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# Social Support and Self-help: The Way to Meet The Needs of The Elderly Who Has Lost Their Only-child

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## Abstract

After the '6.5' petition, the unaccompanied elderly incident fermentation, the existing policy, about the lonely old man rescue, appears their short plates. At the same time, the media in the dissemination of news, support the weak sense of social responsibility, a lot of reports spring up about the elderly who has lost their only child. This article is based on the analysis of the role of the main body of the rescue, in order to find a new perspective to meet the needs of the elderly. The loss of independence is a social phenomenon in all countries and helps the unaccompanied people to realize the reconstruction of their lives. It is not enough that only rely on the existing support, from the government, the organization, and the social groups. We must use the resources of the elderly themselves to start a new way out.

## Keywords

the elderly who has lost their only child; social assistance; self-awareness

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## 1. Introduction

China's aging population has entered the deep water area, where the elderly have become a unique landscape, especially in the old urban areas and rural areas. The surge in the number of old people calls for more attention from society and better policy support from the government, taking good care of the lives of the elderly and becoming a measure of the degree of social civilization. There is a unique group among the elderly. We call them "The elderly who has lost their only child". They are faced with the risk of family vacancies because they have no children. According to statistics, 15 to 20 year old only-child total of about 190 million people in China. According to the annual mortality rate of 4/10000, each year will add 76 thousand lost single family. Demographers predict that China will exist 10 million similar families in the future, and the number of elderly people who lose their independence will reach 20 million. 20 million **solitary** elderly need to be care, regardless of the financial payment or medical, pension policy bearing capacity, it is not a small challenge.

As a special group of pension, the elderly alone lost the situation more severe than the general elderly. They not only have to face the same, or even accelerate body aging, but also bear the loneliness. Because of the loss of independence for the elderly has no fertility. Besides, too much external attention, such as repeated reports from different media, may cause second injuries to them. The dual pressures of body and spirit, both internal and external, lead to the unique behavioral characteristics, such as vulnerability, depression, social disruption, regional escape. However, the current academic research always focused on meeting the needs of those elderly and public policies about those elderly. Causing the neglect of the elderly themselves are not only the demander but also the resources.

The media has been trying to render this elderly group as a vulnerable group, a product of policy. This kind of public opinion leads to almost all the society's cognition that all the old people who lose their independence must live in difficulties and pains. In a sense, this report is biased, the study found that part of the elderly has a superior economic reserves, they are both healthy on physical and

psychological. Those people can be used as a new method of solving the problem of the elderly who has lost their only child.

## **2. Social disruption has become the norm state of lost only-child old man**

In the current social cognition, the sudden death of the only child often means the truncation of social interaction. Especially for the lost only-child old man, children are always the main talk at leisure, the sudden death of children means they lost their social communication motivation

### **2.1 Social disruption and major social support disruption for the elderly who have lost their independence**

The origin of the concept of social fracture from the French sociologist Torny (Touraine), is used to explain the social structure of France. Because of the non-human factors, such as social status, social opportunities and social competition, there is always a group of people were abandoned by social structure. This concept can also be used to analyze the unique and large number of old people who have lost their independence in china. With the empirical analysis found that the loss of single family elderly parents face the main difficulties include loneliness, inferiority and escape. They will choose to escape from the familiar environment and social networking. They afraid to mention the child, pension and other sensitive topics. In the course of time, the elderly who lost their independence gradually became marginalized groups of social interaction. They were in the breakdown of social relations or the disintegration of social life with relatives and friends, organizations and communities. The most direct impact of social disruption is the interruption of social support. There is a special documentary "alive", tells the story of several typical cases of the elderly who have lost their independence. In the case, the parents chose to move away from their former homes and seclusion temples to escape all familiar social relations and the environment associated with their lost children. In fact, only through personal and personal, personal and social contacts, individuals can maintain social identity as well as material support, spiritual support and information sharing support. Rather, the strength of the social support network determines the size of the individual's ability to respond to environmental challenges. The interruption of relationships with others, organizations, communities, etc., which happens to the elderly who lose their independence would lead to the interruption of social support.

### **2.2 The social needs of the elderly who lost their independence**

Although most of the elderly who lost their independence avoid familiar life environment, refused the support from friends, relatives and the community, but the study found that they still eager care from outside and still has a complete Maslow demand system. Found in 2012, the family planning association " services for family care, the family-plan families project survey "shows that the change of the elderly who lost their only-child, the biggest change is the " psychological ", accounting for 45.7%, followed by the spirit, accounting for 34.3% .

#### **2.2.1 Physiological needs**

As long as Human beings live, it can't be separated from clothing, food, shelter and travel. This is the eternal truth. Physiological needs are the basic need to maintain vital signs. Because of the lack of traditional family support mode, the basic needs about life, medical care and pension are not guaranteed. Especially when they faced with widowhood, one or both old mans can't take care of themselves, they have no children to respond. Once the government did not improve measures, they will become the most difficult vulnerable group. Among these are the elderly who live in the countryside, and the vast majority of them do not have pension. On the one hand, traditional ideas would make them lack preparation. On the other hand, "two standard in urban and rural areas" structure caused the old-age insurance benefits of rural areas is far lower than that of urban. So, physiological needs more is the main demand for the rural elderly who has lost their only-child.

