Ageing in Japan

Home help

The government is struggling to curb the rising cost of health care

IN A SUNNY room in a small apartment in the Tokyo satellite town of Kunitachi lies Yasuyuki Ibaraki, eyes closed and breathing laboured. Yukio Miyazaki, his doctor, who visits fortnightly from a local clinic, suspects that he does not have much time left: he has brain damage from a cerebral infarction, a tumour in his digestive system and is unable to swallow or talk. Reiko, his wife, feeds him through a tube to his stomach and clears phlegm from his throat. “He is from a close-kit family and is a quiet man, so I think it is better for him to be here rather than in a hospital,” she says, over green tea and grapes.

satellite n.卫星，人造卫星

lies v.说谎，坐落在 n.谎言，状态，位置

laboured adj.吃力的，谨慎的

fornightly adj.两周的

clinic n.诊所，门诊部

cerebral adj.脑的，大脑的，理智的

infarction n.梗塞形成，梗死形成

tumour n.肿瘤，肿块，疙瘩

digestive adj/n. 消化（的）

phlegm n.痰，冷静，镇定 adj.迟钝的，冷淡的

close-kit 这里翻译为 紧密的 close-kit family 紧密的家庭

grape n.葡萄

Life expectancy in Japan is the highest in the world, at 84. This is good news for its people, but means that an ever-higher share of the population is elderly. Fully 28% of Japanese are older than 65, compared with 15% of Americans and 21% of Germans. More old people, in turn, means higher health-care costs. Last year the government budgeted ¥15trn ($138bn, or 15% of its total expenditure) for health care and nursing, excluding the charges it levies for the public health-insurance scheme. With public debt at 250% of GDP, and debt service consuming a further 24% of spending, the government is looking desperately for ways to cut costs. It reckons caring for people at home is one of its best options.

expectancy n.期待，期望

share n.股，份，占有率 v.共用，均摊，分享，分开 share of市场占有率

budget n.预算 v.预算拨款，规划 adj.价格低廉的，合理的，便宜的

expenditure n.花费，支出，费用，经费，耗费

levy n.征税，征兵 v.征收，索取，征税，征集

scheme v/n.策划，图谋，计划，体系，阴谋

desperate adj.绝望的，急切的，由绝望引起的

despite prep.不管，虽有，尽管（自己）不愿意