” and unmarried women (with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) (91.0%) (Figure 44). Among women who selected “No income” or “Under 5 million yen,” 87.5% had children and 89.8% did not (Figure 45). Furthermore, 47.7% of married women and 58.5% of unmarried women (with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) reported “Permanent employee (full time or part time)” as their current employment status (Figure 46). On the other hand, there was a significant difference<sup>26</sup> among women who reported current employment status of “Permanent employee (full time or part time)” among those with children (43.5%) and those without (56.6%) (Figure 47).

<sup>21</sup> After adjusting for current age, the ratio of unmarried men (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) who reported no income or a total personal income under than 5 million yen was 1.3 greater than the married men (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.27 (1.21-1.35)]).

<sup>22</sup> After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, the ratio of men without children to possess a total personal income of under than 5 million yen or have no income was 1.3 times greater than the men with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.30 (1.19-1.43)]).

<sup>23</sup> After adjusting for current age, presence of children, and annual income, 0.8 times as many unmarried men (men with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) selected “Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)” as their employment status compared to the married men (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.79 (0.76-0.82)]).

<sup>24</sup> After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, men without children selected “Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)” as their employment status at 0.97 times the rate as men with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.97 (0.94-0.99)]).

<sup>25</sup> After adjusting for current age as an adjustment variable, 1.03 times more unmarried women (women with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) had “No income” or “Under 5 million yen” as their annual personal income compared to married women (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.03 (1.00-1.06)]).

<sup>26</sup> After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, women without children had “Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)” as their employment status at 1.14 times the rate as to women with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.14 (1.03-1.26)]).

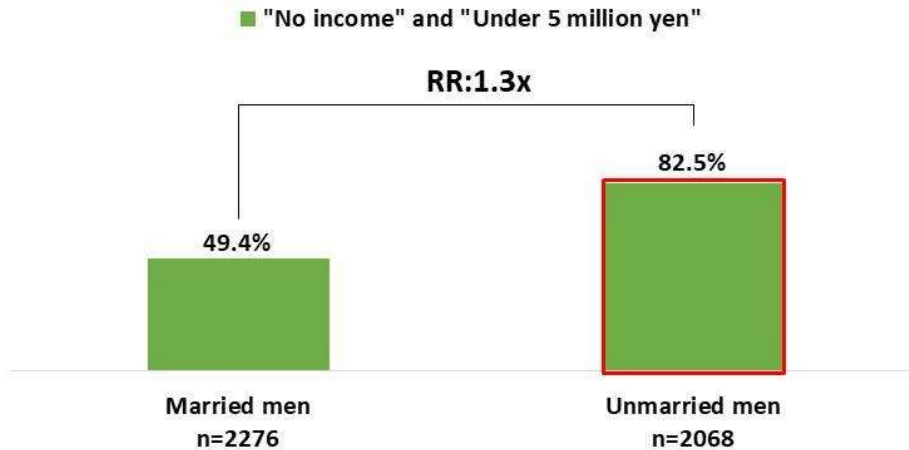
Socioeconomic activities

**Compared to married men, unmarried men were more likely to have incomes of under 5 million yen**

Figure 40

(August 2021, n=4344)

Please select your annual personal income.



After adjusting for current age, the ratio of unmarried men (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) who reported no income or a total personal income under 5 million yen was 1.3 times greater than the married men (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.27 (1.21-1.35)]).

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

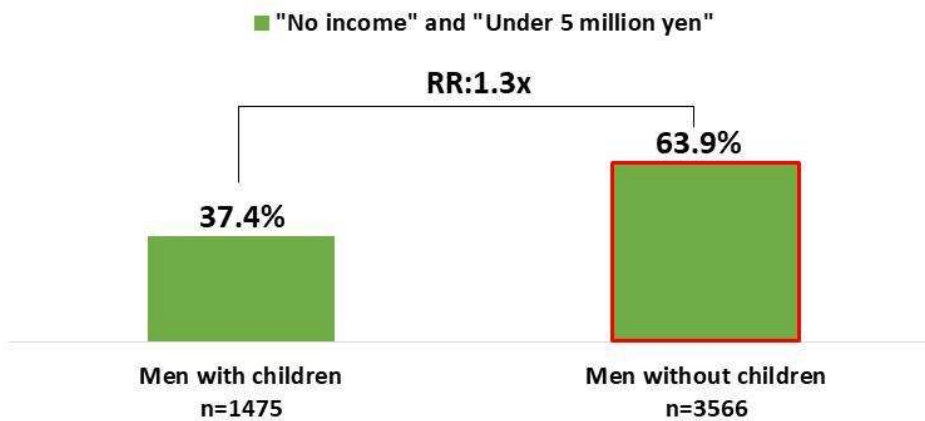
Socioeconomic activities

**Compared to men with children, men without children were more likely to have incomes of under 5 million yen**

Figure 41

(August 2021, n=5041)

Please select your annual personal income.



After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, the ratio of men without children who reported no income or a total person income under 5 million yen was 1.3 times greater than the men with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.30 (1.19-1.43)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

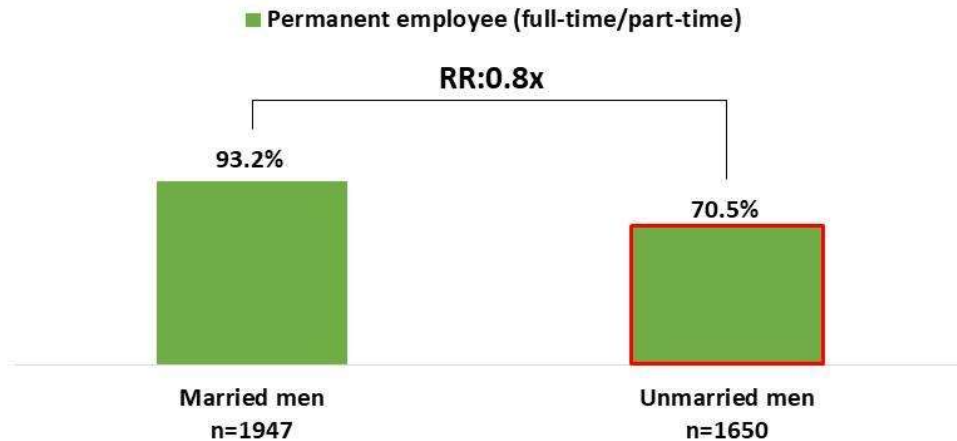
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Figure 42

### Unmarried men were less likely to be permanent employees than married men

(August 2021, n=3597)

Please select your current employment status.



After adjusting for current age, presence of children, and annual income, compared to the married men, 0.8 times as many unmarried men (men with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) selected "Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)" for their employment status (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.79 (0.76-0.82)]).

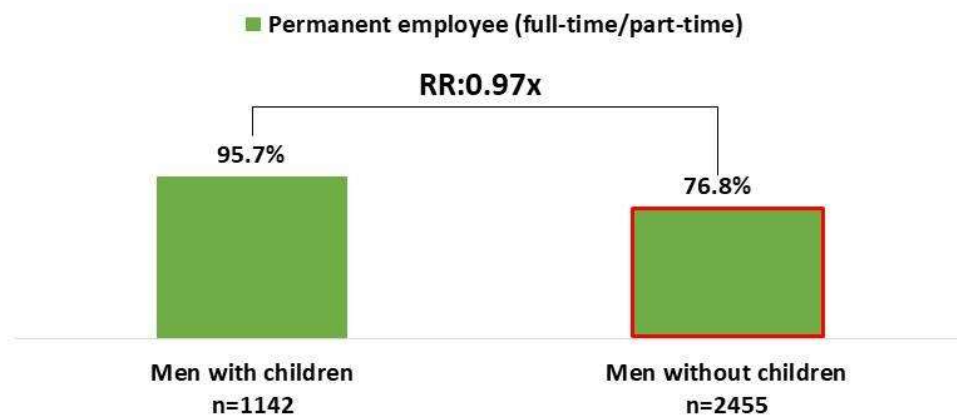
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Figure 43

### Compared to men with children, men with children tended to be less likely to have permanent employment

(August 2021, n=5041)

Please select your current employment status.



After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, the men without children selected "Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)" as their employment status at 0.97 times the rate of the men with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.97 (0.94-0.99)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
 Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

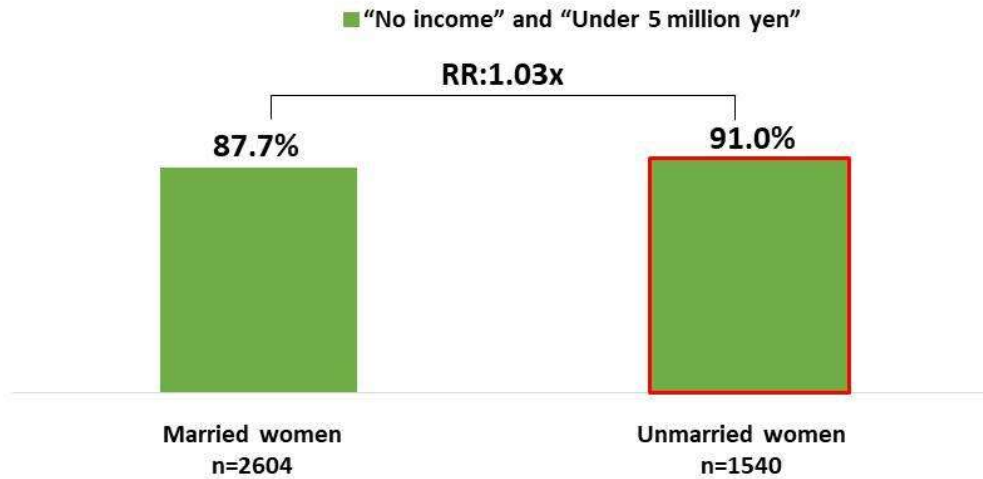
Socioeconomic activities

**Compared to married women, a higher percentage of unmarried women had earned less than 5 million yen annually**

Figure 44

(August 2021, n=4144)

Please select your annual income.



After adjusting for current age, unmarried women (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) selected personal incomes of "No income" or "Under 5 million yen" 1.03 times more frequently than married women (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.03 (1.00-1.06)]).

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

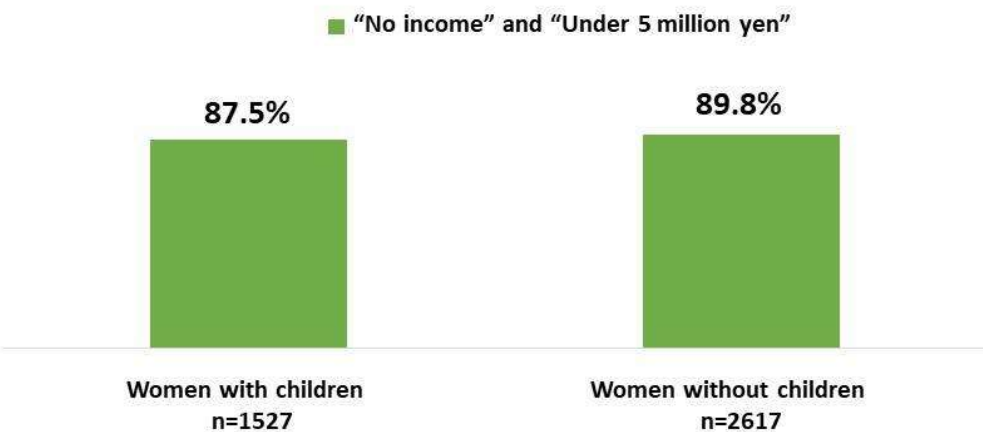
Socioeconomic activities

**Almost 90% of all women had incomes under 5 million yen, whether they had children or not**

Figure 45

(August 2021, n=4144)

Please select your annual income.



After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, there was no difference observed in the rates at which women with children and women without children selected personal incomes of "No income" or "Under 5 million yen" (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.00 (0.97-1.03)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
 Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)



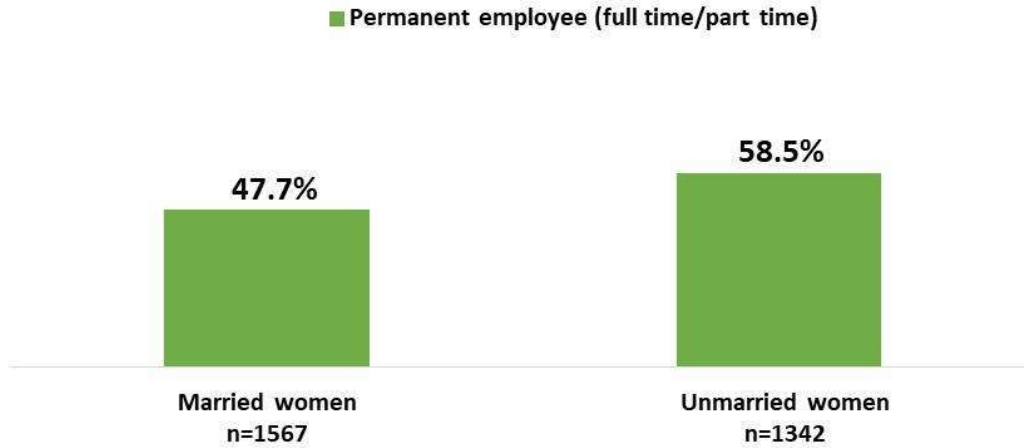
Socioeconomic activities

**Regarding employment status, 47.7% of married women and 58.5% of unmarried women were permanent employees**

Figure 46

(August 2021, n=2909)

Please select your current employment status.



After adjusting for current age, presence of children, and household income, there was no difference observed in the rates at which married women and unmarried women (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage) selected "Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)" as their employment status (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.06 (0.98-1.15)]).

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

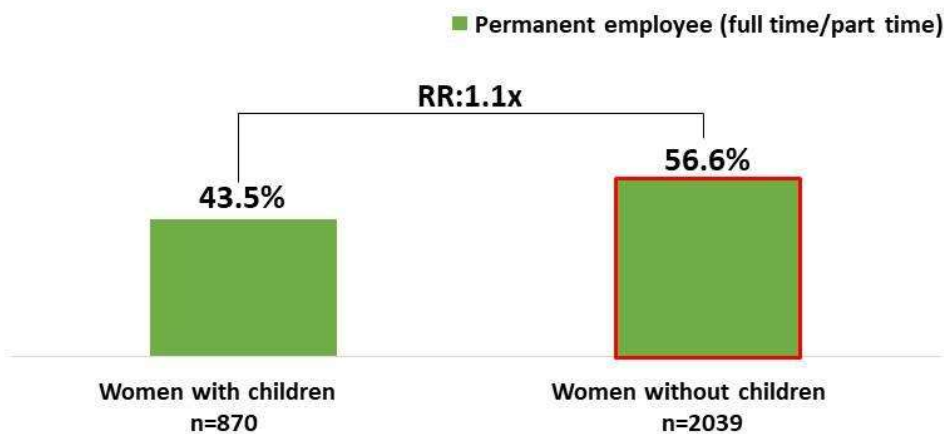
Socioeconomic activities

**Compared to women with children, a higher percentage of women without children were permanent employees**

Figure 47

(August 2021, n=2909)

Please select your current employment status.



