

Young carers in Tokyo:

Living circumstances & mental health outcomes

Daniel Stanyon, Miharu Nakanishi, Syudo Yamasaki, Mitsuhiro Miyashita, Satoshi Yamaguchi, Kaori Baba, Naomi Nakajima, Junko Niimura, Jordan DeVlyder, Mariko Hiraiwa-Hasegawa, Shuntaro Ando, Kiyoto Kasai, Atsushi Nishida

Background: prevalence & health of young carers

- Worldwide prevalence: **2-10%** of youth $\leq 18y$ ³
- Poorer transdiagnostic mental health outcomes^{4, 5}
- But:
 - Quantitative data (mostly) from English-speaking, western contexts
 - Limited studies investigating caregiving duration / age effects

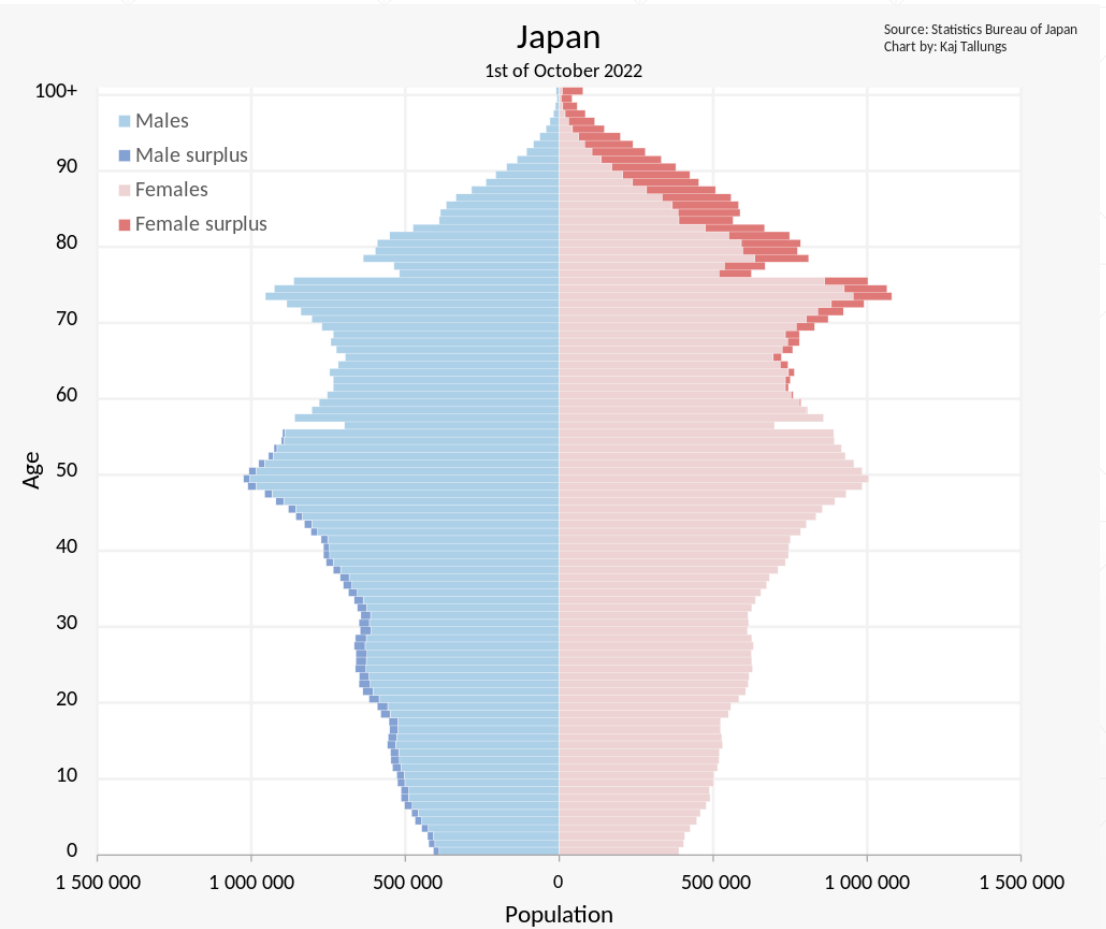
3. Leu A, Becker S. A cross-national and comparative classification of in-country awareness and policy responses to 'young carers'. *J Youth Stud* 2017;20:750-762.

