



Exploring Reasons for Choosing a Mode of Care Service: A Comparative Analysis between the Elderly in Chinese Rural and Urban Areas

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Abstract. The aging is getting worse in China, and elders need more time to think what modes of care service they choose. But there are disparities in finance, education and medical resources distribution especially. With these disparities, this article is about the elderly's reasons for choosing home-based care, community care and institutional care service between urban and rural areas. The result of this research can be a starting point for the development of elder care in the future. Different solutions can be measured for the shortage of urban and rural areas. This research analyzes about thirty studies from CNKI from 2005 to 2022. By the way, the author made a questionnaire survey in a small city in Shandong Province of the reasons for choosing these three modes. Elders' financial basis, traditional perceptions, health conditions, and workplace of their children are influence factors of the reasons for choosing home-based care in urban and rural areas. The quality of medical care, the ability to take care of the disabled and the medical resources the community provides have a foremost status for elders to choose community care. Economic basis and better service are the reasons for elders to institutions care.

Keywords: Elderly Care Service, Urban Areas, Rural Areas.

1 Introduction

The aging situation in China is serious in the world, the aging people need more social concern and support. It is expected that the elderly population in China will exceed 300 million by 2025, and the disabled and semi-disabled elderly will increase from 40 million in 2015 to 97.5 million in 2050. The elderly population over 80 years old is growing even faster^[1]. With the development of urban areas, more and more young people prefer working in cities. As a result, the appearance of abundant empty-nest elders in rural areas aroused social concern and attention^[2]. However, the current situation of pension care in urban has more advantages than that in rural with the development of the economic and expansion of the market^[3]. In China, a situation of elders that society wants to form is the old have something to be supported, something to rely on, something to enjoy, and something to gain. But there are a lot of challenges visible in the field of

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caring for elders. By the way, establishing a comprehensive system for old-age care is one of the urgent assignments after China entered a well-off society [4]. The increase of aging amplifies the stress of young people. In China's traditional view, it's the children's responsibility to take care of their parents. However, with the development of old-care market and progressive policy practices, elders have a more comprehensive environment to be provided care services [5]. Present society has three fundamental modes of care service for elders. The home-based care, community care and institutional care service. But different elders have different reasons for choosing their favored mode. And there is a disparity between elders in urban and rural areas. This article is a study on the differences between urban and rural elderly people in their choice of ways to support the elderly. Through the comparative analysis of the causes of the elderly in urban and rural areas, the relevant government departments should issue more targeted policies to improve the allocation of regional medical resources, which is more conducive to the standardization of the old-care market and the improvement of various old-care models. After China entered a well-off society, the gap between the demand and the social supply of elderly care became more obvious [6]. Only by identifying the problems can we promote the high-quality development of the socialization and industrialization of the elderly care service. After reading some of the existing literature, the author found that most of the current literature was separate research on urban and rural areas, and the literature on specific regions, specific reasons for old-care and specific populations was relatively rich. There are only a few articles comparing and analyzing the choices of regional urban and rural pension modes. The existing studies only describe the current situation, but lack measures to solve the causes. This article describes reasons and comparative analysis for elders in urban and rural choosing three modes in sequence.

2 Comparisons

The mode of care service for the elderly has three different kinds, home-based care for the aged, community care service for the aged, and institutional care service for the aged. Most elderly people in China will choose one of them to be their road for the reminded decades. But elderly people in rural and urban areas have different choices.

2.1 Home-based Care

In China, home-based care for the aged is a traditional choice. Because family is an important and special concept in the Chinese mind.

The aged in rural areas.

Firstly, they grow up on the land and feed on the cereal on the land. The land plot that the Chinese have had since ancient times is still common in urbanization. Their houses rely on the land, which means the land links the aged and house as a tie. They prefer to spend their lives in their own house, instead of moving to urban areas [7]. Secondly, the elderly in rural get used to the environment and lifestyle around them. Quiet

and slow pace and circle of friends are better than in the urban. If they were moved to the urban following their children, it would be a challenge for them to adapt to the new environment. Tension, aloneness, and pressure will harm their emotion [8]. Thirdly, the lack of sectional nursing homes urges the elderly in rural choose home-based care. One of the problems of nursing homes in rural is the imbalance between supply and demand [9]. In the seventh census of China, the proportion of the elderly population in rural areas was 23.81% and that in urban areas was 15.82% [10]. However, an insufficient supply of community old-age care and institutional old-age care in rural areas. There will be more than 34000 rural care service institutions in 2021. The number is much less than in cities. Lack of economic and medical resources limits the distribution in the marketization of nursing homes in rural areas.