After adjusting for current age, marital status, and presence of partner, women without children selected "Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)" 1.14 times more frequently than the women with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.14 (1.03-1.26)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
 Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

### Interpretations

- ✓ In this survey, we saw that marital status and presence of children tends to vary among men according to annual personal income and employment status, regardless of age. Higher annual incomes and permanent employment rates were found among men with marriage histories compared to men without marriage histories, as well as among men with children compared to those without. These findings suggest the importance of economic support and employment conditions for helping people who want to get married or have children to be able to do so.
- ✓ On the other hand, a higher percentage of women with no marriage history and women without children had higher annual incomes, and a higher percentage of both groups were permanent employees. Certain past studies<sup>27</sup> have reported that some people with children leave the labor force due to the difficulty of balancing employment and child-rearing for reasons including lack of systems to support continued employment, and the findings of this survey support the same conclusion.

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<sup>27</sup> Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd. Project Report Survey Research on Balancing Employment, Childrearing, Etc. Project Report, FY2018. "Survey Results of Workers." <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/11900000/000534372.pdf> Last retrieved March 3, 2022.

#### 4.5. Attempts to conceive and life planning

- Among respondents currently trying to conceive, about 30% said they are planning the timing of their pregnancy and have shared their life plans with their partners. On the other hand, some respondents did not think life plans are necessary.
  - ✓ When respondents who are trying to conceive were asked which actions they are actively taking to do so, 34.6% said “I am trying to time my pregnancy by taking my basal body temperature and using home ovulation tests.” Furthermore, 32.8% said that they have “Shared their life plans with their partner, including desires regarding pregnancy and childbirth” (Figure 48).
  - ✓ When asked what age they made a life plan that included marriage, childbirth, and child-rearing, 47.0% of parents and 21.9% of non-parents said they had done so by age 29 (Figure 49).
  - ✓ When asked about the best age to make life plans that include marriage, childbirth, and child-rearing, 67.8% of respondents with children and 47.8% of those without children said it is necessary to start thinking about them in one’s teens or 20s. However, 26.6% of parents and 45.7% of non-parents said they do not think life plans are necessary (Figure 50).

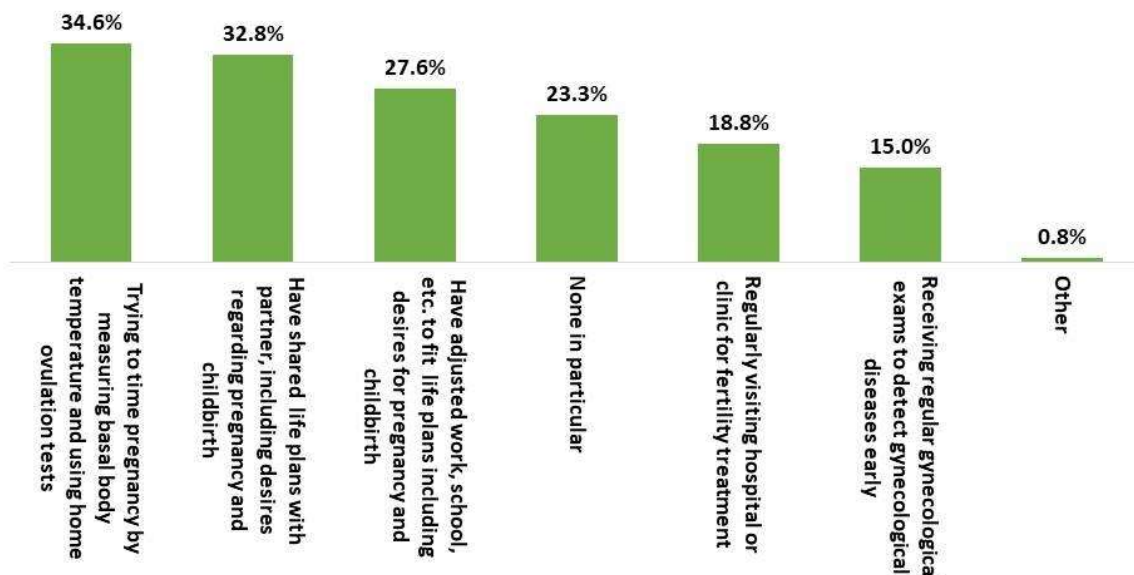
#### Attempts to conceive

Figure 48

**Over one-third of people trying to conceive are timing sex by taking their basal body temperature or by using at-home ovulation kits and have told partners their life plans**

(August 2021, n=399)

Next is a question for people currently trying to conceive. If you are actively taking any of the following actions to conceive, please tell us.



This slide includes biological men and women who said they are trying to conceive for the first time.  
Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

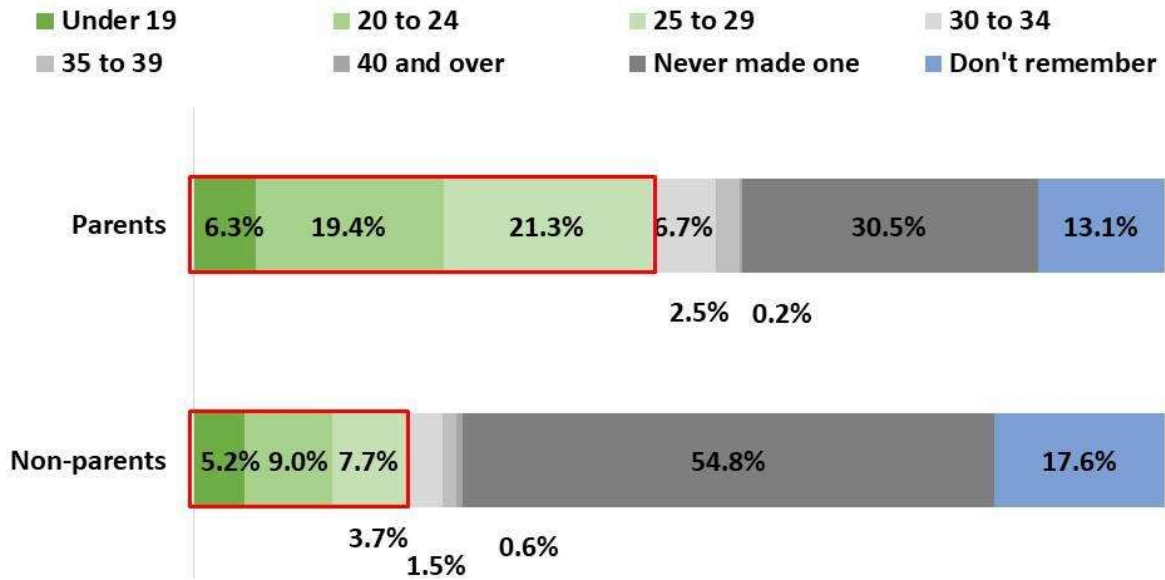
Life planning

**Almost half (47.0%) of parents and 21.9% of people without children had life plans by their 20s**

Figure 49

(August 2021, n=10000)

Around what age were you when you made a life plan for yourself that included marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing?



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system. Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Life planning

**Over one-third (67.8%) of parents and almost half (47.8%) of non-parents said people need to start thinking of their life plans in their teens or 20s**

Figure 50

(August 2021, n=10000)

Around what age do people need to make life plans that include marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing?



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system. Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

### Interpretations

- ✓ Although around 30% of respondents currently trying to conceive said they are timing intercourse by tracking their basal body temperature and using home ovulation tests, and that they have shared their life plans with their partners, almost one-third of respondents with children and almost half of those without children said they have never made a life plan. In contrast, approximately 70% of parents said people must think about life plans that cover marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing starting in their teens or twenties. Further studies are necessary to determine the impact of life plans and the ages they are created for people who want to get married or conceive.

#### 4.6. Marriage-related topics

- When people with no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage were asked about their reason for not marrying, almost 40% said, “I do not feel the need to get married.” Meanwhile, 10% to 20% of those who do not desire marriage said support or policies for marriage could cause them to change their minds.
  - ✓ Overall and by age group, the most popular reasons among people who have never married were, “I cannot find a suitable partner, “I do not feel the need to get married”, and “I do not want to lose free time and comfort” (Figures 51 and 52).
  - ✓ When asked about which systems or forms of support should be in place to help people get married, the most popular responses overall, by age group, and by gender identity were, “Financial support for marriage,” “Make education free for children,” and “Financial support for child-rearing” (Figures 53, 54, and 55).
  - ✓ By marital status, “Financial support for marriage” was the most popular form of support or system for helping people get married. Furthermore, couples in de facto marriages tended to be more likely to select “Institutional support for de facto marriage and same-sex couples” (Figure 56).
  - ✓ Respondents who do not want to get married were asked, “If the marriage support options or systems you previously selected were in place, would you want to get married?” Around 10% to 20% said they might change their mind (Figure 57).

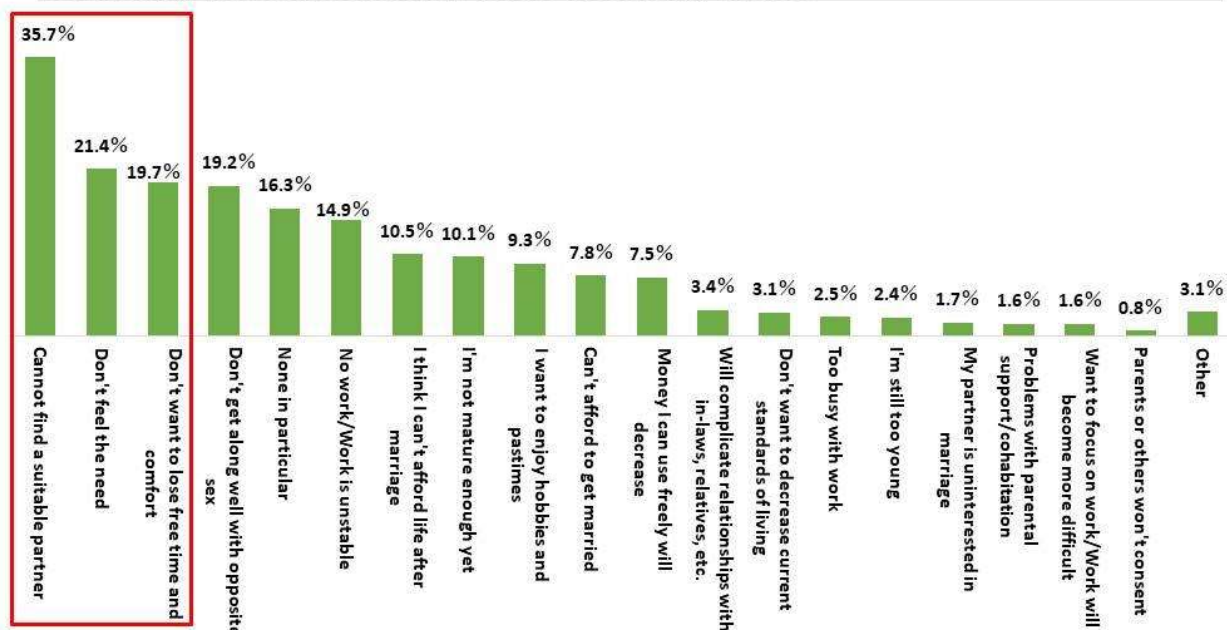
#### Marriage

Regarding reasons for not marrying, many said that they could not find suitable partners, they felt no need to marry, or that they do not want to lose free time or comfort (All respondents)

Figure 51

(August 2021, n=4348)

This question is for people who selected unmarried (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage). Please share the reason you are not currently married.



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

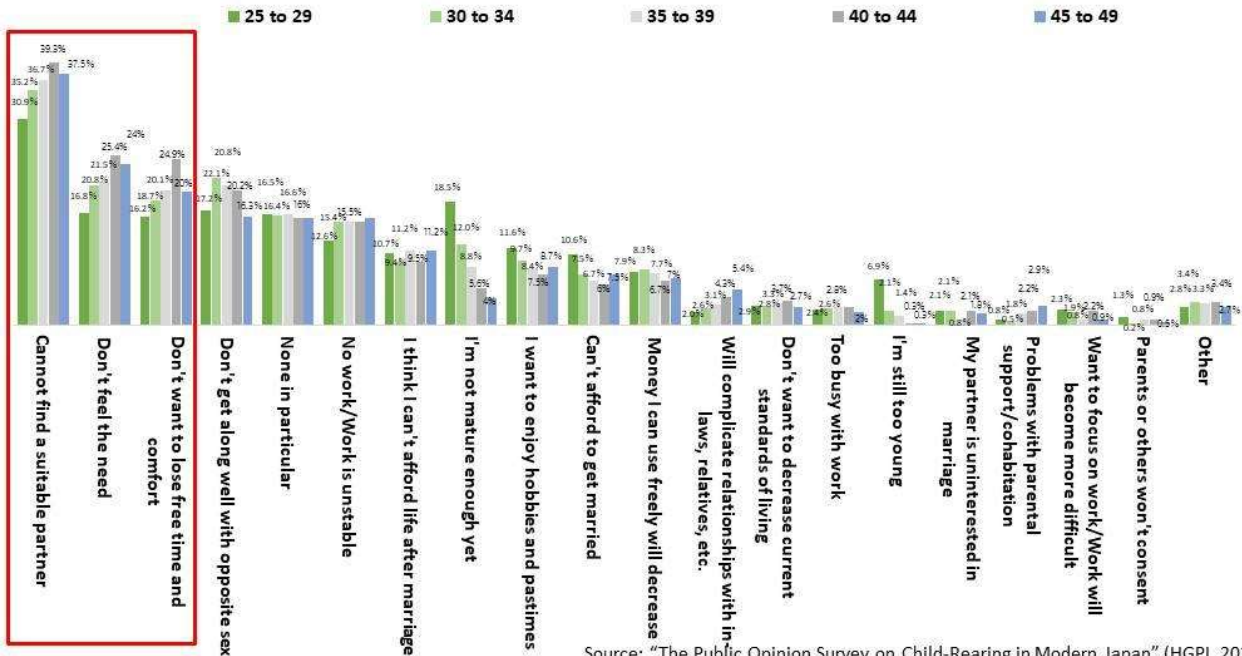
Marriage

Figure 52

Many said they could not find suitable partners, they felt no need to marry, or that they do not want to lose free time or comfort (By age group)

