The Coming of a 'Death Laden' Society: Main Challenges to Medicine and Healthcare of a 'Hyper-Aged' Japan

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Since the late 1990s, Japan has been the world’s most advanced ageing society. What comes next then? Preceding the rest of the world, in a decade Japan will phase into what may be referred to as a ‘death-laden’ society, when a ballooning number of deaths, due primarily to the prospective mortality of the baby boomers and their juniors, continues to burden Japanese society well into the second half of the twenty-first century. The coming of a ‘death-laden’ society will require a paradigm shift particularly in the country’s long-established medical and healthcare practices. While continuing to serve as the guardian of the citizens’ ‘quality of life’ through nurturing their healthy long life, medical and healthcare professionals will need to address and promote, more extensively than ever before, the ‘quality of dying’ of a mounting number of the elderly by advancing end-of-life care and a variety of supports associated with it, a long-avoided area of service in modern society as a whole.

Key Words

- Death-Laden Society
- Ageing Society
- End-of-Life Care
- Social Change
- Mortality