4. Lacey RE, Xue B, McMunn A. The mental and physical health of young carers: A systematic review. *Lancet Public Health* 2022;7:e787-e796.

5. Fleitas Alfonso L, Singh A, Disney G, et al. Mental health of young informal carers: A systematic review. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol* 2022;57:2345-2358.

Japan's ageing society

- **1 in 5** adults ≥ 65 y projected to have dementia by 2030²
- **>30%** adults with caregiving needs named non-partner family members as primary caregivers³



1. Cabinet Office. Annual report on the aging society. Fig. 1-2-3-2 [Japanese]. 2017.

2. Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare. Comprehensive survey of living conditions 2022. Fig. 25 [Japanese]. 2023.



Young Carers: A Silent Cry for Help (2022)

NHK Documentary 11月 45分 00秒
Broadcast on July 17, 2022 / Available until July 17, 2023

“Action for Children’s Futures”, Tokyo Metropolitan Government (2023)



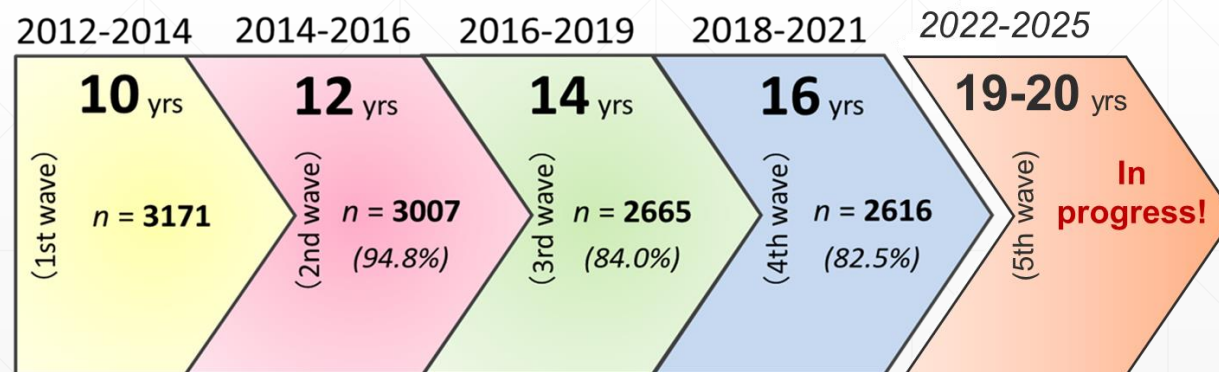
“Do you know a young carer?” public awareness campaign, Child & Families Agency (2023)

1. What are the demographic and household characteristics of young carers in Tokyo?
2. What are the mental health outcomes of Tokyo's young carers? Do these differ by caregiving duration / age?

Research themes

The Tokyo Teen Cohort (TTC) study

- Prospective, longitudinal cohort survey
- Survey waves at **10y, 12y, 14y & 16y**
- ***n*=3171** child-parent pairs at baseline (2012, 10y)
- Young participants born **Sept 2002-Aug 2004**





Caregiving status (10y, 12y, 14y, 16y)

「お子さんは、家族の中の、お年寄り、病気の人、または体の不自由な人のお世話をどのくらいしますか。」

“How often does your child look after someone within your family who is elderly, or has an illness or disability?”

“Every day / almost every day” -> **Young carer** (~3%)

- 1 time: **Short-term carer** (~2%)
- 2+ times: **Long-term carer** (~1%)

“A few times a week” to “Never” -> **Non-carer**

How likely are young carers to be/have...

