

Construction of urban community care service in our country

— Based on survey of empty nesters in Beijing Beixinqiao Street

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Abstract. The April 2011 sixth census data showed that 0-14 years old accounted for 16.60% of the total population, down 6.29 percentage points than in 2000; 60 years and above accounted for 13.26% of the total population, up 2.93 percentage points than in 2000; 8.87% of the population aged 65 and above of the total population, up from 1.91 percent in 2000. Young and old ratio is seriously imbalanced, the aging process of the population is obviously fastened. In the family structure, the average population per household is 3.10 people, down 0.34 than in 2000. The proportion of nuclear families decreased significantly, single-person households increased significantly. With the weakening of family pension, social pension costs too high, insufficient supply, community services for the aged gradually coming into sight in recent years, and become a focus in recent studies. Based on this, the analysis found the following issues need to be solved: gradual weakening of family support services, community home care model needs to be improved and the quality of social pension institutions still need to be enhanced. This paper took Beixinqiao Street empty nesters as subject for the survey, taking the elderly demand as the starting point, to orient in meeting the needs of the elderly. It investigated over their living conditions, mental status, and many other aspects, then analyzed and summarized the demand of Beixinqiao Street empty nesters for elderly services, trying to explore for the most suitable community home-based care model for the status quo.

1. Introduction

There is currently no consensus on the definition of empty-nester, but in summary there are three main opinions about the definition of empty-nester: the first definition is that after the last child of the family grow up and leaves the family, there are only one or two elderly people live in the family, who are called empty-nester; the second definition is that family that only contains one or two elderly people, who are defined as empty-nester; the third definition is that family that is childless or children being far away. The research subject in this thesis are those families that only contain elderly people beyond 60 years old, childless or children being far away, despite they are living by themselves or in pairs.

2. Research design

2.1 Research methods and tools.

Quantitative research is to discover the quantity regularity of things by the way of statistics, then to unravel the nature of things. The focus of quantitative research is to unravel the root nature of things through numbers, that is to say, to reflect the status quo, categories and inter-relations of things through accurately-measured data and charts, which will comparatively clarify the unclear, blurry social phenomena. [1] this thesis adopted quantitative research, carrying out data collection, analysis, summary in strict accordance to the specific methodology of quantitative research. This research has adopted two tools: data collection tool and data analysis tool. The former one is questionnaire, which in this thesis is self-completed closed questionnaire. The latter one is spss20.0, the most frequently-used data analysis tool.

2.2 Research subject.

Due to the objective limitation, and by the principle of convenient sampling, this thesis takes empty-nesters living in Beixinqiao Street Beijing near the place where the author lives as research subject. Among the 300 elderly people being investigated, males constitute 35%, on the other hand, females constitute 65%; elders aged between 60 to 69 constitute 36.8%, elders aged 70 to 79 constitute 40%, elders aged 80 to 89 constitute 16.4%, and elders aged beyond 90 constitute 6.8%.

2.3 Data collection and analysis.

This questionnaire is given out and collected with the help of Beixinqiao Street Community. This research gave out 300 questionnaire and collect back 296 valid ones, with the valid recovery rate 98%. And then this author defined variables, recorded data, and analyzed the data through spss19.0.

3. Results analysis

3.1 General introduction to empty nester living in Beixinqiao Street.

The research discovered that among the empty nesters investigated, 50.76% lived alone, 49.24% lived in couples; the most majority found their lives well-secured financially, and found it pleasant; 63.46% believed they could take care of themselves, 29.23% needed some help from others, needed others to take full care of them; the most majority of them had been educated to the level of junior high school or senior high school; the most majority of them worked for the state-owned enterprises before they retired, so the empty-nesters of Beixinqiao Street could be dubbed as “elder of new generation”. Elder of new generation refers to after the year 2010, academically changed elder generation aged beyond 60 years old. Before the year, elders were widely not educated, after the year, two thirds of elders had been educated at least in primary school level. [2]

