

1 in 4 Japanese has thought of suicide: government survey

Kyodo

The Cabinet Office said Wednesday in announcing the results of a government survey that 1 out of 4 Japanese adults has contemplated suicide, with young people more prone to such thoughts than others.

The outcome "probably reflects the difficulty of finding jobs amid the economic slump, the increase in nonregular employees and weak personal relations," the office said.

The January survey received 2,017 valid responses from Japanese aged 20 and older. Of the pollees, 23.4 percent had thought of committing suicide, up 4.3 percentage points from the previous and first such survey, which was conducted in 2008.

By sex, the ratio stood at 27.1 percent for women and 19.1 percent for men.

People in their 20s were found to be more prone to suicidal thoughts than those in other age brackets, with 28.4 percent of those respondents having contemplated suicide. Of the young respondents, 36.2 percent said they had thought of killing themselves during the past year.

By age bracket, 25.0 percent of the respondents in their 30s had suicidal thoughts, as did 27.3 percent of those in their 40s, 25.7 percent of those in their 50s, 20.4 percent of respondents in their 60s and 15.7 percent for those aged 70 and older.

Asked how they overcame the desire to kill themselves, 38.8 percent said they revealed their feelings to family members, friends, fellow workers and other people close to them. In addition, 38.6 percent said they diverted their attention to work or hobbies, while 18.0 percent took as much time off as possible.

To a multiple-answer question on how the March 11, 2011, disasters may have changed the way they feel or think, 64.3 percent said it had made them recognize more strongly the importance of relations with other people, while 54.3 percent said it made them realize the need to make their own efforts to protect themselves and their families.

Some 41.7 percent said they now feel more insecure, while 7.5 percent said there was no change in the way they feel or think.

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