

Abstract

People make reports of suspected **child abuse to child guidance centers more frequently in urban areas and there is a positive correlation with the population density of Japan's prefectures**. However, the causes of this phenomenon remain unclear. We hypothesized that neighborhoods with a high population density are more likely to notice signs of abuse. A nationwide web-based survey of 5500 people in Japan revealed that residents of more densely populated areas were more likely to have directly seen or heard such signs of abuse. This study points out that **population densities may increase the detection of abuse**. Since child abuse is a serious social problem, we want to contribute to a society in which children can live happily. For this purpose, we are studying the characteristics of how people report possible child abuse to child guidance centers and other governmental agencies.

Purpose

To minimize damage caused by child abuse, child guidance centers must quickly obtain information about such suspected cases. This study investigates factors that influence citizen reports of possible child abuse.

Study 1: Population density and reports

Purpose

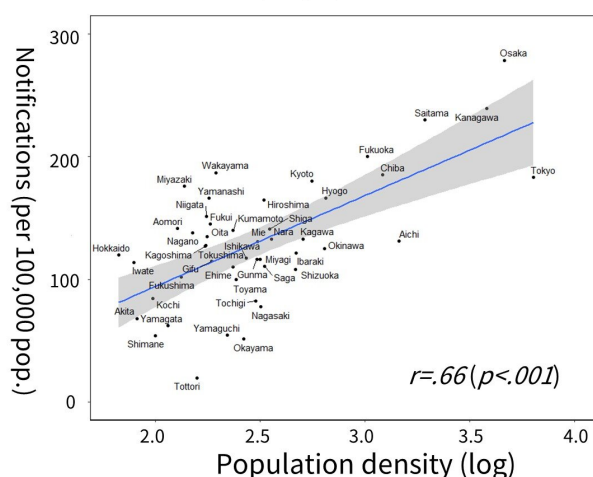
To quantitatively understand relationship between degree of urbanization and child abuse reports by examining the relationship using population density.

Method

Using publicly available government statistical data, we examined correlation between population density of a prefecture and number of abuse reports.

Result

Prefectures with higher population density had more child abuse notifications per population.



Study 2 examines reasons for this phenomenon.

Study 2: Ease of recognizing child abuse

Purpose

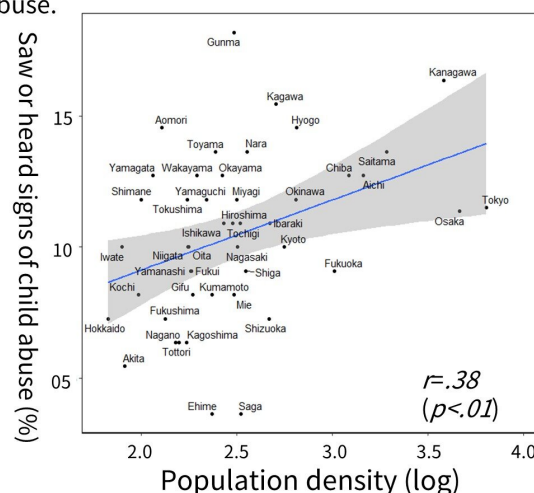
To examine whether ease of recognizing signs of abuse is one reason why number of notifications is higher in more densely populated areas.

Method

Nationwide web-based survey of 5,500 adults asked whether they had directly seen or heard any signs of possible child abuse in past three years.

Result

Respondents in more densely populated areas were more likely to report having seen or heard signs of abuse.



Ease of noticing signs of abuse, such as suspicious noises, affected notifications.

Conclusion

Ease of noticing child abuse might impact number of notifications of possible child abuse. A system must be designed for collecting information on child abuse that is tailored to regional characteristics.

References

[1] Masafumi Matsuda, Yuko Okumura, Tessei Kobayashi, Hiroki Higuchi, "Regional Differences in Notification of Abuse to Child Guidance Centers -Analysis Using Prefectural Population Density," *Journal of Health and Welfare Statistics*, Vol. 70, No. 13, pp. 2-6, 2023. (In Japanese)

Contact

Masafumi Matsuda

Child Development Research Group, Innovative Communication Laboratory