	10 Years	12 Years	14 Years	16 Years
 Girl	1.96 (1.17–3.28)	1.80 (1.10–2.96)	1.21 (0.75–1.94)	1.81 (1.08–3.03)
 2+ siblings	1.17 (0.88–1.56)	1.28 (0.97–1.70)	1.05 (0.79–1.39)	1.26 (0.94–1.68)
 Single parent household	0.73 (0.20–2.62)	2.09 (0.82–5.33)	1.59 (0.71–3.58)	0.95 (0.35–2.60)
 Low household income (<4mil yen per year)	1.21 (0.53–2.74)	1.27 (0.54–2.95)	2.98 (1.43–6.20)	2.02 (0.84–4.85)
 Cohabiting with grandparent(s)	4.97 (2.82–8.77)	5.88 (3.40–10.17)	7.67 (4.57–12.86)	8.28 (4.77–14.38)

Unadjusted (crude) associations, represented by Odds Ratios (OR).
 Analysis sample $n=2,331$; numbers in brackets represents 95% confidence intervals.

*Nakanishi, Stanyon, Yamasaki, ... & Nishida (2024),
 International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health*

Looking longitudinally

At 10 years	Short-term carer	Long-term carer
 Girl	1.31 (0.93–1.85)	1.73 (0.97–3.07)
 2+ siblings	1.10 (0.88–1.38)	1.21 (0.87–1.66)
 Single parent household	0.80 (0.34–1.89)	1.74 (0.71–4.29)
 Low annual income (<4mil yen)	1.30 (0.72–2.34)	1.41 (0.65–3.05)
 Cohabiting with grandparent(s)	4.75 (3.10–7.28)	8.55 (4.69–15.61)

Unadjusted (crude) associations, represented by Odds Ratios (OR).
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Mental health outcomes

Depression: Short Mood & Feelings Questionnaire
(≥ 8 = depression)

Self-harm: 「この1年以内に、自分で自分を故意に傷つけてしまったことはありましたか。」

“Within the past year, have you ever hurt yourself on purpose?” (Yes/No)

Suicidality: 「これまでに生きていても仕方がないと考えたことはありましたか。」

“Have you ever felt that your life was no longer worth living?” (Yes/No)

日本語	English
Q1. 悲しい気持ちになったり、楽しくなかったりした	Q1. I felt miserable or unhappy
Q2. 何をしても楽しなかった	Q2. I didn't enjoy anything at all
Q3. とても疲れていて、座っているだけだったり、何もしなかったりした	Q3. I felt so tired I just sat around and did nothing
Q4. とても落ち着かなかった	Q4. I was very restless
Q5. これ以上何もよくならないと感じた	Q5. I felt I was no good anymore
Q6. たくさん泣いた	Q6. I cried a lot
Q7. ちゃんと考えたり集中したりすることが難しかった	Q7. I found it hard to think properly or concentrate
Q8. 自分のことが嫌だった	Q8. I hated myself
Q9. 悪い子どもだった	Q9. I was a bad person
Q10. さみしかった	Q10. I felt lonely
Q11. 誰も自分のことを本当に好きではないと思った	Q11. I thought nobody really loved me
Q12. ほかの子ども達のように良い子にはなれないと思った	Q12. I thought I could never be as good as other kids
Q13. すべてのことがうまくいかなかった	Q13. I did everything wrong