(August 2021, n=4348)

This question is for people who selected unmarried (no history of marriage, de facto marriage, or same-sex marriage). Please share the reason you are not currently married.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

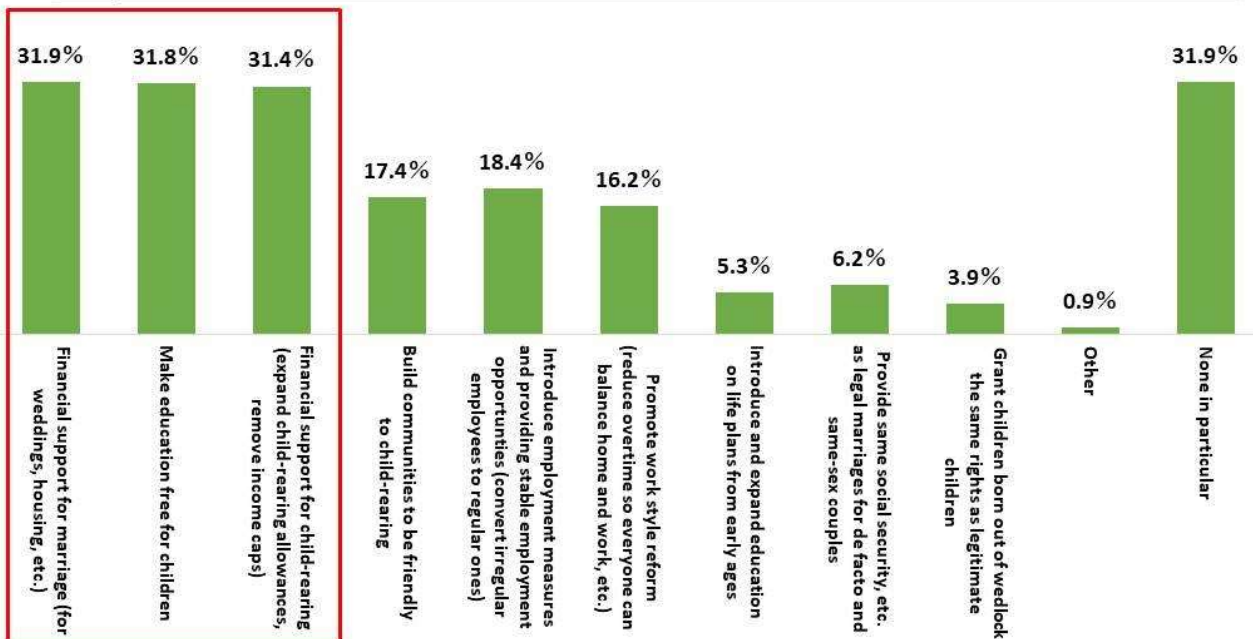
Marriage

Figure 53

Many thought financial support for marriage, free education for children, and financial support for child-rearing would help people marry (All respondents)

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select any systems or forms of support that you think should exist to help people who want to marry.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

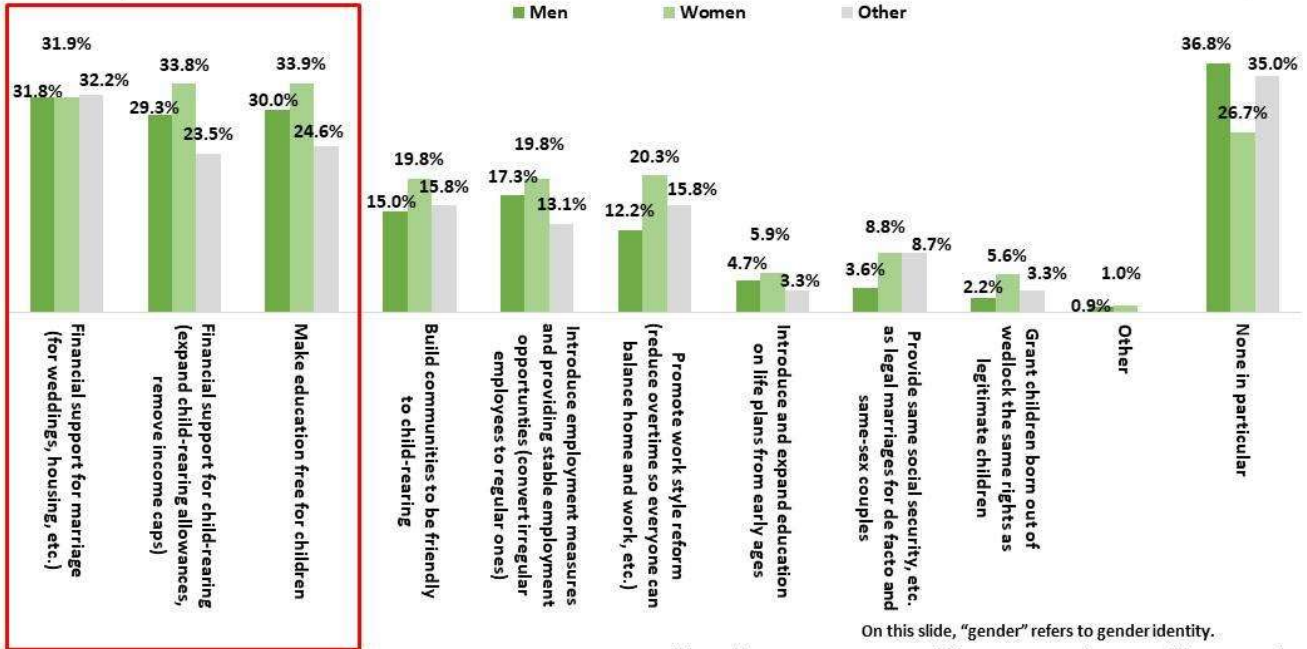
Marriage

To help people marry, financial support for marriages and child-rearing and free education for children were the most popular options among all genders

Figure 54

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select any systems or forms of support that you think should exist to help people who want to marry.



On this slide, "gender" refers to gender identity.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

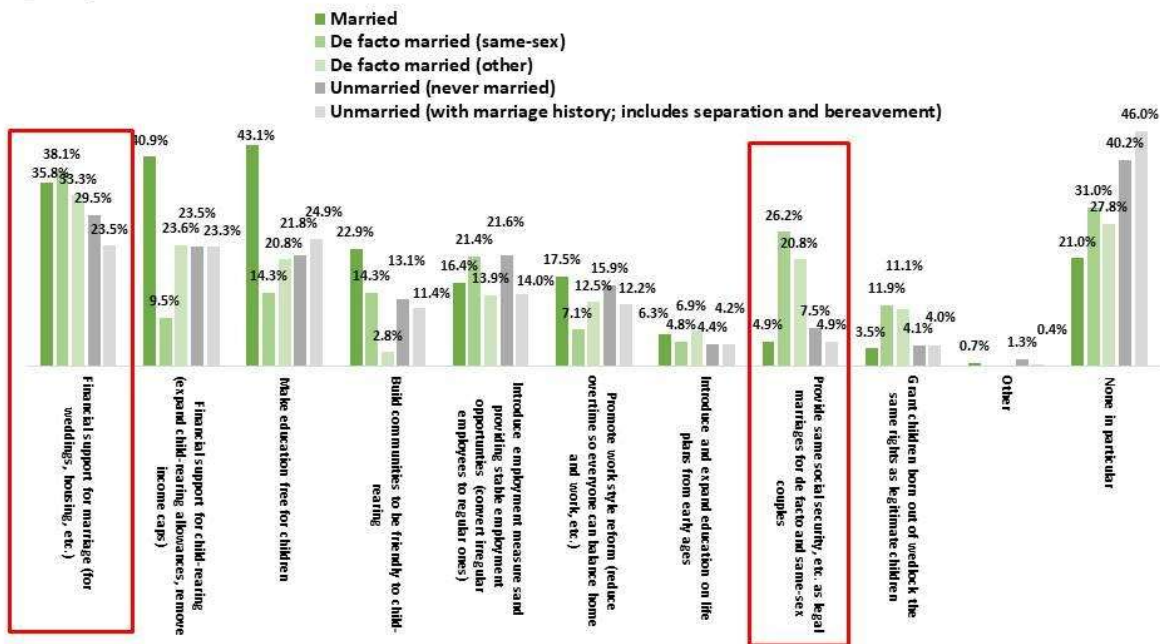
Marriage

"Financial support for marriages" was most popular regardless of marital status. Support for de facto and same sex marriages was most popular among those in de facto marriages

Figure 55

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select any systems or forms of support that you think should exist to help people who want to marry.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)



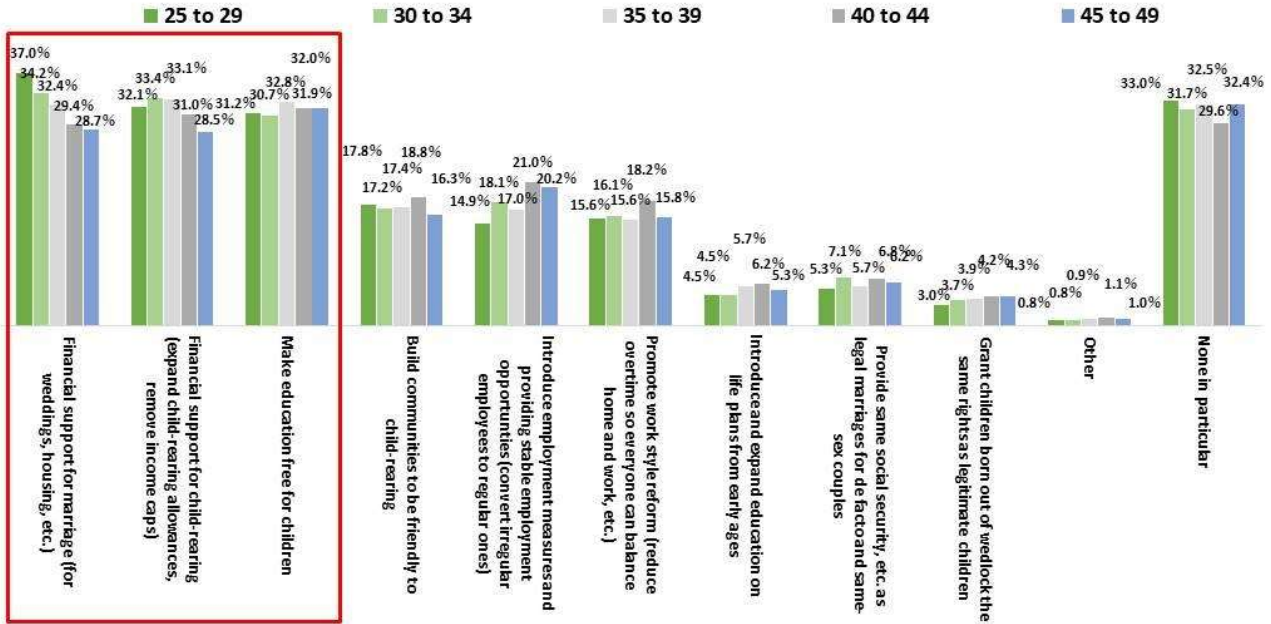
Marriage

Figure 56

To help people marry, financial support for marriages and child-rearing and free education for children were the most popular choices among all age groups

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select any systems or forms of support that you think should exist to help people who want to marry.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

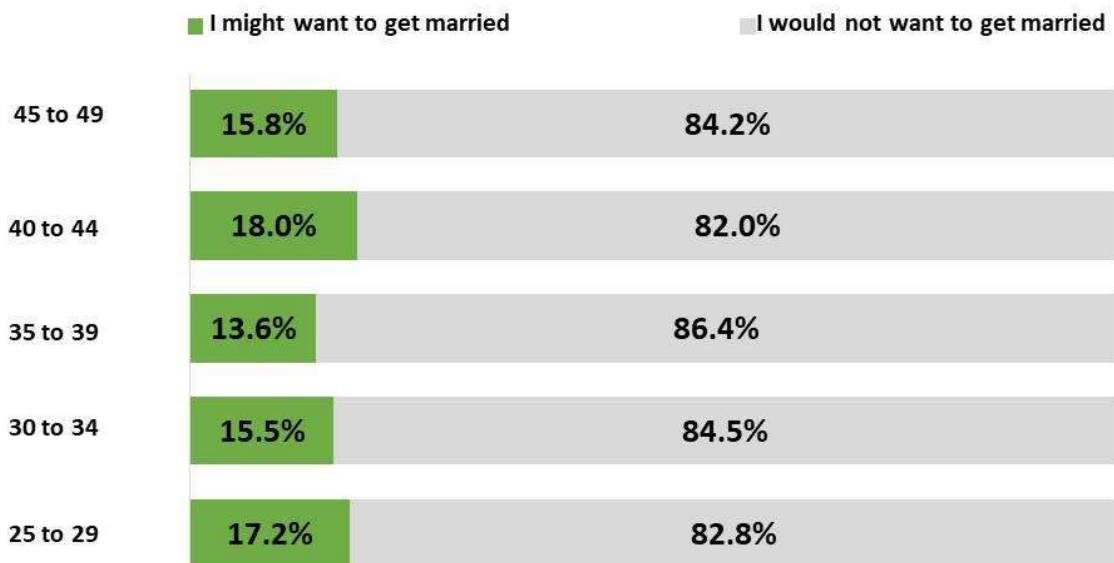
Marriage

Figure 57

About 10% to 20% of those who do not want to marry said they would change their minds if the forms of support or systems they picked were in place

(August 2021, n=512)

This question is for people who replied, "I don't want to get married." If the marriage support options or systems you previously selected were in place, would you want to get married?



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

## Interpretations

- ✓ Among unmarried respondents, the most frequently-cited reasons for not being married were “I cannot find a suitable partner,” and “I do not feel the need to get married.” The systems and forms of support they thought best were “Financial support for marriage (such as subsidies for weddings, housing, etc.),” “Financial support for child-rearing (expanding child-rearing allowances and removing income caps),” and “Make education free for children.” This means economic support for marriage and child-rearing, the most popular choices, require rapid consideration and action.
- ✓ Also, a certain number of the respondents who do not desire marriage said they would change their minds if their desired systems and forms of support were in place, suggesting that financial support would be somewhat effective.
- ✓ Following financial support, the most popular options were “Build communities to be friendly to child-rearing,” “Promote work style reform (reduce overtime so everyone can balance home and work, etc.).” In the following section, we will see that approximately 70% of respondents want dual incomes and for husbands to balance work and child-rearing and household duties, but that many said doing so is difficult in practice.<sup>28</sup> As such, establishing an environment to transition from a single-income society to a dual-income society is a key issue.
- ✓ At the same time, many of those in de facto marriages (including same-sex couples) said they would like to improve systems for de facto marriages and same-sex couples. To effectively improve total fertility rates, certain countries like France and Sweden have started treating out-of-wedlock births among couples who are not legally married, such as people cohabiting or in de facto marriages, as legally equivalent to legitimate births. From the perspective of reproductive health and rights, it is important to broaden recognition of various forms of partnership and child-rearing. However, it has been pointed out that for Japan, a country with a high rate of illegitimate births, an important factor for the declining fertility rate is the growing tendency for men and women to go unmarried or to marry late. Further discussion is required on which measures must be established in the future.