The elderly in urban areas

Home-based care is the most common choice. But compared to the rural, the reason has some distinction. Firstly, the market for hiring nannies is more expensive than in rural areas [11]. It's a convenient and efficient kind of lifestyle that the aged live with nannies, especially the aged suffering from chronic diseases or the disabled [12]. Nanny's responsibility is not only to do the cooking and cleaning but also to pay attention to the healthy state of the aged. What's more, nannies can serve partly as children in affective interaction. Nannies prefer to export the pleasure of company to the aged because they want to establish an affinity with the aged to have a comfortable workplace environment [13]. During the employment relationship, both the aged and nanny can get more feedback of emotion and it's a process of mutual profit. Secondly, most of the aged in urban have a part of stable and relatively higher pension [14]. The department in which they used to work will give them a safeguard. Compared with the aged in rural areas, they will be more relaxed about facing the economic problems of old aged life. The aged choosing home-based care in rural are relying more on the finance they made at a young. Thirdly, inequality in medical insurance is common between urban and rural [3]. Compared with rural areas, urban areas enjoy more medical resources [3]. Under this condition, medical insurance provide more diversity of service for the aged. But in rural, the lack of medical service won't be got the same level as in the city in a short time [15]. Fourth, according to the author's questionnaire survey, 44.44% of the elderly live with their children in the same city, and children can provide help in life for their parents. However, their children in rural prefer to work in the city and settle down there. This leads to geographical alienation between the aged and children (See Figure 1).

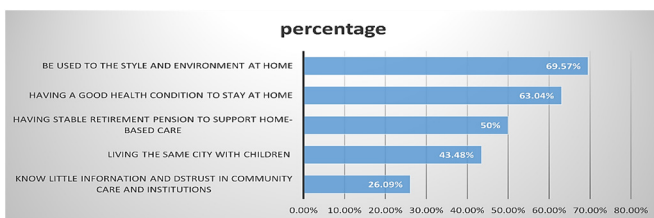


Fig. 1. Reasons for the aged choose home-based care (The data was collected by the author)

The author made a questionnaire survey focused on choices and reasons for the modes of care service for the aged. The number of aged participating questionnaire survey is sixty. They will select the answers to the questions they pretend. According to the quantitative research data, the author does a further comparative analysis to get the results and reasons for the elderly choose the pension mode. From the survey, there are also common reasons for choosing a homed-based care service. Firstly, 63.04% of the aged think that their current status of health can support choosing this mode. Secondly, 26.09% of the elderly consider a lack of understanding of nursing homes and institutions which leads to distrust of a nursing homes [16].

2.2 Community Care Service

Community care service is based on the family as the core and the community as the auxiliary, to provide daily care and spiritual comfort. The community is a regional social life community. It has a function that the government and the market can't be replaced in the realization of human care and social services offered for the elderly.

The aged in urban areas

The supply of community care services in the city is better than in rural areas, so the aged in urban has more choices than the aged in rural. Firstly, the aged tend to reduce the mental and financial stress of children [17]. Especially when parents and children are in different cities, both of them think it's a good way to reduce their worries. To some extent, the community shares the children's concerns about the elderly's daily situation [18]. This is an aim that the aged want to achieve. However, in rural areas, empty-nest elderly doesn't understand the mode of community care service. In their opinion, children should be responsible for their old life [19]. However, most children tend to work in the city and neglect their families. At the same time, more conflicts arise within the family and then form a bad circle. Secondly, the community care service will hold a wide range of services that include boarding, therapeutic and nursing care, rehabilitation, and cultural activities [20]. Urban communities are more executive than rural communities. They have more experience and resources than rural areas in providing diverse services. These various services will satisfy the aged both physical and mental needs. At the same time, the aged will build new friendships and new social relationships to enjoy the circle of the aged [21]. These reasons tempt elders in urban to choose community care services.

The aged in rural areas

Compared with the advantages of community care service in urban, this mode in rural areas has more problems to solve. Firstly, community care service in rural areas lacks the ability to take care of disabled elders [22]. As vulnerable groups, they need more special attention which is not just from family but from the community. Readers can comprehend it as part of social support theory and this theory also applies to medical services [23]. But obviously, rural areas need more attempts to practice this theory. However, more and more of the disabled in urban are willing to choose community care

services. Secondly, the elderly having good health conditions in rural will not choose community care services [24]. In most rural areas, the neighborhood and blood ties of the elderly in rural community areas can provide some mutual care for their daily life. Mutual support care in rural can replace community care and child care to a certain extent [25].

2.3 Institutional Care Service

Institutions for elders are divided into two kinds: government and personal and the former for public welfare, the latter for profit. Compared with urban and rural areas, institutional care services for the aged are common in urban, because urban areas have smoother traffic, elders with education, and enough supply of medical resources. The servable market in urban is more extensive than in rural areas. According to the author's questionnaire survey, only a few of elders choose institutional care services (See Figure 2). At the same time, this group of elders has a stable pension and a higher level of social support [26].