3.2 Empty nesters' caring and service need in Beixinqiao Street.

The current division of elder's specific needs is different from person to person. J. J Glassman et al pointed out that age, gender, income, living arrangement, body condition and family support all have influence over elders' needs of social welfare; D. J Challis, on the other hand, focused more on the influence of social segregation and feeling of loneliness over elders' needs; [3] Professor Chenlixing divided elders' needs into six aspects, including materialistic life, spiritual and cultural life, life quality, self-mentality, rights and benefits they get, living environment. [4]

This research analyzed Beixinqiao Street empty nesters' needs in three aspects: economic situation, daily living situation and psychological situation.

3.3 Economic situation.

After entered old age, with working capabilities decreased obviously, elders also lost a big part of their incomes. This research investigated about the income source and daily expense of empty nesters living in Beixinqiao Street. And the result showed that the biggest part of their income come from retirement pension and children' support. Daily expense mainly includes food and health care. And during the investigation process, this research also found out that more elder tend to prevent disease, with 20% of their daily expenses on health care products. It was known that the majority of elders found the current economic income and social medical insurance unsatisfying at the time when there is no critical illness. So elders from Beixinqiao Street pay lots of attention to daily health care and health maintenance. The most majority of the investees found their lives well-secured and satisfying. Among all of them, 71.5% found their lives well-secured, 25.4% found their lives basically secured, and 3.1% found their lives had no guarantee. (as shown in figure one). It also needs attention that guarantee is merely a low level guarantee, only limiting to basic daily living guarantees such as eating, wearing, living and do on.

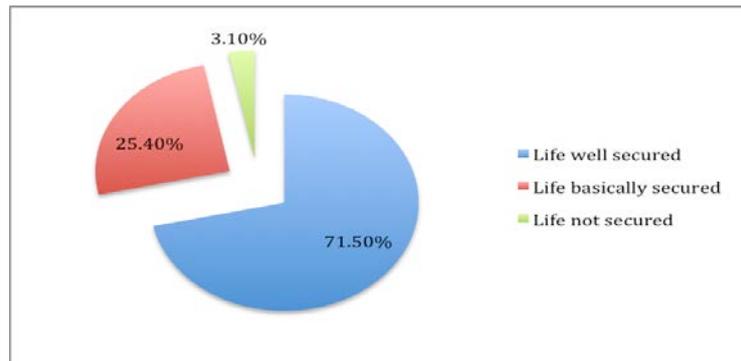


Figure 1 life security situation for Beixinqiao Street empty nesters

4. Daily live situation

4.1 Inter-generational relations.

Over half of the investees express their willingness to live with their children (51.92% of the investees want to live with their children, 27.31% of the investees don't want to live with their children, 20.38% simply don't care, 0.39% are childless). Regardless of their willingness to live with children, over half of the investees hope their children work nearby, which will be convenient for both contact and care providing. And the biggest problem when comes to live with their children is the different life style.

The survey investigated over the attitude of elders to take care of the third generation, 34.36% are willing to help their children, 7.34% do not want to, 50.96% feel powerless to take care of the third-generation, 7.34% do not care to take care of the third generation. Elders who are willing to help their children with third generation usually aged 66-72 years old, which are mostly elderly couples or female elderly. Elders who feel powerless to take care of the third generation are often more than 75 years old, which more than often suffering from chronic diseases. Those who do not want to help their children with third generation are usually aged 60-65 years, most of who are just retired at home with rich amateur life, energetic, more than half of whom will pursue the unfinished dream of their young age. Most of the 60 years old or so elderly women have not yet quit menopause, with mood more impetuous, highly likely to affect third generations' emotions and shape them into lively children. Raising the third generation requires not only physical but also intellectual labor.