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<sup>28</sup> Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd. Project Report Survey Research on Balancing Employment, Childrearing, Etc. Project Report, FY2018. “Survey Results of Workers.” <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/11900000/000534372.pdf> Last retrieved March 3, 2022.

#### 4.7. Gender-related topics

- **About 70% of respondents thought wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.**
  - ✓ When asked their thoughts on the statement, “Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing,” 19.3% of all respondents selected “Agree” and 46.0% selected “Somewhat agree.” Furthermore, 22.1% of women and 16.6% of men selected “Agree;” 46.2% of women and 45.8% of men answered “Somewhat agree;” 21.5% of parents and 18.3% of non-parents replied “Agree;” and 48.3% of parents and 44.9% of non-parents chose “Somewhat agree” (Figure 58, Figure 59, and Figure 60).
  - ✓ Looking at responses to the statement, “Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing” by marital status, 18.7% of married respondents and 20.1% of unmarried respondents selected “Agree” while 47.3% of married respondents and 44.4% of unmarried respondents picked “Somewhat agree.” Regardless of age group, over 60% of all respondents chose “Agree” or “Somewhat agree” (Figures 61 and Figure 62).

Gender awareness

### About 70% of people said that wives should have jobs and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing

Figure 58

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.

■ Agree    
 ■ Somewhat agree    
 ■ Somewhat disagree    
 ■ Disagree



Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

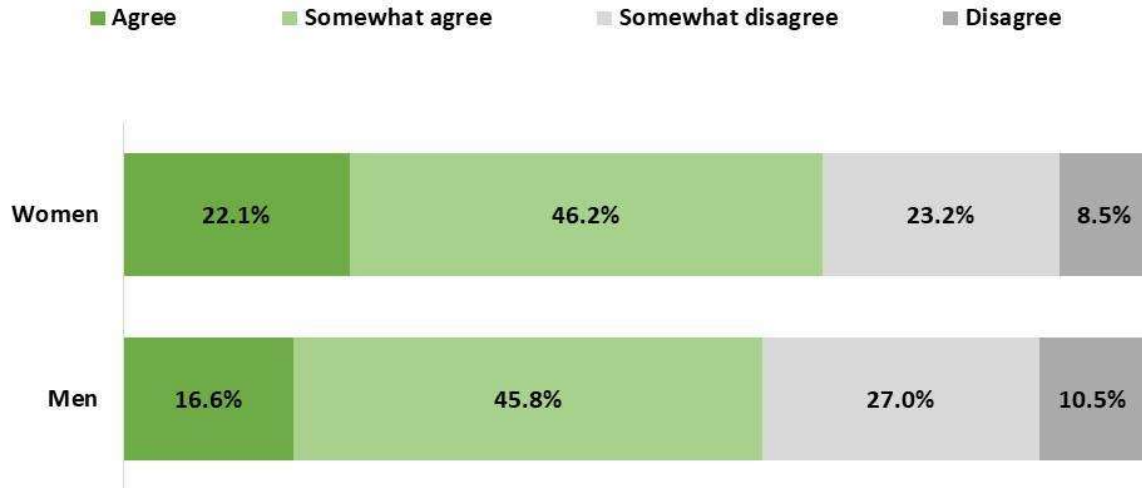
Gender awareness

**Approximately 70% of women and 60% of men thought wives should work and husbands should share in household duties and child-rearing**

Figure 59

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

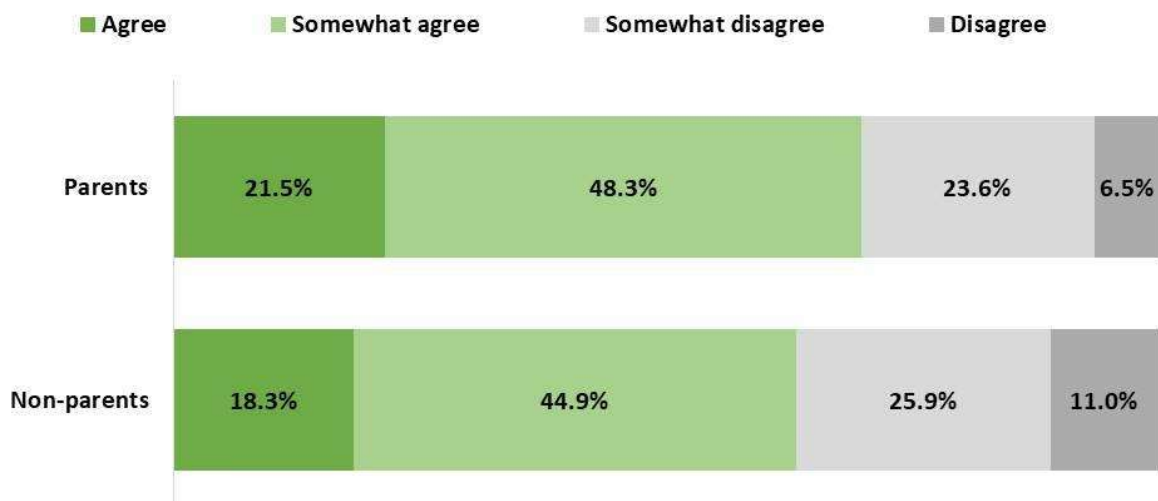
Gender awareness

**Approximately 70% of parents and 60% of people without children thought wives should work and husbands should share in household duties and child-rearing**

Figure 60

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

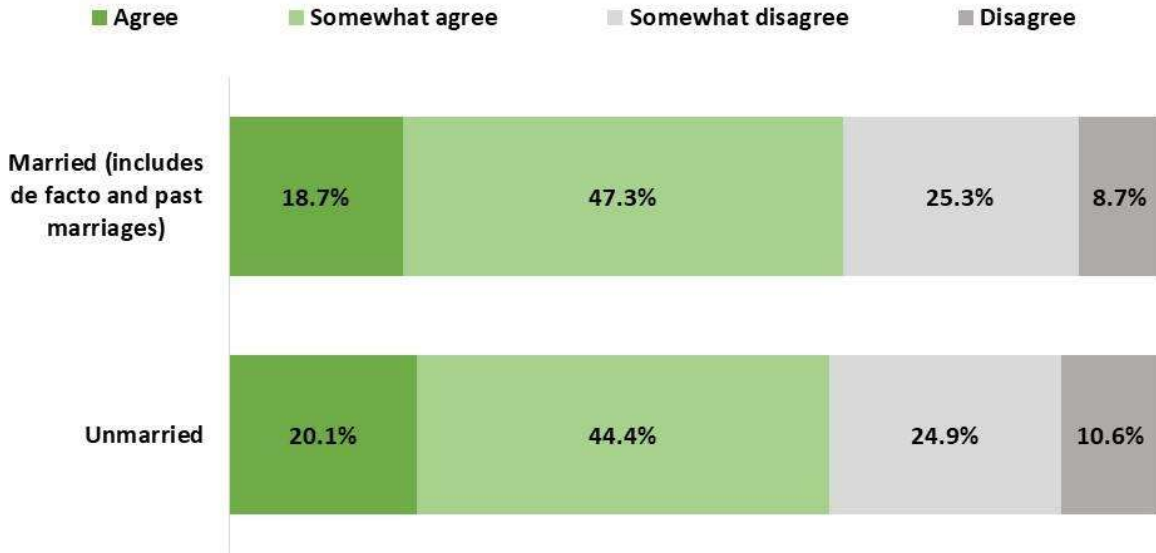
Gender awareness

**Regardless of marital status, over 60% of all respondents thought wives should work and husbands should share in household duties and child-rearing**

Figure 61

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

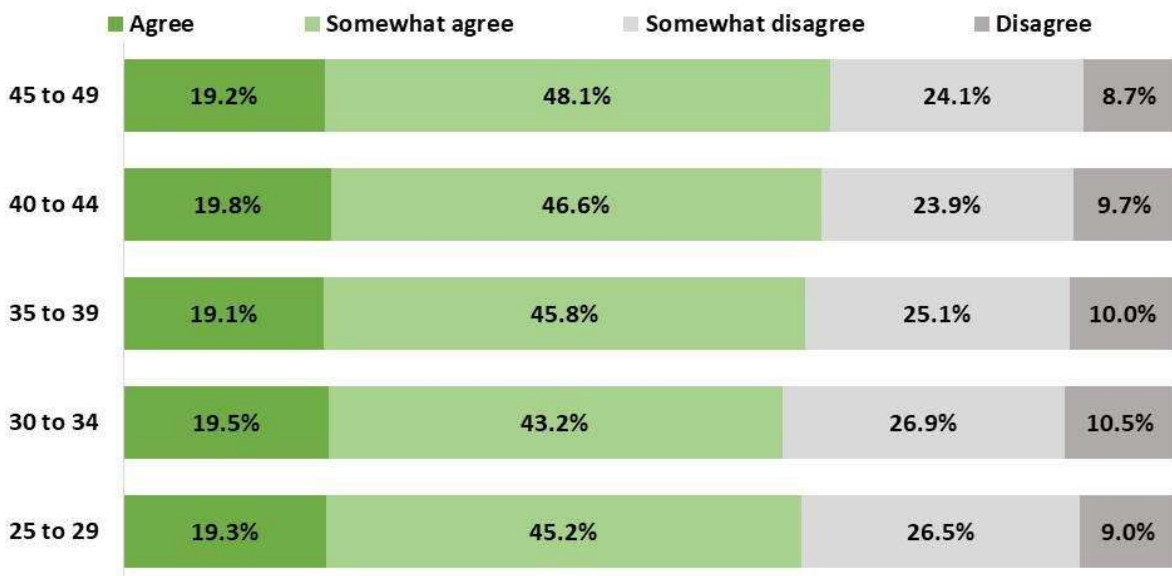
Gender awareness

**Across age groups, over 60% of all respondents thought wives should also have jobs and husbands should participate in housework and caring for children**

Figure 62

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in household duties and child-rearing.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

- **Around 50% of respondents said it is best for children to be taken care of by their mothers at home until around age three.**
  - ✓ When asked if it is best for children to be taken care of by their mothers at home until around age three,” 14.0% of all respondents chose “Agree” and 40.5% selected “Somewhat agree.” Looking at responses by gender, 15.4% of women and 12.7% of men answered “Agree;” and 40.4% of women and 40.6% of men chose “Somewhat agree.” By presence of children, 17.4% of parents and 12.4% of non-parents responded “Agree,” while 42.1% of parents and 39.8% of non-parents answered “Somewhat agree” (Figure 63, Figure 64, and Figure 65).
  - ✓ Among respondents ages 45 to 49, 16.9% chose “Agree” and 43.9% said “Somewhat agree.” For those ages 30 to 34, 12.1% said “Agree” and 35.7% picked “Somewhat agree” (Figure 66).
  - ✓ When asked their thoughts on the statement, “Women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs,” 5.5% of all respondents chose “Agree” and 26.4% picked “Somewhat agree.” By gender, “Agree” was selected by 4.7% of women and 6.2% of men while “Somewhat agree” was picked by 24.6% of women and 28.2% of men. By presence or absence of children, 6.4% of parents and 5.0% of non-parents answered “Agree.” “Somewhat agree” was selected by 29.9% of respondents with children and 24.7% of those without (Figure 67, Figure 68, and Figure 69).
  - ✓ Across all age groups, approximately 30% of respondents chose either “Agree” or “Somewhat agree” (Figure 70).
  - ✓ When asked their thoughts on the statement, “Men are working, so it cannot be helped that they cannot do housework and rear children,” 3.8% of all respondents said “Agree” and 20.7% said “Somewhat agree.” By gender, “Agree” was selected by 2.8% of women and 4.8% of men. “Somewhat agree” was picked by 19.1% of women and 22.2% of men (Figure 71 and Figure 72).

Gender awareness

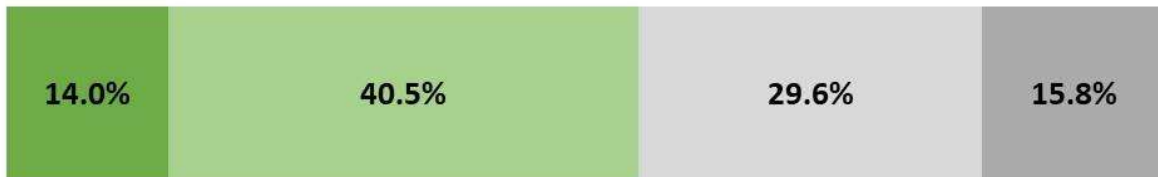
**Over half of all respondents thought it is best for children to be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three**

Figure 63

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: It is best for children to be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three.

■ Agree    
 ■ Somewhat agree    
 ■ Somewhat disagree    
 ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Gender awareness

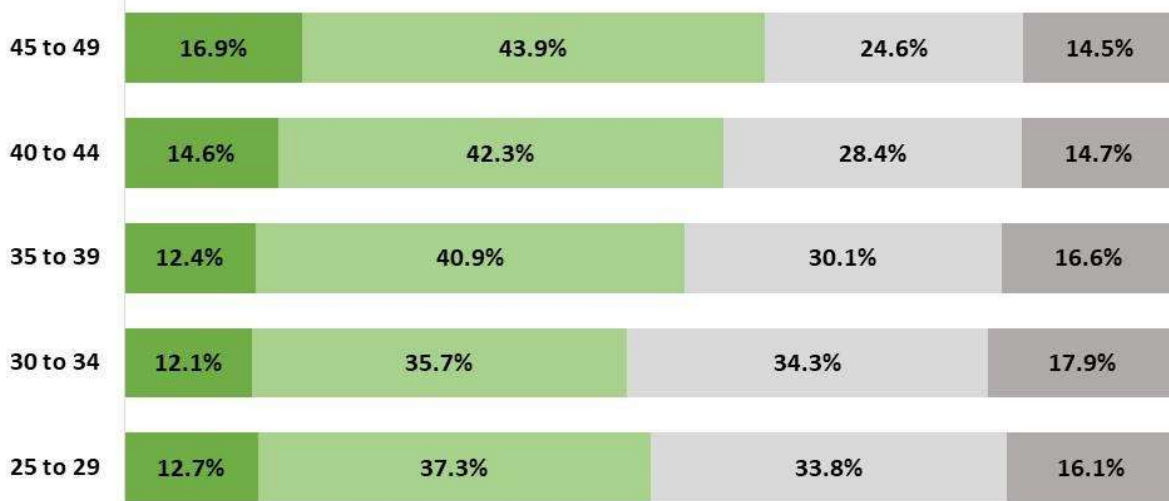
**Over half of those age 35 and over thought children should be at home with their mothers until age three, while fewer than half of those under age 35 were in agreement**

Figure 64

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: It is best for children to be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three.

