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## Communication as care for the elderly

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Communication has important implications for the building of personal relationships and for human dignity. Such being the case, we first conducted a survey of the actual situation of the communication between the elderly and their caregivers. The result showed that there were two types of verbal communications between the elderly and their caregivers. One is “Type I communication” (Task-Performatory communication) based on a variety of nursing or care service, and it accounted for 75.9% of the total. The other is “Type II communication” (Life-Worldly communication) based on family, business, and social events of their normal social life, and it was found that the latter elicited more speech from the elderly than the former did.

In a second-stage survey, we then implemented an educational intervention for the care staff to facilitate “Type II talking,” and measured its effectiveness. Although the result showed that the effectiveness varied between facilities, the amount of time the care staff spent on type II talking increased significantly a week after the intervention and, at the same time, the amount of time the elderly spent on type II talking and on voluntary speech increased significantly. The reasons were that the care staff provided topics on the world of living to which the elderly belong, as the topics they should talk about; that the response from the elderly was supported by the care staff’s laughter, their expression of agreement, and their expression of strong interest; and that the elderly were given opportunities to develop the topics by being treated as “speakers.”

## Biography

Yasuko Fukaya has completed her PhD at 1999 from Tokyo University, Japan. She is Professor, Department of Home Care Nursing, at Kanto Gakuin University, Japan.

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