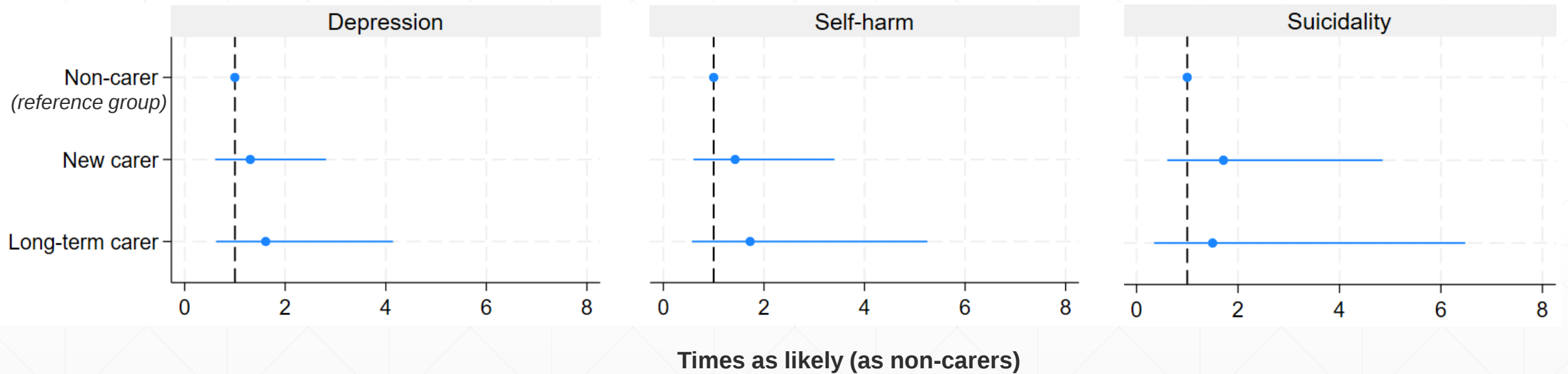
Caregiving duration

「お子さんは、家族の中の、お年寄り、病気の人、または体の不自由な人のお世話をどのくらいしますか。」

“How often does your child look after someone within your family who is elderly, or has an illness or disability?”

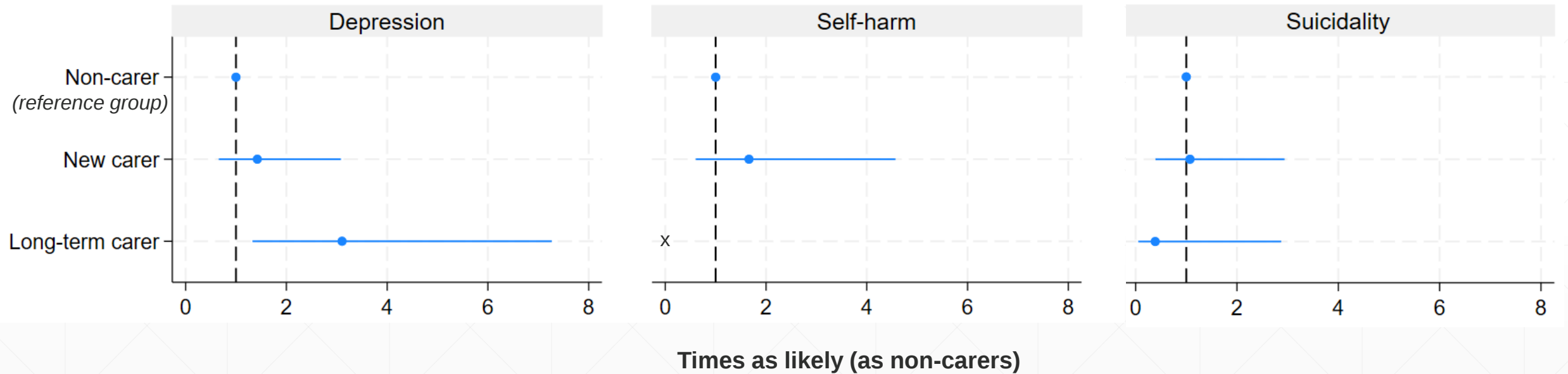
10y		12y		Caregiving duration @ 12y
Young carer	+	Young carer	=	'Long-term carer'
Non-carer	+	Young carer	=	'New carer'
Young carer	+	Non-carer	=	'Ex-carer'
Non-carer	+	Non-carer	=	'Non-carer'