■ Agree    
 ■ Somewhat agree    
 ■ Somewhat disagree    
 ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

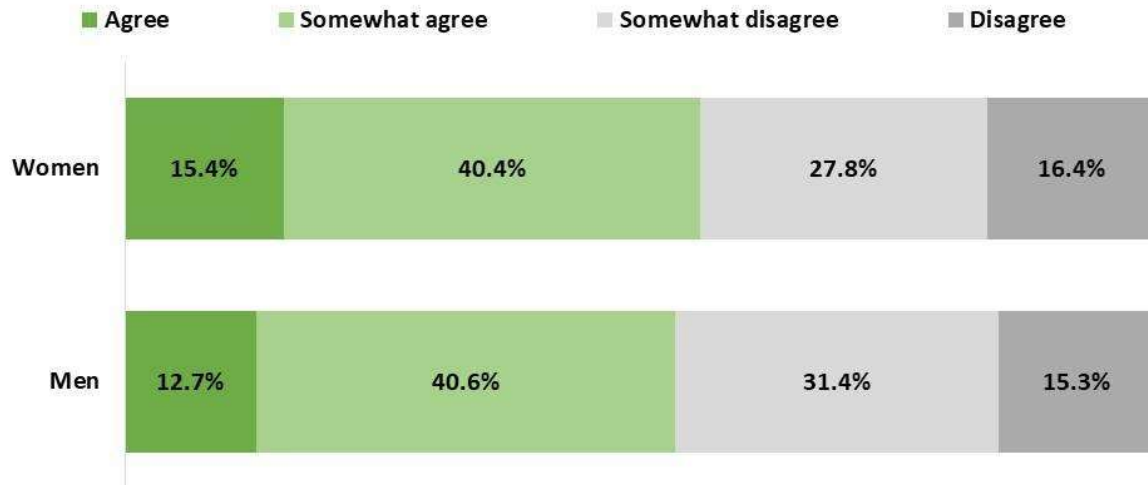
Gender awareness

**About 60% of women and around 50% of men thought children should be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three**

Figure 65

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: It is best for children to be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

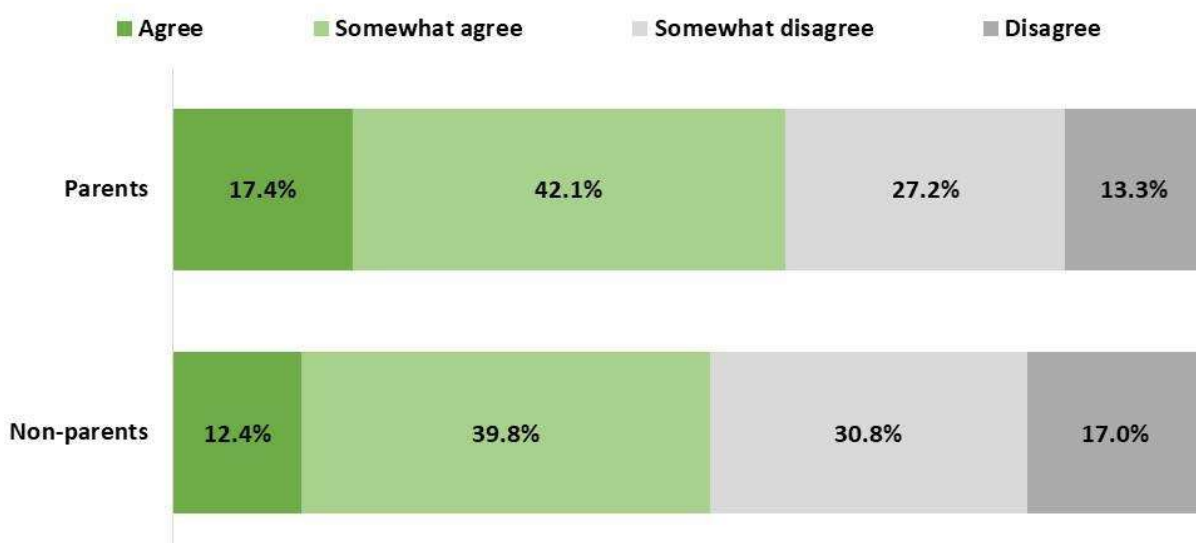
Gender awareness

**Approximately 60% of parents and about half of those without children thought children should be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three**

Figure 66

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: It is best for children to be taken care of at home by their mothers until around age three.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)



Gender awareness

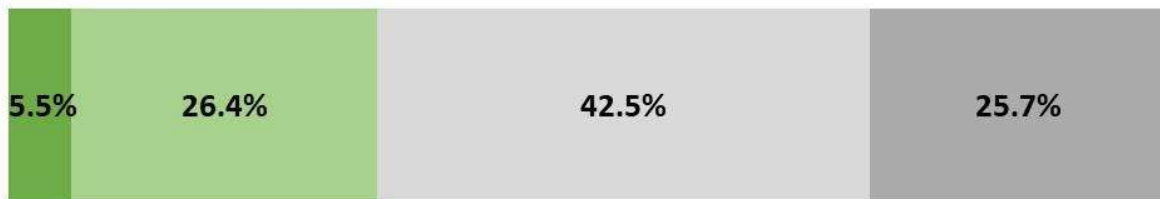
**Approximately 30% of all respondents thought women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs**

Figure 67

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs.

■ Agree    ■ Somewhat agree    ■ Somewhat disagree    ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Gender awareness

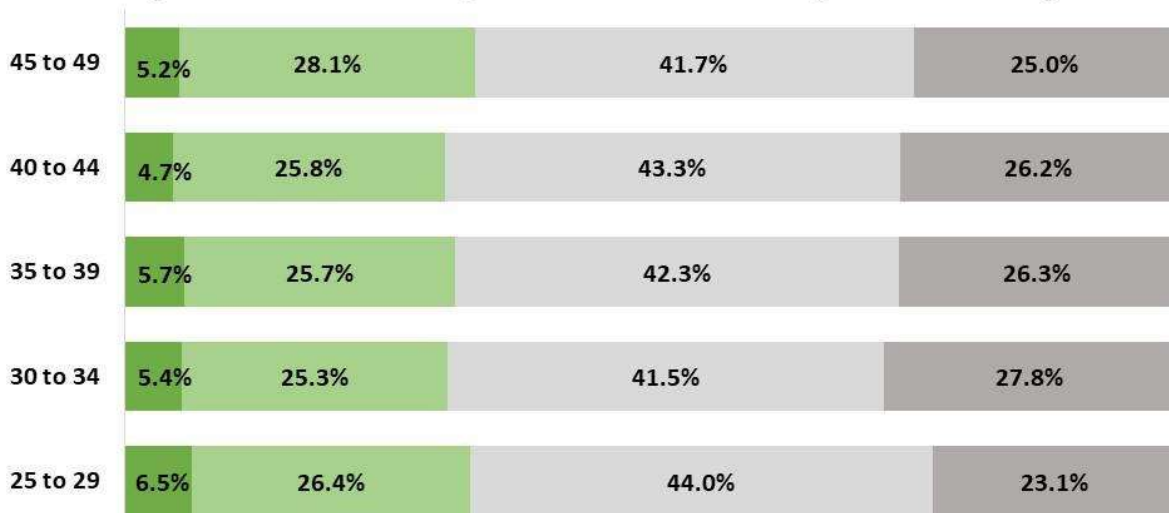
**About 30% of people in all age groups said women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs**

Figure 68

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs.

■ Agree    ■ Somewhat agree    ■ Somewhat disagree    ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

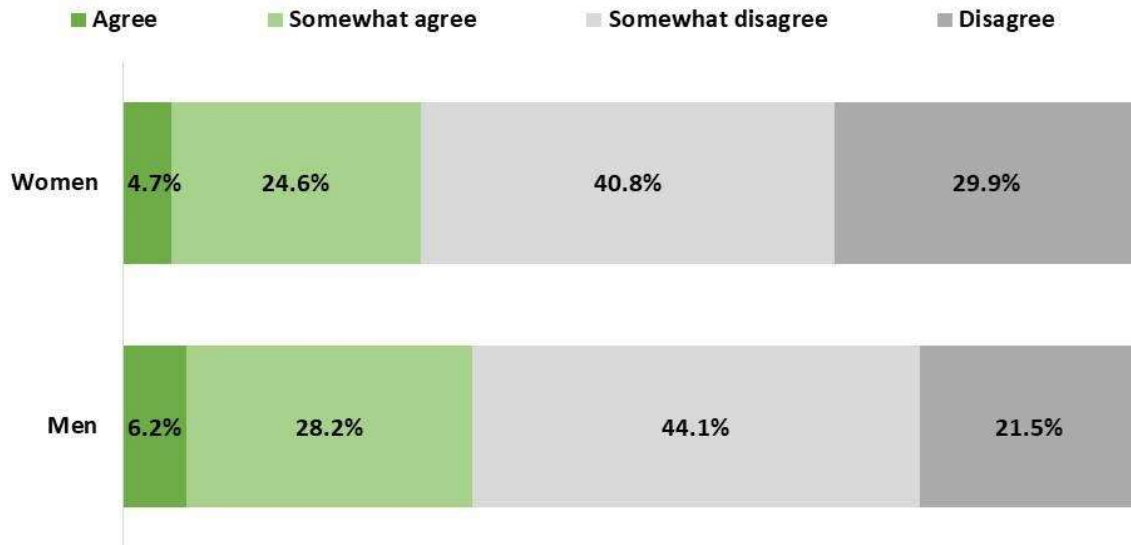
Gender awareness

**By sex, 29.3% of women and 34.4% of men agreed that women with jobs must still pay attention to household duties and caring for children**

Figure 69

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

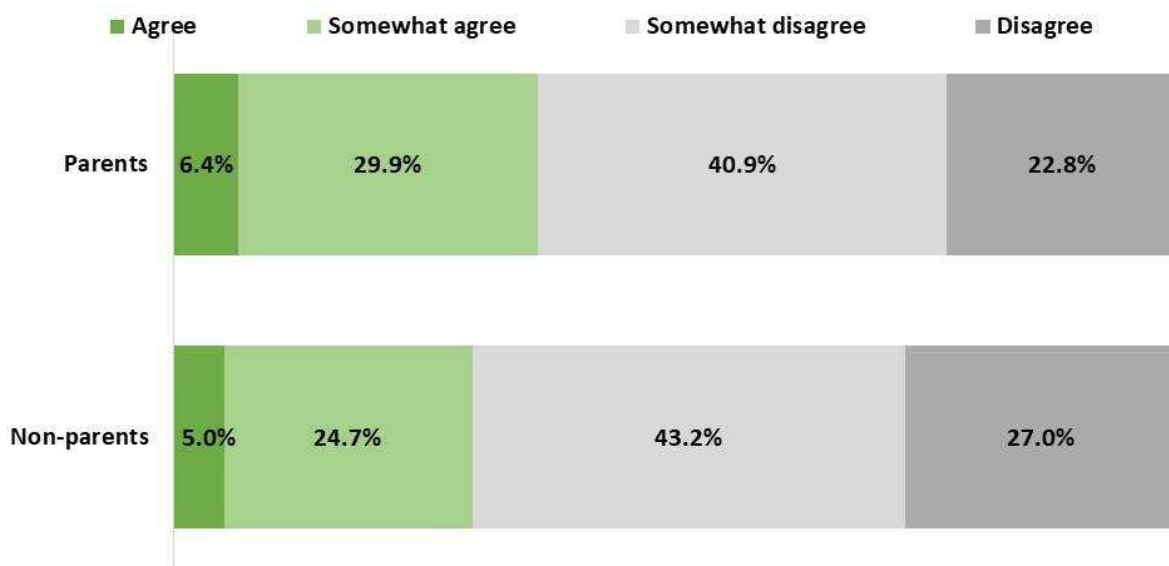
Gender awareness

**About 40% of parents thought women with jobs must not neglect household duties or caring for children. About 30% of those without children agreed**

Figure 70

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Women must not neglect housework and child-rearing even if they have jobs.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Gender awareness

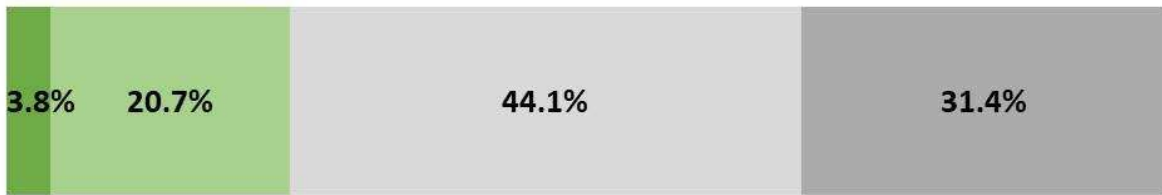
**Approximately 20% felt it cannot be helped that men cannot do housework and rear children due to work**

Figure 71

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Men are working, so it cannot be helped that they cannot do housework and rear children.

