

Report: '30 to see 18% of elderly men living alone

Kyodo News

The proportion of Japan's elderly male population living alone is expected to surge within the next 20 years, according to a government white paper released Friday.

The report also said the number of people aged 65 or older hit an all-time high of 29.01 million as of last Oct. 1, accounting for 22.7 percent of the total population, up 0.6 percentage point from a year before.

Among men aged 65 or older, the percentage of those living alone is projected to jump to 17.8 percent in 2030 from 11.0 percent in 2010, according to the government's 2010 report on the aging society.

As for elderly women, the percentage of those living alone is expected to edge up to 20.9 percent from 19.4 percent during the same period, the white paper said.

Among factors listed as behind the trend are a rise in single-person households and childless households, declining marriage rates and rising divorces.

Single-household elderly tend to become isolated from society and as a result some may go unnoticed even after death while others may end up committing crimes, the paper said.

The report also warned that isolation from society makes these people vulnerable to commercial fraud targeting the elderly, resulting in a sharp increase in such crimes.

Given these potential problems, each community should provide support for the elderly to increase their interaction with others, the report said.

Another survey showed a marked 24.4 percent of men aged 60 or older polled having nobody to whom they could turn when they are in trouble. The rate was much higher than among women in the same age category, of which only 9.3 percent had nobody to rely on.

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