

Is the Risk of Dementia Higher Among Agricultural Workers? A Longitudinal Study from JAGES

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Abstract:

Previous research indicates that dementia is more common in rural areas. However, it is unclear whether this is due to rural living conditions or the larger number of agricultural workers. This study examines if the risk of dementia is linked to living in a rural area or working in agriculture.

We analyzed six years of data from the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study (JAGES), which included older adults not certified for long-term care. The main outcome was the incidence of dementia, and the key factors were the degree of urbanization and engagement in agriculture. Agricultural work was defined by the longest-held occupation reported in a self-administered questionnaire. Multilevel analysis was used, adjusting for sex, age, and socioeconomic status.

Our findings show that living in rural areas increases the risk of dementia compared to urban areas. However, working in agriculture does not add extra risk. This suggests that other rural factors contribute to the higher dementia incidence.