■ Agree    
 ■ Somewhat agree    
 ■ Somewhat disagree    
 ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Gender awareness

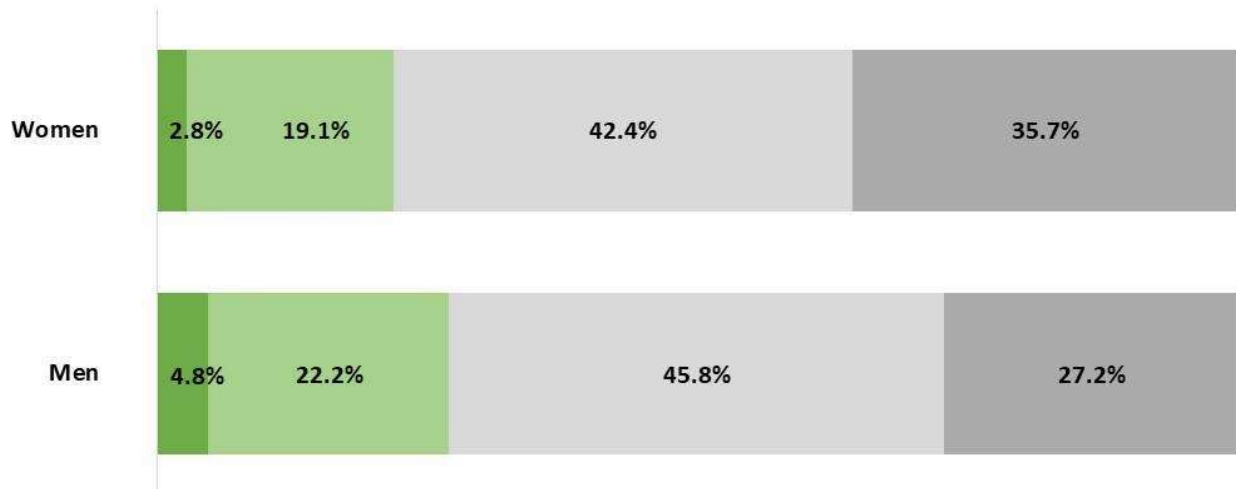
**About 20% of women and 30% of men said, "Men are working, so it cannot be helped that they cannot do housework and rear children"**

Figure 72

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please share your opinion on the following statement: Men are working, so it cannot be helped that they cannot do housework and rear children.

■ Agree    
 ■ Somewhat agree    
 ■ Somewhat disagree    
 ■ Disagree



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

### **Interpretations**

- ✓ Regardless of gender, presence of children, marital status, or age, over 60% of respondents agreed that “Wives should also have jobs, and husbands should share in housework and child-rearing.” On the other hand, more than half said it is best for children to be taken care of by their mothers at home until around age three, and approximately one-third said women with jobs must not neglect housework and child-rearing. While awareness toward women’s advancement in society is growing, some respondents want women to devote themselves to child-rearing when their children are young. These findings provide a glimpse at the difficulties women face when balancing family and work.
- ✓ While gender awareness is growing and values regarding housework and child-rearing are becoming more diverse, the social environment has not kept up with progress to the point that both women and men can balance work and home life. In the future, flexible support that more closely fits circumstances will be required.

#### 4.8. Topics related to surroundings and the social environment

- **Compared to respondents without children, respondents with children tended to have more opportunities to interact with children and were more likely to be on visiting terms with people in their neighborhoods during childhood.**
  - ✓ When asked how many opportunities to interact with babies and children they had in their daily lives before having children, “Often” or “Somewhat often” were selected by 45.6% of parents and 20.6% of non-parents (Figure 73).
  - ✓ A significantly higher percentage of respondents with children answered “Often” or “Somewhat often” compared to the group without children (Figure 74).<sup>29</sup>
  - ✓ The group with children tended to select they were an “Only child” at a significantly lower rate than respondents without children (Figure 75).<sup>30</sup>
  - ✓ Compared to non-parents, parents tended to be significantly more likely to reply that they “Often visited or hosted neighbors” when they were children (Figure 76).<sup>31</sup>

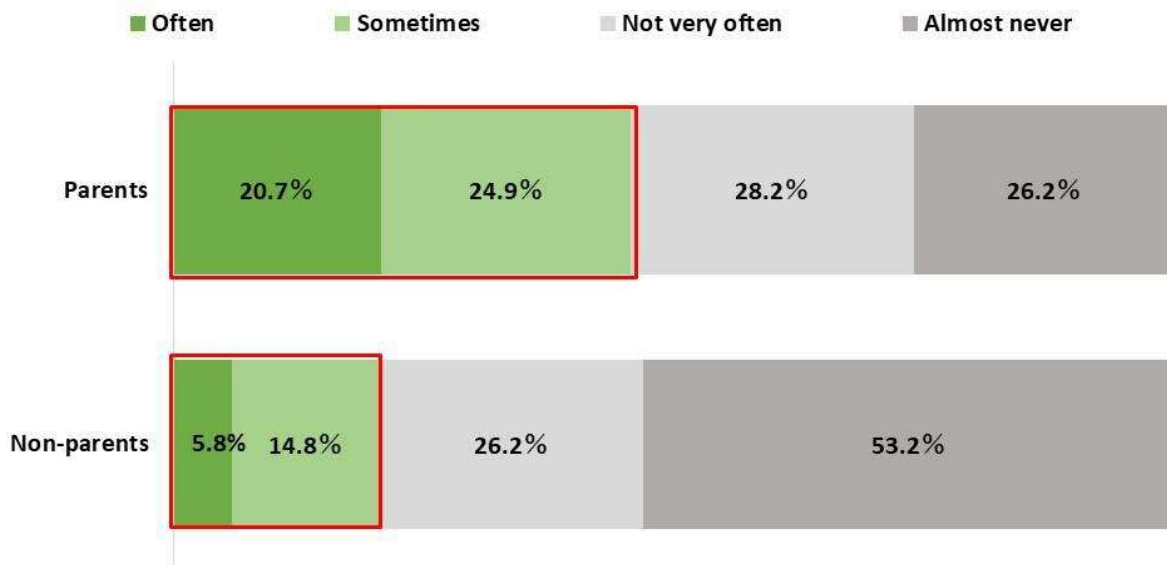
Surrounding environments

Figure 73

**45.6% of parents and 20.6% of non-parents had many opportunities for daily interaction with babies and children**

(August 2021, n=10000)

In everyday life, how often do you have opportunities to interact with babies or children? If you have children now, please select the choice that corresponds to how often you had such opportunities before having children.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

<sup>29</sup> After adjusting for current age, neighborhood relationships, and number of siblings, respondents with children had significantly more opportunities to interact with children than the group without children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.42 (0.40-0.45)]).

<sup>30</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, and parental relationships, those without children identified themselves as only children 1.6 times more often than those with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.55 (1.36-1.75)]).

<sup>31</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, and status as an only child, compared to non-parents, 1.2 times more parents replied they “Often visited or hosted neighbors” or “Sometimes visited or hosted neighbors” as children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.15 (1.12-1.17)]).

Surrounding environments

Figure 74

**Compared to parents, fewer people without children said they have many opportunities for daily interaction babies and children**

(August 2021, n=10000)

In everyday life, how often do you have opportunities to interact with babies or children? If you have children now, please select the choice that corresponds to how often you had such opportunities before having children.



After adjusting for current age, neighborhood relationships, and number of siblings, respondents with children had significantly more opportunities to interact with children than the group without children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.42 (0.40-0.45)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

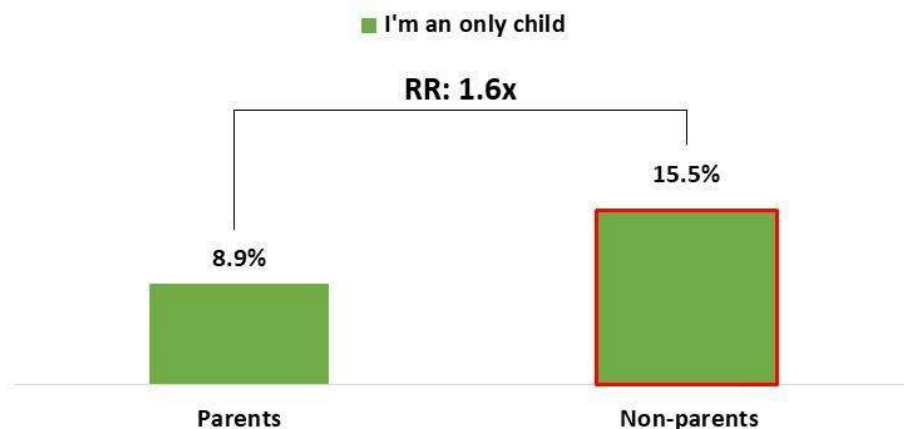
Surrounding environments

Figure 75

**A greater proportion of those without children reported they were only children compared to those with children**

(August 2021, n=10000)

How many siblings do you have?



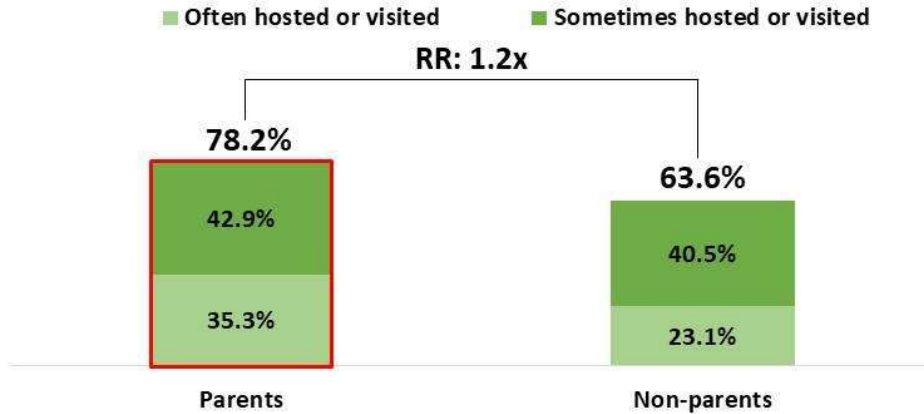
After adjustment with current age, gender, and parental relationships as adjustment variables, those without children identified themselves as only children 1.6 times more often than those with children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.55 (1.36-1.75)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

**Compared to non-parents, parents tended to be more likely to report they had associated with neighbors as children**

(August 2021, n=10000)

**During your childhood, how frequently did you associate with people in your neighborhood?**



After adjusting for current age, gender, and status as an only child, compared to non-parents, 1.2 times more parents replied they “Often visited or hosted neighbors” or “Sometimes visited or hosted neighbors” as children (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 1.15 (1.12-1.17)]).

On this slide, “children” includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
 Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

- **When asked which types of support and systems will be necessary to enable would-be parents to conceive at their desired timing, respondents want a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children to be introduced and measures for employment to be taken so stable employment opportunities can be provided**

  - ✓ Regarding types of support and systems that respondents believe are necessary to help would-be parents conceive when they want to, 23.0% of all respondents selected, “Introduce a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children.” It was followed by “Take measures for employment and provide opportunities for stable employment” at 17.0% and “Provide classes teaching correct information about ease of conception and infertility,” at 16.1% (Figure 77).
  - ✓ When asked about necessary support and systems to enable people who want children to conceive when they want, the most frequently-picked response among both men and women was, “Introduce a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children” (Figure 78).
  - ✓ When asked about necessary support and systems to enable people who want children to conceive when they want, the most common responses was “Grant insurance coverage to infertility treatments” among women without children (20.0%), while men without children most frequently chose, “Introduce a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children” (19.2%) (Figure 79).
  - ✓ Respondents with children tended to be significantly more likely than those without to say that Japan has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (Figure 80).<sup>32</sup>
  - ✓ Compared to non-parents, parents were significantly more likely to say “They are sufficient” or “They are somewhat sufficient” when asked if their workplace has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (Figure 81)<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, annual personal income, and employment status, 0.7 times as many non-parents selected “They are sufficient” or “They are somewhat sufficient” compared to parents when asked if Japan has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.69 (0.65-0.73)]).

<sup>33</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, annual personal income, and employment status, 0.7 times as many non-parents selected “They are sufficient” or “They are somewhat sufficient” compared to parents when asked if their workplace has systems and an environment that support balance between work and pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.73 (0.69-0.77)]).



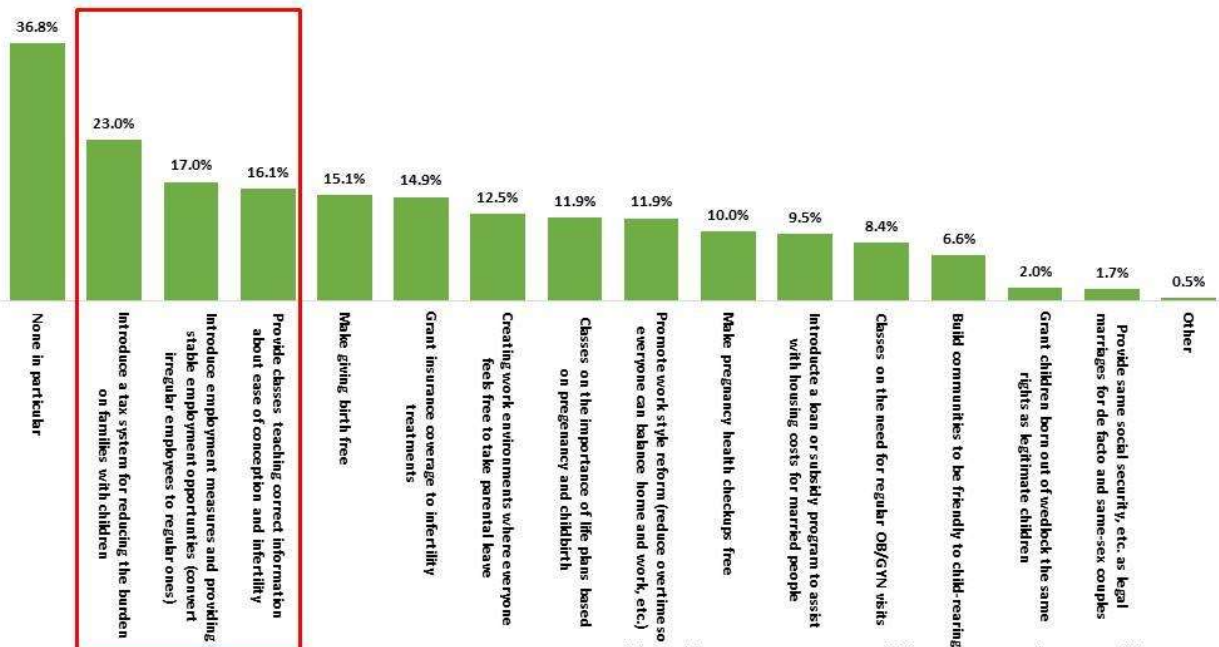
Social conditions

Figure 77

The most popular systems and forms of support for helping would-be parents conceive were supporting families with children, implementing measures for employment, and providing classes on women's health

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select types of support or systems you think are necessary to enable people who want children to be able to conceive when they want.



Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

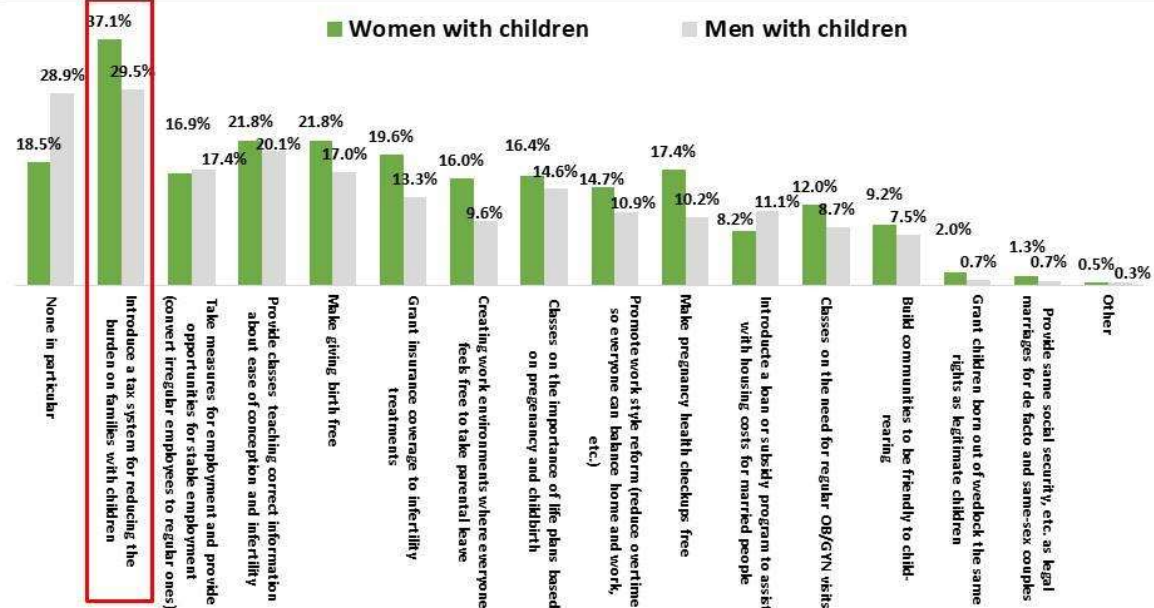
Social conditions

Figure 78

Among woman and men with children, the most popular response for helping would-be parents conceive when they want was to lessen burdens on families with children through tax measures

(August 2021, n=3244)

Please select types of support or systems you think are necessary to enable people who want children to be able to conceive when they want.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

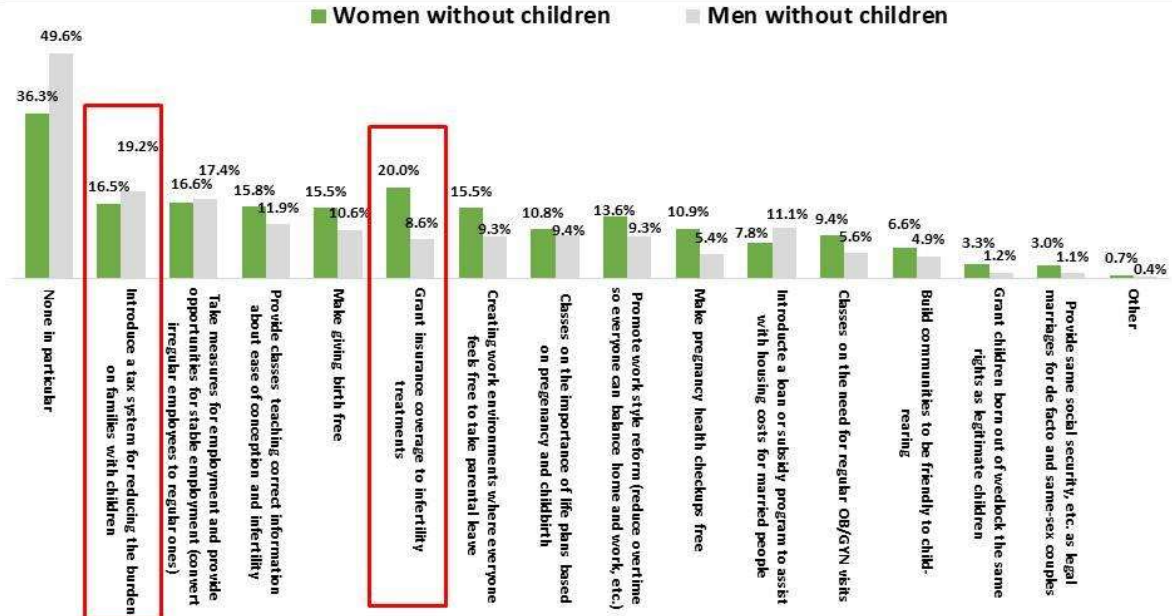
Social conditions

Figure 79

Among non-parents, the most common choice for supporting would-be parents among women was insurance coverage for infertility treatments; for men, it was support for families with children

(August 2021, n=6756)

Please select types of support or systems you think are necessary to enable people who want children to be able to conceive when they want.



On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system. Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

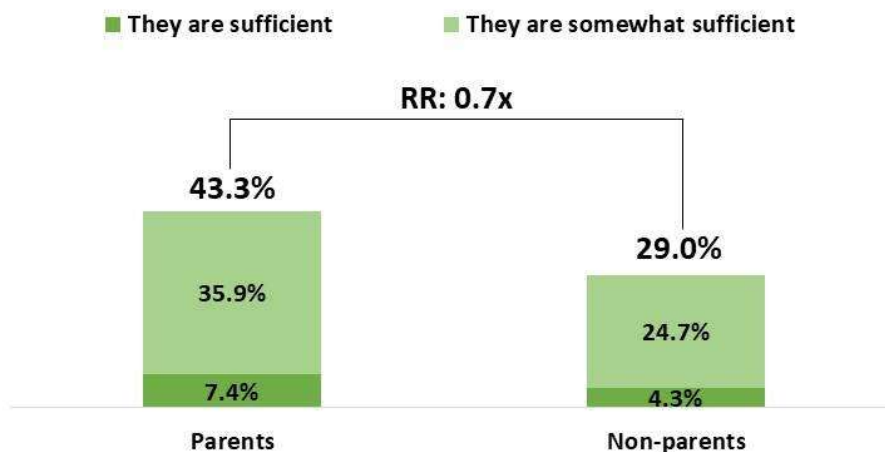
Social conditions

Figure 80

Compared to non-parents, more parents said that "Japan has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing"

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the option that best fits your opinion on the following: Does Japan have systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing?



After adjusting for current age, gender, annual personal income, and employment status, 0.7 times as many non-parents selected "They are sufficient" or "They are somewhat sufficient" compared to parents when asked if Japan has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.69 (0.65-0.73)]).

On this slide, "children" includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system. Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

Social conditions

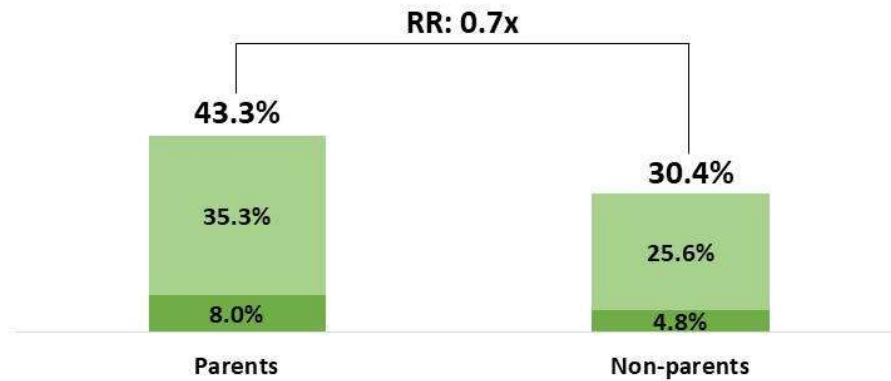
Figure 81

Compared to non-parents, a greater number of parents said their workplaces had systems and environments that support balance between work and pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing

(August 2021, n=10000)

Please select the option that best fits your opinion on the following: Do you think your workplace has systems and an environment that facilitate pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing?

■ They are sufficient      
 ■ They are somewhat sufficient



After adjusting for current age, gender, annual personal income, and employment status, 0.7 times as many non-parents selected “They are sufficient” or “They are somewhat sufficient” compared to parents when asked if their workplace has systems and an environment that support balance between work and pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing (log-binomial regression, [RR (95% CI) : 0.73 (0.69-0.77)]).

On this slide, “children” includes biological children, step-children, or children adopted through the special adoption system.  
 Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

## Interpretations

- ✓ Compared to non-parents, a greater proportion of parents said they had many opportunities to interact with babies in daily life before having children and that they visited or hosted neighbors as a child, even if they were an only child. These results suggest the presence of opportunities for everyday interactions across generations or positions may have an impact on having children. As the nuclear family model continues to grow more common in the modern era, broad discussions should be held with the public on how to best shape communities and society.
- ✓ Regarding necessary systems and forms of support for people who want to conceive to be able to do so, the most popular responses overall were, “Introduce a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children” and “Take measures for employment and provide opportunities for stable employment,” which make it clear people require financial support and stable employment to conceive. Further discussion based on the voices of the public must be held. In addition, among female respondents without children, the most popular response was “Grant insurance coverage to infertility treatments.” Expectations are high for future attitude and fact-finding surveys conducted after infertility treatments begin to receive insurance coverage in the coming fiscal year.
- ✓ As for links to findings from Section 4.4, “Socioeconomic Activity,” a high percentage of respondents who are permanent employees with stable incomes felt they were enjoying good benefits and that it is easy to raise children. On the other hand, respondents who want children but have irregular employment are likely to be unable to enjoy generous benefits packages, which we can infer to be related to their perception of child-rearing as difficult.

#### 4.9. COVID-19 impact on life planning

- **Approximately 6% of people said they postponed or canceled plans to get married or have a child due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
  - ✓ When asked about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on life plans, 2.8% of unmarried respondents said their marriage plans were moved up, 4.0% said their plans were delayed, and 3.1% said their plans were canceled (Figure 82).
  - ✓ Among unmarried respondents, those with annual incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” were significantly more likely than those with annual incomes of “5 million yen or more” to report that their marriage plans had been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 83).<sup>34</sup>
  - ✓ In a question on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted parts of life plans, regarding childbirth, 90.5% said their plans did not change, 3.2% said their plans were moved up, 3.5% said their plans were postponed, and 2.5% said their plans were canceled (Figure 84).
  - ✓ Also, respondents with annual incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” tended to be significantly more likely than those with annual incomes of “5 million yen or more” to report that their plans to have a child were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 85).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, and presence of children, those with personal incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” were more likely than those whose income was “5 million yen or over” to reply that their marriage plans had been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic with an odds ratio of 1.8 times (logistic regression analysis, [OR (95% CI) : 1.75 (1.13-2.72)]).

<sup>35</sup> After adjusting for current age, gender, marital status, and presence of children and partners, those with personal incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” said that their plans to have a child were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic 1.7 times more often than those whose incomes were “5 million yen or over” (logistic regression analysis, [RR (95% CI) : 1.69 (1.11-2.57)]).

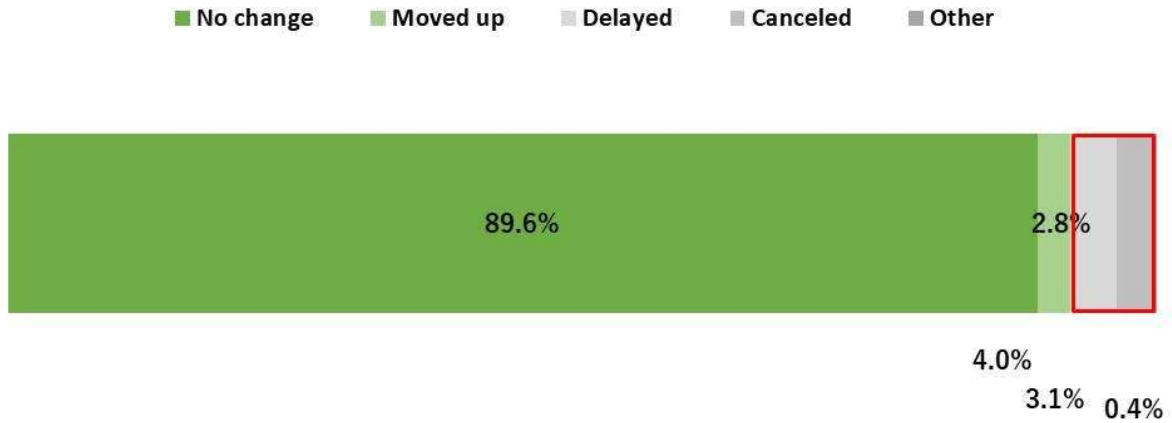
COVID-19 impact

**Approximately 7% of unmarried people said “I postponed or canceled plans to get married due to COVID-19”**

Figure 82

(August 2021, n=5314)

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan? (Marriage)



This question was asked to respondents who replied “Not very much,” or “A little” to the question “How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan?” The response “Not at all” includes those who replied “I don’t think it changed,” and “Not very much.”

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

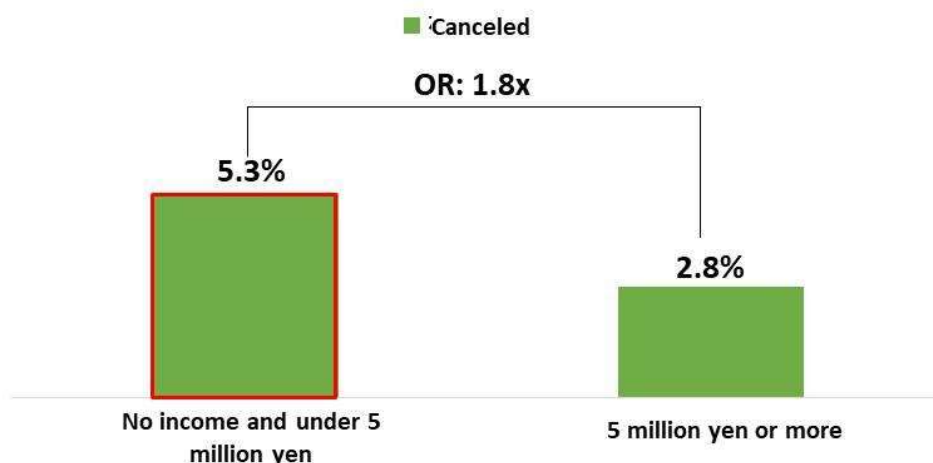
COVID-19 impact

**Among unmarried people, a larger proportion of those earning less than 5 million yen said they canceled marriage plans due to COVID-19 compared to those earning 5 million yen or more**

Figure 83

(August 2021, n=4358)

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan? (Marriage)



After adjusting for current age, gender, and presence of children, those with personal incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” were more likely than those whose income was “5 million yen or over” to reply that their marriage plans had been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic with an odds ratio of 1.8 times (logistic regression analysis, [OR (95% CI) : 1.75 (1.13-2.72)]).