Results: 12y



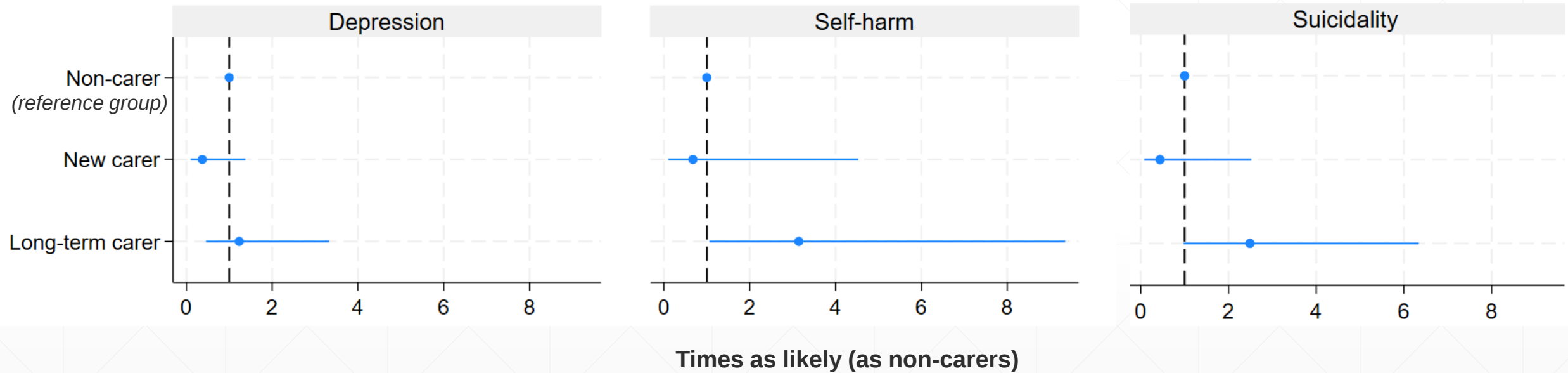
Unadjusted (crude) associations. Analysis sample $n=2,331$; missing data handled via multiple imputation with chained equations.

Results: 14y



Unadjusted (crude) associations. Analysis sample $n=2,331$; missing data handled via multiple imputation with chained equations.