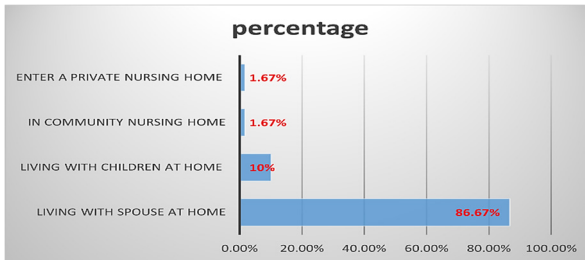


Fig. 2. The elderly is more inclined to the mode of care service (The data was collected by the author)

The aged in urban areas

In urban areas, the distribution of institutions is connected with economic conditions [27]. And the reason they choose institutional care service is that professional nursing staff can carry out service. Because under market conditions, better service means more profit to some extent. And private pension institutions are the product of the demand market, therefore the choice of endowment institution is a disguised choice of service quality.

The aged in rural areas

However, in rural areas, elders are more tend to choose governmental institutions. Firstly, it's a public welfare and the cost is related to affordable. And more importantly, relatively satisfactory services can be provided to the elderly under their family's economic capacity. In comparison between the two choices in rural and urban, what can reach the preconditions that elders choose the type of institutional care is economic support. Secondly, most of the elders won't choose institutional care, because their health can support home-based care [28]. The requirements of the rural elderly for quality

of life are smaller than those of the urban elderly. Their early life environment influenced their choice of current living environment.

Above all, these three modes of care service have different reasons to be suitable for elders in urban and rural. And every mode still faces problems needed to be solved. The aged in urban and rural areas will make their own choices based on their emotional appeal, economic conditions, objective resource allocation, cognitive level, and so on.

3 Discussion

3.1 The Traditional Value and Market of Elders

In home-based care, the most popular mode, the traditional value of elders is one of the most significant reasons^[7]. The land is tied between the rural elders and their life. And the land determines the lifestyle they like. The root of life is necessary for them, and traditional opinion is connected with land which influences most of the elders to choose home-based care. Because of the traditional value, most elders in the past thought it was the children's responsibility to give them a satisfied life when they are old^[13]. But at present, some of them have transformed this value. They realized that their old life should be created by themselves, their children, and their community together^[28]. With this demand, more institutions came to the demand market. Focus on rural areas, both of government and market should try more attempt to establish an environment for elders. The government put more economical, policy, and surprise supply into rural areas^[29].

3.2 The Distinguish of Service between Nanny of Home-based Hare and home-nurses of Community Care

Nanny comes from the market and they don't have professional skills in nursing. What they do in the family is just to do cleaning, cooking and paying attention to the healthy state of the aged. However, because the shortage of home-based care can't meet the growing special needs of the elderly, so family-nurses for the elderly are becoming more and more popular^[30]. But the quality of family nursing isn't as good as people think^[30]. Both the technical and professional aspects of home care need to be greatly improved. Especially for some elderly people with chronic diseases and limited self-care ability, nursing staff should have specialized knowledge and skills for special elderly people^[12].

3.3 The Disparity of Medical Resources Supply between Urban and Rural Areas

In China, the imbalance of medical resources is only a part of the disparity between urban and rural areas^[31]. The reason for the huge gap between urban and rural medical resources lies in unbalanced economic development. The government should give greater investment and intervention in the matching of urban and rural medical supplies^[32].

3.4 Limitations

When analyzing the level of elderly care services in cities, the author did not study the classification of cities in China. Theoretically, China's cities are divided into four levels, and there are also cities with special administrative levels such as municipalities and autonomous regions, like Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and so on. This paper only makes a comparative analysis between the urban area and rural area in the traditional sense. In the process of literature search, there is almost no literature involving the difference in urban grading service levels. What's more, such research needs to invest a lot of manpower and material resources, and the research has to take into account the variables which appear with the change of urban development level for a long time. Without these variables, the author only analyzes the urban-rural gap from the macroscopic aspect.

4 Conclusion

From these three modes of elderly care service, most elders in urban and rural will choose home-based care. Then, community care is the second selection, and institutional care is the least choice. The reasons they select modes are influenced by their traditional thinking, health condition, financial condition, the market of medical resources, the structure of the family, and so on.

From this article, elders in the city have more stable pensions than in rural in an extent. Their financial basis can be a foremost element in supporting home-based care. According to the author's statistics, the elderly and children living in the city can take care of each other and provide help in life. But young people in rural areas tend to work in cities, and empty-nest elderly live in rural areas to take care of themselves. The shortage of medical resources in rural leads elders who choose home-based care to be more abundant. Focus on community care, the quality of service in urban community care is better than that in rural. Cultural and social activities are enticing elements for elders in urban. But this supply is lacking in rural. Rural community care lacks of care ability for the disabled elderly, while the number of urban disabled elderly people choosing community pension is increasing, because of its sufficient resource and skillful nurses. The primary element for elders to consider institutional care is a financial problem. The elderly in rural areas pretend to choose governmental institutions to care for its lower cost. Part of the wealth elderly pretends personal institutions care for personalized service.

In the future, these three modes of care service will be more detailed and suitable for the various demand of elders. Researchers can explore more about the disparity of elders' wishes in the past decades. The economic base determines the superstructure. Elders will be more active and flexible in their choices as time goes by. Researchers have more space to explore more realistic reasons and proceed from the psychology of elders to explore what they really need.

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