Source: “The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan” (HGPI, 2021)

COVID-19 impact

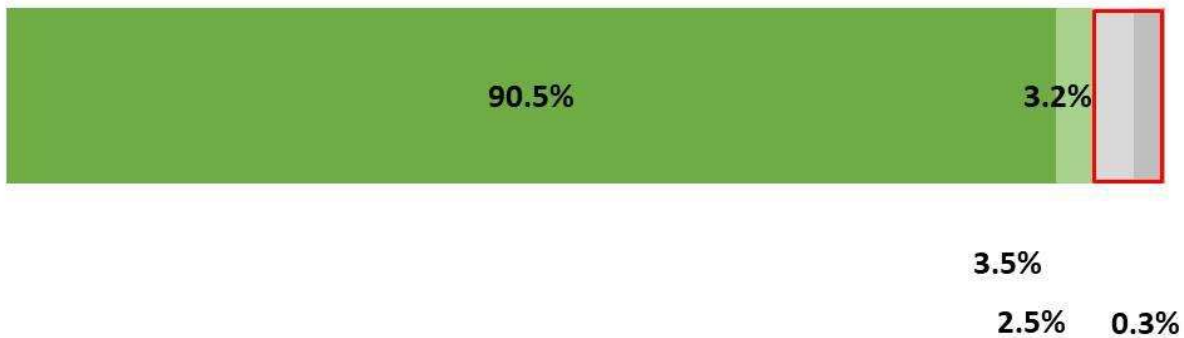
**Approximately 6% of all respondents postponed or canceled plans to have a child due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Figure 84

(August 2021, n=10000)

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan? (Pregnancy)

■ No change ■ Moved up ■ Delayed ■ Canceled ■ Other



This question was asked to respondents who replied "Not very much," or "A little" to the question "How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan?" The response "Not at all" includes those who replied "I don't think it changed," and "Not very much."

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

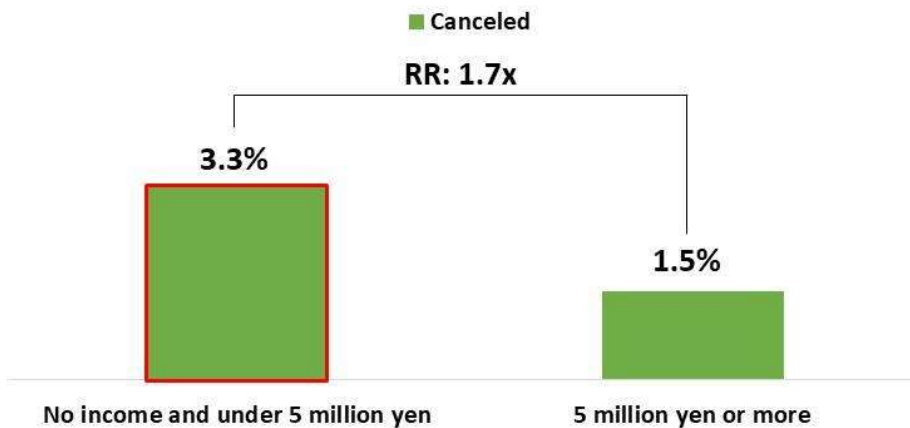
COVID-19 impact

**Those who earned less than 5 million yen tended to say their plans to have a child were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic more often than those who earned 5 million yen or more**

Figure 85

(August 2021, n=10000)

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your life plan? (Pregnancy)



After adjusting for current age, gender, marital status, and presence of children and partners, those with personal incomes of "None" or "Under 5 million yen" said that their plans to have a child were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic 1.7 times more often than those whose incomes were "5 million yen or over" (logistic regression analysis, [RR (95% CI) : 1.69 (1.11-2.57)]).

Source: "The Public Opinion Survey on Child-Rearing in Modern Japan" (HGPI, 2021)

### **Interpretations**

- ✓ About 6% of respondents said they postponed or canceled plans to get married or have a child due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, compared to those with annual personal incomes of 5 million yen or more, respondents with annual personal incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” tended to be significantly more likely to report they had canceled plans for getting married or having a child. We must hold new discussions on what forms of support, including financial support, are necessary to create a society where nobody is forced to give up on getting married or having children even in the event of large-scale natural disasters or infectious disease pandemics.



## 5. Opinions

The survey results showed there is clear room for improvement in health literacy throughout society for topics like fertility and infertility in men and women as well as health concerns specific to women. They also suggested that factors related to having children among would-be parents include: history of diagnosis and treatment for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and PCOS; age of initial gynecological examination; annual income and employment status; and relationships in communities during childhood and later relationships with children in one's surroundings. Based on these findings, the survey team's views on desirable measures for creating a society in which those who wish to have children can do so are described below.

Each recommended measure is mutually linked and a national policy which allows each person to enjoy reproductive health and rights and that supports women's health over the life course must be established to promote all measures in a comprehensive, efficient manner. It will also be necessary for society to obtain an understanding of reproductive health and rights and women's health across genders and generations.

### 5.1. Perspective 1: Reinforce support to improve health literacy

To promote reproductive health and rights as fundamental rights for all individuals and couples throughout Japanese society, it will be necessary to strengthen support systems so people can obtain correct information about fertility and infertility in men and women, women specific health concerns, and the various options and possibilities for life plans.

#### ■ Relevant survey results

- ✓ Approximately half of women and over 60% of men reported that they did not know that symptoms experienced before and during menstruation are treatable
- ✓ Approximately half of women and over 60% of men reported that they did not know that organic diseases like endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and amenorrhea carry the risk of infertility if left untreated
- ✓ Around 30% said "Through natural sexual intercourse between couples, women can conceive until around age 40. After that age, it becomes extremely difficult." Approximately 40% said "Women can still conceive at around age 40 by undergoing infertility treatment, but after that age, it becomes extremely difficult."
- ✓ On the topic of menstrual symptoms, almost 60% of respondents said they take painkillers for menstrual pain, but a high proportion said they do not know how to cope with other symptoms, or that they experience symptoms but tolerate them
- ✓ Aside from those who said they do not remember where they learned about topics like women's health or reproductive health and rights, most said they learned about these topics at school or by searching the internet

#### ■ Recommendations

#### Government

- ✓ To foster awareness toward reproductive health and rights throughout society, expand and improve opportunities for education on reproductive health and rights starting from childhood and for all genders
- ✓ Provide leadership in establishing educational opportunities that teach people various options and possibilities for life planning in addition to reproductive health and rights
- ✓ Design systems and secure budgets for measures to create opportunities for people of all ages and genders to receive consultations and gather information on reproductive health and rights (including health offices in educational institutions; consultation offices at companies; counseling and support services using social networks and similar tools operated by local governments, healthcare institutions, or NPOs; and Youth Café events)

#### Educational institutions

- ✓ Provide opportunities for comprehensive education that not only covers traditional content such as the pregnancy process but also topics like fertility in men and women, causes of infertility, and women specific health concerns with various life plans in view. When doing so, utilize specialists in reproductive health and rights such as OB/GYNs and midwives

#### Industry

- ✓ Establish training programs and consultation services that provide employees the knowledge on reproductive health and rights that is necessary at every life stage

#### The media

- ✓ Instead of focusing coverage on certain types of information like advanced maternal age pregnancies and births among celebrities and others who can serve as influencers, be more considerate when disseminating information so citizens can obtain accurate knowledge on reproductive health and rights and be informed about various options and possibilities for life planning
- ✓ Devote efforts to devising methods of disseminating information such as making effective use of the internet, which many people use to gather information

### **5.2. Perspective 2: Establish a system to improve access to gynecologists**

It has been medically proven that abnormal menstrual symptoms can later have effects on infertility and women's health in general. It will be necessary to disseminate information and build systems that enable people who need gynecological examinations to receive them at appropriate times.<sup>36,37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "Infertility." [https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content\\_id=15](https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/diseases/index.php?content_id=15) Last retrieved March 2, 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Japan Society for Reproductive Medicine. "Question 4: What sorts of factors cause infertility?" [http://www.jsrm.or.jp/public/funinsho\\_qa04.html](http://www.jsrm.or.jp/public/funinsho_qa04.html) Last retrieved March 2, 2022.

### ■ Relevant survey results

- ✓ Compared to respondents with children, respondents who are currently trying for their first child tended to have higher rates of diagnosis or treatment history for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and PCOS.
- ✓ Average age of first gynecological visit tended to be higher among those currently trying for their first child compared to those with children
- ✓ Almost one-third of all women said they have never visited a gynecologist
- ✓ When women with a history of gynecological visits were asked how often they visited a gynecologist, almost half said they only visit when they have concerning symptoms, making it the most common response. Almost 20% said they visit a gynecologist for regular checkups even without concerning symptoms

### ■ Recommendations

#### Government

- ✓ Provide leadership in helping women and all of society understand the importance of receiving gynecological examinations at the right times
- ✓ Consider measures for improving systems, such as by appointing gynecologists as school doctors, so students can obtain correct knowledge about menstruation, take effective actions for coping with menstruation, and learn appropriate health-seeking behavior

#### Academic societies and research institutions

- ✓ Establish easy-to-understand guidelines on gynecological examinations that cover topics like abnormal menstrual symptoms, and disseminate those guidelines throughout society

#### Educational institutions

- ✓ Introduce a questionnaire for asking students who have started menstruating about menstrual symptoms during regular health checkups, and establish a system to identify students who require gynecological examinations
- ✓ Promote collaboration among educational institutions, health institutions, and consultation organizations (including counseling and support services using social networks and similar tools operated by local governments, healthcare institutions, or NPOs; or Youth Café events) to establish a system that helps students experiencing abnormal menstrual symptoms receive gynecological examinations
- ✓ Promote training programs on reproductive health and rights and women's health for school nurses and similar professionals

#### Industry and health insurance societies

- ✓ Add items for menstrual symptoms and related topics to questionnaires used at company health checkups and establish a system for helping women maintain awareness of their physical condition as well as access gynecologists
- ✓ Strengthen cooperation among industrial physicians and gynecologists, create affiliations with departments of gynecology, and establish a leave system that facilitates regular gynecological visits
- ✓ Promote training programs on reproductive health and rights and women's health for industrial physicians

### **5.3. Perspective 3: Provide economic support to people who want to have children and advance work style reforms**

When we asked which forms of support are necessary for helping people who want to get married or conceive, the most popular option was financial support. Many also voiced the need for promoting work style reforms to help people stay in the workforce after marriage or childbirth, so improving work environments is also urgent.

Although individual economic circumstances and backgrounds vary among women, a certain number of respondents thought women should continue to work and that men should take part in child-rearing and housework after having children. However, over half of the respondents also thought that children should be taken care of by their mothers at home until around age three, and in reality, there are many situations in which women must be responsible for housework and child-rearing. There were also a certain number of people who thought men should not have to take part in child-rearing because they have jobs. While the background to this issue includes problems related to gender stereotypes, it has also been pointed out there are structural issues within working environments for women. These include long working hours, gender-based glass ceilings, and the fact that women who return to the workforce after maternity or childcare leave are assigned to roles with relatively light responsibilities. As such, all of society requires work style reform.

#### ■ **Relevant survey results**

- ✓ There was a significant difference in respondents with children (37.4%) and respondents without children (63.9%) among those who reported annual personal incomes of "No income" or "Under 5 million yen"
- ✓ There was a significant difference among men with children (95.7%) and men without children (76.8%) among those whose employment status was "Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)"
- ✓ The most popular systems or forms of support for helping people get married were, "Financial support for marriage," "Make education free for children," and "Financial support for child-rearing"

- ✓ Around 10% to 20% of respondents who do not want to get married might change their mind if their desired forms of marriage support were in place
- ✓ Many thought introducing tax systems for reducing the burden on families with children, taking measures for employment, and providing opportunities for stable employment will be necessary forms of support or systems for helping would-be parents conceive at their desired timing
- ✓ Among people without children, the most popular forms of support and systems for helping people who want children to conceive when they want were “Grant insurance coverage to infertility treatments” for women and “Introduce a tax system for reducing the burden on families with children” for men
- ✓ Regardless of gender, presence of children, marital status, or age, over 60% of respondents thought wives should also have jobs, and husbands should participate in housework and child-rearing
- ✓ Over half said it is best for children to be raised by their mothers at home until around age three, and about 30% said women with jobs should not neglect housework and child-rearing
- ✓ Around 6% of respondents said they delayed or canceled plans to marry or have children due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Respondents with annual incomes of “None” or “Under 5 million yen” tended to be significantly more likely than those with annual incomes of “5 million yen or more” to report that they canceled plans to have a child due to the COVID-19 pandemic

#### ■ Recommendations

##### Government

- ✓ Recognize the importance of policy processes that take survey and research results into account and consider introducing tax systems that lighten burdens on families with children and implementing measures that enable more people to maintain stable employment
- ✓ As this survey was a cross-sectional study, cohort studies and other further research and surveys in this field should be subsidized and their findings should be utilized to create policies that fit real-world circumstances more closely
- ✓ Provide leadership in advancing work style reform to make society a place where people who want to keep working after getting married and having children can do so without burdening only one partner

##### Industry

- ✓ Advance work style reform, such as by shortening long working hours, so women and anyone else who wants to balance work with family life and child-rearing can do so

#### 5.4. Perspective 4: Provide people with opportunities to interact with children and promote the creation of mechanisms for mutual support in communities

The results of this survey showed that before having children, parents had more opportunities to interact with babies than non-parents, and that a higher percentage of parents associated with neighbors as children. This shows it is desirable for opportunities to be created for people to have interactions across generations and positions in their daily living environments.

■ **Relevant survey results**

- ✓ Even before having children, parents tended to be significantly more likely than non-parents to have had interactions with children in their daily lives
- ✓ Compared to non-parents, parents tended to have a larger proportion of respondents who associated with neighbors as children
- ✓ Non-parents tended to be more likely than parents to report they were an only child

■ **Recommendations**

Government

- ✓ Provide leadership in promoting community development to connect community members with preschools, kindergartens, schools, businesses, and other institutions to create opportunities for community interactions among people who do not normally come into contact with each other and to foster mutual understanding that surpasses individual positions

Educational institutions

- ✓ Introduce opportunities for middle and high school students to interact with students at nursery schools and kindergartens so they can experience interacting with children

## 6. PROJECT TEAM

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## 7. SUPPORTING COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Asahi Mutual Life Insurance Co

Bayer Yakuhin, Ltd

Fuji Pharma Co., Ltd.

Hokkaido University

- ※ Please note that opinion exchanges were held with supporting companies and organizations when conducting the survey, but decisions regarding the reflection of opinions shared during those discussions in the survey were made independently by the survey team.

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