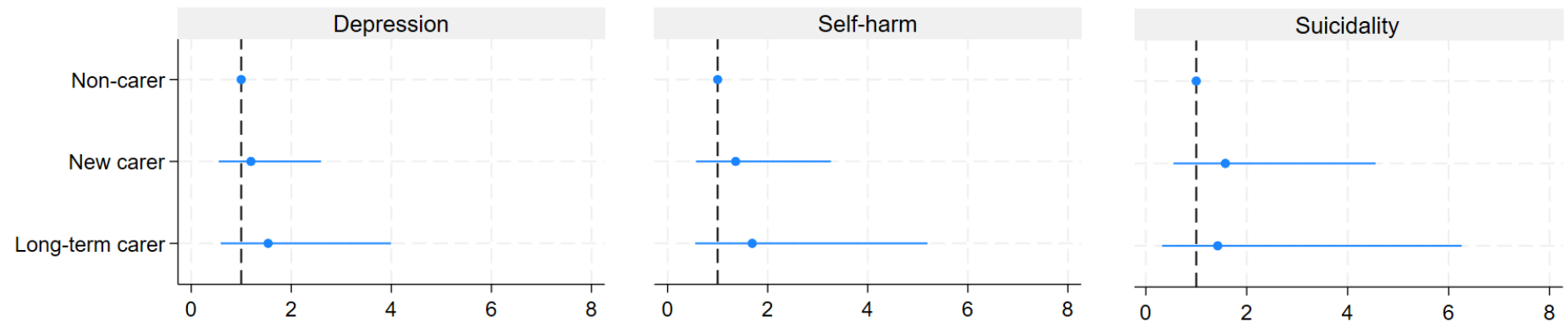
Results: 16y



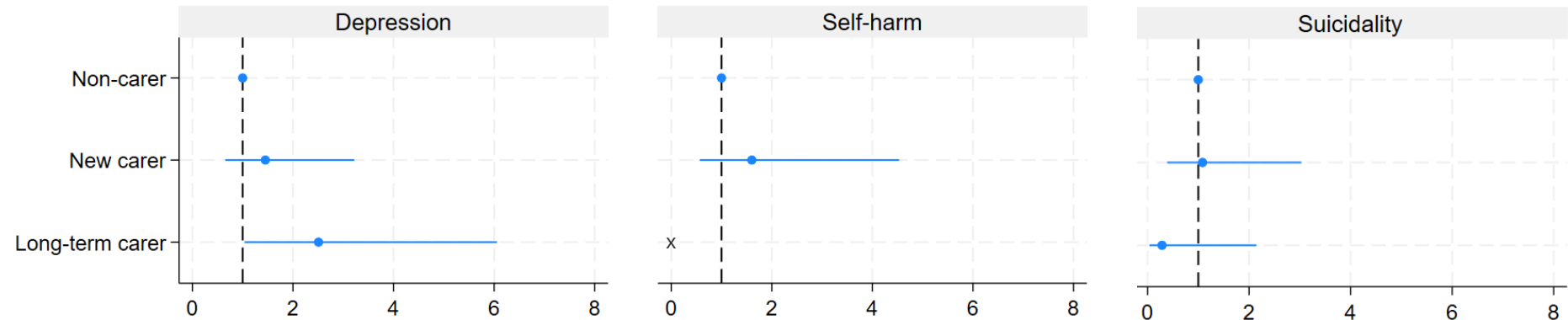
Unadjusted (crude) associations. Analysis sample $n=2,331$; missing data handled via multiple imputation with chained equations.

Adjusted for **gender, low income status, single parent household, and parental distress**

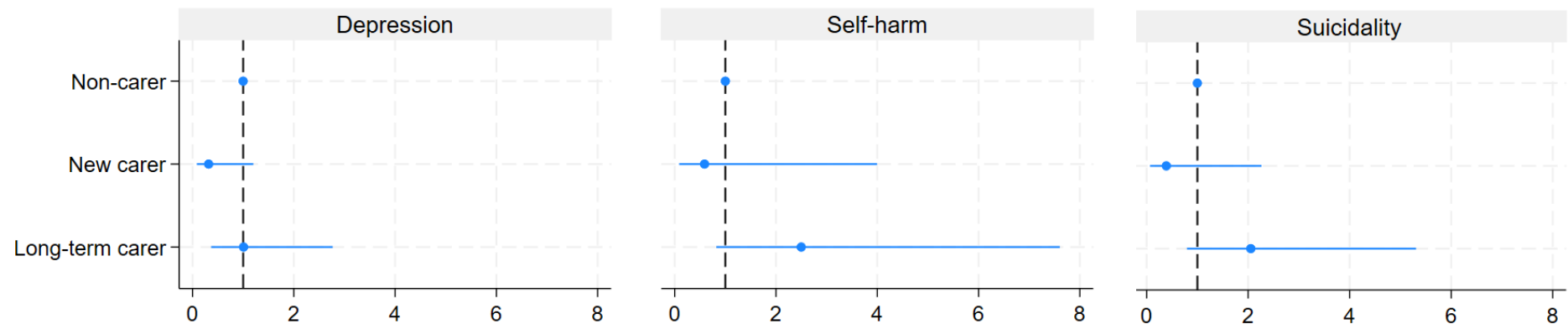
12y



14y



16y



- Young carers in Tokyo: more likely to be **girls**, from **low income households** and **living with grandparents**
- Long-term caring -> **greater MH risk**
- **More serious outcomes** at 16y
- Prioritize **early identification & practical support** for greatest benefit
- But... survey data has limitations!

Discussion



TMiMS 公益財団法人
東京都医学総合研究所
 Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Medical Science
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 **東京大学**
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 【青春期の健康・発達調査】
TEEN COHORT

Funded by JSPS KAKENHI and JST-Mirai Program

Thank you!

daniel.j.stanyon@kcl.ac.uk