4.2 Live care needs.

The survey data showed that 4.23% of the respondents were very healthy, 27.69% were comparatively healthy, 44.62% were generally healthy, 20.77% were not healthy and 2.69% were very unhealthy. From another point of view, the respondents need to be taken care of others can also reflect their physical health conditions: 63.46% of respondents believe that they currently can take care of themselves, 29.23% of respondents have need for some help, 7.31% of the respondents need to be completely taken care of.

4.3 Recreational ways.

The main forms of entertainment of the respondents were as follows: watching TV (70.38%), walking (37.69%), playing cards (6.15%), traveling (8.08%), no entertainment (1.15%) and others (6.54%). Elders who prefer to watch TV choose health programs than other programs. 22.31% of the respondents prefer to keep pets, 47.69% do not like pets, 30% of the respondents hold good or indifferent attitude. In summary, Beixinqiao Street empty nester prefer to entertain themselves at home, rarely participate in community-based activities.

4.4 Psychological situations.

The survey includes expectations for children, and the results are as follows: the proportion of elders who hope that children will be the family's financial sources is 12.69%, and the proportion of elders who want to communicate with their children spiritually is 44.62%. The proportion of elders who hope their children to work near home to facilitate the care is 31.54%. From this set of data the conclusion could be drawn as such, North New Bridge Street empty nester greatest expectation from

their children is the soul communication. Another set of data can also be an indirect indicator of the elderly's spiritual needs in the process of taking care of the elderly, which is the problems the elderly are most afraid of encountering in their elderly. These problems are lonely soul, daily life without care, security, alone physical labor, living in poverty, etc.

4.5 The Empty Nesters' Tendency to the Way of Old - age Service in Beixinqiao Street.

At present, there are three main ways in China's urban community aging service system: family pension, community home-based care and institutional pension. Among those, family care for the aged is the most traditional way of providing for the aged in our country. The care provided by family members to the elderly is still what the old people want the most. Therefore, at present family care is our country's main aging care service; the community home-based care is a new way of age care. It takes family as the core, and it bases on community, relies on professional services. The care service provided by the community for the elderly has the specialized, personalized and social characteristics. And it could make a big endowment with small investment income. Thus it could save social resources, create a social atmosphere, enhance the sense of belonging of the elderly while providing services; institutional pension refers to the system where elderly will be entrusted to some social care institutions by their children, which provide accommodation for the elderly.

According to the three main ways of family pension, community home-based care and institutional pension, the author gives the elderly three options in the design of the questionnaire and explains these three ways in detail when issuing the questionnaire. After survey, the following data were obtained: 51.51% of the respondents still think that the family pension is the best way to support the elderly, 26.54% of the respondents' ideal way is community pension, 18.08% of the respondents prefer to use the institutional care. The data show that, the family pension is still the ideal way for the elderly, but the community home-based care and professional pension agencies are gradually accepted by the elderly.

5. The analysis of the problem of the urban community pension service based on the investigation of empty nesters in Beixinqiao street

5.1 Traditional family care function gradually weakened.

Traditional family pension is the main pension way of traditional family. Family pension can make the elderly receive their children's regular care, which have a very positive role for the elderly' daily life and spiritual comfort. However, with the continuous improvement of people's living standards and the implementation of the family planning policy, China's family development has the trend of miniaturization and coreization, and the proportion of extended family is gradually reduced. The weakening of the core function of the old family structure has become an inevitable result. In addition, the traditional concept of pension is gradually changing with the development of society. In recent years, the pressure of rising prices makes the younger generation inadequate in the maintenance of the spiritual and material aspects of the elderly. "Eating the old clan" team is constantly expanding, which effects a certain degree of dilution of the concept and awareness of old-age pension in modern society.