### 2.2.2. Safety requirements

The loss of the only child would cause the elderly feel the crisis of future life. Under the Chinese "filial piety" cultural background, the children are the dependent of their parents, and other social security only be assisted. This is the root cause of China's family pension ratio to reach 95%. Similarly, according to a survey by the China Family Planning Association, among the security needs, the proportion of elderly people who lose their independence is the highest concern for medical care, reaching 62.9%. Mainly the two aspects, fear of illness without care and no one can sign the agreement of surgery. Secondly, the need for old-age security, mainly worried about the no one to serve them and no burial after death.

### 2.2.3 Social needs

Social loss is the most important aspect of the elderly who has lost their only-child, because they afraid to see and hear any information about their children. They will choose to avoid people around. In my view, the avoidance involves both the escape of the reality of the departure of the children, the fear of complaining and the concern given to relatives and friends. The more this escape, the more needs should be supplied through family, friends, social organizations and other care and love. So that they would go out of the pain of losing their only child and reentered the community.

### 2.2.4 Respect needs

At the beginning of the article shows, too much reports may cause second injury to those elders. Some media reported that much like Di's mother and leaves yellow's state. Although the starting point is good, but also to fight for their attention and kind-hearted people social assistance, but with the increasing of tracking media, their lives have been effected badly. Everyone knows that those elders are painful. Why do you have to repeat it to them to describe the pain? In addition, when the media reported the elderly who loss independence ,they especially love to use words like " Miserable " and " Loneliness", although this word can arouse public concern for the elderly loss of independence and compassion, but for these old people, that will only make them more inferiority.

### 2.2.5 The need for self-actualization

The self-realization of the elderly who lose independence is not the need to achieve personal ideals, negative reports, and personal wisdom. In fact, go out of the loss of independence shadow is also a self-realization. It is rational to realize that the departure of children is irreversible, and that their own escape is also helpless. So they are re-integrated into society and adapted to new ways of life through their connections with others, organizations and communities. This process is similar to Goodman's definition of "re-socialization theory": to abandon the original attitude towards life, value and identity, and to rebuild the new instead.

## **3. The necessity of social support to meet the needs of the elderly who have lost their independence**

The large number of the elderly who has lose their only-child, and it still shows increasing trend. Although it is not the inevitable result of the family planning policy, there must be a close relationship between them. Therefore, those who lose independence must hope that the family planning policy makers are responsible for the elderly who has lost their independence. All along, the government is regarded as lack of attention and assistant in the term of taking care of those elders. The "6. 5" petition is the direct result of this problem. Obviously, the loss of independence is no longer an isolated population phenomenon. Now their pension and medical needs can't be demanded only rely on the government's material assistance. Although it mainly shows that the needs of the elderly are not satisfied, they have been associated with more and more social, economic and cultural problems. In view of this problem, it is necessary to adjust and supplement the existing supporting measures in a timely manner. However, even if more financial investment, leaving the service provider's supply, leaving the volunteer organizations, the role of funds will be greatly reduced.

From the demand level, the elderly who lost independence demand diversity. However, thinking the urgency, old-age security, medical security, life care and emotional dependence are the real points,

social support can't be carried out without any point. China's existing pension model, the most important is family pension. The second is community endowment, but there is always no enough beds. So the importance of community care in the elderly alone lost pension is more obviously. Which requires related elderly contact the community to obtain a variety of life support. Although life care can be obtained through buying long-term care insurance or employing carers, because of the economic limit and service personnel business Hours, most care needs can't be met. Especially for highly lost or completely disabled elderly people, it is necessary for them to receive help from relatives, friends, social organizations and communities to help them regain their social life.

Those elderly tend to escape the original social circle because of the loss of one's own life. This escape is at the expense of alienation, access to emotional support and material assistance. For a social person, the strength of the social network determines the ability to cope with the crisis. Therefore, their behaviors more likely to escape, the integration of government, community, social organizations or voluntary organizations, social workers and other social forces to expand the range of their social support is more important.

#### **4. " Self-help"- an effective complement to social support**

The former part analyzes the importance of social support to meet the needs of the elderly who have lost their independence. The more widespread the social support sources are, the greater the chance that the elderly will be able to meet the needs of the elderly who have lost their independence. But the introduction of the article also mentioned, the media wantonly reported, rendering the "lost old man" of "miserable" image, and even will lose independence entirely attributable to the inevitable consequences of family planning policy. The negative effect of this kind of report is the impression of the public on the loss of independence, and the bias of the curing and losing of the old.