5.2 The community home-based care model is still to be improved.

Community home-based care model can provide better and more professional pension services, but better and more professional services need more funds and a larger place as a basis for support. Without these support, community home-based pension will not be able to be carried out, or steadily developed. At present, China's community has not enough investment funds for the community home-based care. And public funds that could be donated to community pension system are also very limited. Therefore, the lack of funds is the main dilemma facing the current community home-based pension. In addition, the community home-based care needs a large number of professionals with professional service capabilities. Especially because of funding problems, it needs more volunteers to participate. However, the professional skills of current community home-based care services for the elderly are poor, and staff did not receive a complete and systematic of professional training, thus

cannot provide targeted services. Therefore, the lack of professionals is the second largest obstacle facing the community home-based care service system.

5.3 The quality of social pension institutions needs to be improved.

As the investigation show, the old people of Beixinqiao Street have a better understanding of the institutional pension than the community home-based case for old-age. There are still some problems in these institutions. One of the most important issues is the quality of pension agencies. At present, China's social pension agencies could only provide a single content of old-age services, and their facilities conditions are relatively poor. The high-grade services cost too much, and the low-grade's services are poor, thus overall cannot meet the needs of diversified needs. In addition, the social pension agencies also lack a relatively professional service concept, and its management is also mainly based on their own interests, not paying enough attention to the needs of the elderly.

6. Suggestions on Improving China's Urban Community Service System for the Aged

6.1 Take family pension as the foundation, strengthen the social moral propaganda.

From the above analysis, it could be seen that the empty nesters in Beixinqiao Street need financial assistance and spiritual comfort from family members, especially children to meet. Family pension model is still the most basic old-age service model, and is also the one that will be able to make old-age happy, is also the one the empty nest elderly want to get among all old-age service models. Therefore, in the future for a long time, home care is still the major pension model. To build our urban social pension service system, the family pension service must be taken as the basis, and the society need to vigorously carry forward the tradition of respecting the elderly in China, so that the elderly are "old-fashioned by the old".

6.2 Take community-based home care for the elderly as basis, improve the social home care services.

Community home care system is an important way of the future of urban community service system. The using of community resources to provide people with old-age services could create more jobs, mobilize a lot of idle resources. In the process of community improving the social home care services, the government should accurately locate functions to promote the development of old-age services. In addition, it is necessary to increase capital investment, increase funding sources, broaden the community home care service system, and guide the various units to participate in the building of social home care service system, making the investment diversified, with various forces to support community home service. In order to truly meet the personalized and professional needs of the elderly, community home services should gradually rationalize the content of services, and get a real understanding of the needs of the elderly, and provide targeted pension services for the elderly, in order to improve service quality. What need to be pointed out is that it is necessary to strengthen the community home care service team building, organize more pension-related professional training to improve the professional level of the community home care service team to provide strong protection for community home-based care services.

6.3 Take institutional pension as supplement, improve the service capacity of pension agencies.

Social old-age care agencies is an important force in the community service system for the aged. It is also the main place for the "three noes" in Chinese cities for a long time. And the current needs of China's pension agencies is still great, growing faster and faster. But overall, the overall level of development of pension institutions in China is still lagging behind. Frequent occurrence of vicious incidents of pension agencies in recent years also arouses our reflection. Therefore, to build a sound urban community home care service system, we must improve the service capacity of pension agencies. Specifically, it can be improved from the following aspects: government and other agencies need to give professional guidance and help to support; pension institutions have a clear functional orientation, to provide special services, and build the characteristics of business; we need to strengthen the institutional pension team, improve the quality of the staff level, improve the existing the situation where nursing staff number is inadequate, with low wages and high turnover rate.

7. Summary

At present, the issue of pension service has been the focus of attention, not only to a family, but also to all levels of the population, but also to all aspects of society. And it is related to the welfare of many people. It is of great significance for the construction of the urban community pension service system, which is also necessary for the benign development of the whole society. With the continuous development of society, the traditional family pension model has been unable to support the needs of the entire community for old-age services. Thus it is necessary to explore a wide range of old-age service model. And community home-based care services and social pension agencies service are to be the important supplement ways for the traditional family pension. To build a sound urban community home care service system, we must improve these three old-age service models, seeking a wide range of old-age services.

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