On the one hand, exaggerated media reports would cause public fuzzy and have biased impression on the elderly who has lost only-child. On the other hand, all kinds of national policies and voluntary assistance about the elderly making the rescue of this elderly is considered to be the responsibility of the state and social responsibility. Loss of independence for the elderly has regard the state and society to provide relief as their personal rights. This concept is inaccurate and unilateral. Because of human, material, time and space constraints, social support is often seen "distant water can't save near fire." The life, care, needs and medical care of the elderly are often all-weather and random. But even in developed countries where welfare benefits are made, social workers can't be on standby for twenty-four hours. That is to say, social support is not omnipotent, more often, the elderly need help themselves. Of course, part of the lost only-child old man group are the disabled, who can't take care of themselves. We call it the most difficult lost only-child elderly. We advocate them to help themselves, not only will not affect the aid treatment to this part of the elderly, but will focus more resources to those most in need of help.

The problem of how to help the elderly who has lost their only-child was concerned widespread through the media. Since the existing social support are deficient in solving this problem, and then find a new perspective to solve problems seems to be perfectly logical and reasonable. The existing relief resources are almost equally distributed in different regions, mainly for the monthly subsidy and unscheduled door-to-door service of the elderly who have lost their independence. It is understood that, for the real needs of the elderly, the monthly subsidy is far from enough, a handful of home services is also drop in the bucket. If we can truly cultivate the elderly with the consciousness of self-reliance, self-improvement, self-help, then the limited resources can be better allocated. For example, the elderly who can completely take care of themselves, can form a groups and serve other difficult elderly. The elderly who have talent, expertise or professional skills can use their own advantages in some purple charity activities, like old people lost calligraphy performances, charity perform and the clinic and so on. These can not only give full play to the value of the elderly who lose their independence, but in the process of participating in activities and helping others, they are more likely to step out of the shadow of loneliness and find the meaning of life more easily. Once the elderly can create their own value, they can achieve greater degree of self-rescue, to reduce their own

demands for social support. Secondly, they even create more resources. The number of people who rely solely on social assistance is reduced, and individuals who really need social assistance must be able to enjoy more services and care.

## 5 Thinking

The government should be responsible for the retirement, medical care and other needs of the elderly who have lost their only-child, which is no doubt. But whether the government should not take full responsibility for this elderly, which is debatable. I want to think about two issues about the responsibility and social assistance for the elderly who have lost their independence:

(1) Family planning and the loss of only-child, there is a direct causal relationship between them?

(2) The loss of only-child is equate to the "poor" and "miserable" and "miserable" and so on?

The first question. I don't think there is a direct cause and effect relationship between them. The only child phenomenon is not unique in China. It is also a natural phenomenon, such as illness, an accident, etc. The phenomenon of losing the only-child is inevitable all over the world. However, countries around the world that carry out family planning policies or have implemented family planning are only in China 1980s in China and 50s in India. Therefore, because of the implementation of family planning policy, the phenomenon of "losing only-child" is obvious, and this logic relationship is clearly untenable. The existing mainstream media in China choose to stand on the side of losing independence, and the relevant news reports emphasize one point of view "losing independence is weakness and miserable". So, the whole society has begun to support the loss of independence, but denounce the health department. Because the petitioners even some emotional media author insists that the loss of independence is just the inevitable consequences of the one-child policy. This affirms the causal relationship between family planning and the loss of only-child. To some extent, such irrational support from the media and the public is not a good thing for the elderly who lose their only-child. Excessive rendering will affect their self-identity. So that they take for granted that they are miserable, thereby affecting their self-help initiative, resulting in life dependence. Lost independence group has been rendered into the major media vulnerable groups, policy products. We should realize that the loss of only-child is not a unique phenomenon of that country. The particularity of our country is that the number of those who lose independence is large and growing fast. Therefore, for a country, the loss of only-child itself is not a problem, we call the issue of losing only-child is the lack of rescue resources, aid projects. To solve this problem only depend on state aid is not realistic, external support is not exhaustive, limited social resources restricts the social support scale.

Secondly, is the elderly's, who has lost their only-child, life is tragic, this view is not to say yes or no. In China, where the "filial piety" culture is deeply entrenched, the loss of the only-child is equivalent to the loss of the rest of his life. This pain is very deep. For media reports known several loss of independence for the elderly, such as the Di's mother and Professor Pan, they regarded the death of children as their own death. So far, they still keep the things that their child leave before they are left, and the message they send, which is why the pain is so deep. It is precisely because of these, most of the public's general perception that loss of only-child is just tragic. But any phenomenon, as long as it is related to people, it will not be completely same. The loss of independence is no exception. Old doctor Chen, after losing independence, choose to live in the temple to help the nearby elderly by free medical treatment. Chen Shujuan, after losing her son, still choose to live with smile. There are many examples of this. For them, losing independence is painful, but it is not their "miserable" reason.

In my opinion, they are the hidden resources in the group of the elderly who have lost their only-child". Because they have same experience with each other and they are more easy to feel the mood, even encourage others out of the house. More people at the same experience willing to help others, not only can make up for lack of social support, but also can make the loss of independence for the elderly to feel the value of life.

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