

Cultural influences on end-of-life decision making in Japan: Why Japanese Patients Struggle to Make End-of-Life Decisions: Insights from Nurses on Cultural Influences

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Japan 125 million population

1. 98.5% of the population is ethnically Japanese
– a highly homogeneous society
2. 30% of the population is over 65 years old
3. Over 100,000 people are over 100 years old
4. Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world
5. Deep-rooted traditions and strong cultural identity



Overview of health care system in Japan

- **Full covered by public insurance**

Patient pays 10% to 30% of all medical cost.

Monthly payment does not exceed about 1000\$.

- **Free access is guaranteed**

Patient can consult with every hospital/clinic in the country.

- **No GP/FP (home doctor) system**

Physicians working at clinics are basically “specialists”.

Typically, specialists work in hospitals for 10 or more years, and then they establish a clinic and see patients with common diseases.

Ikegami N. Lancet 2011

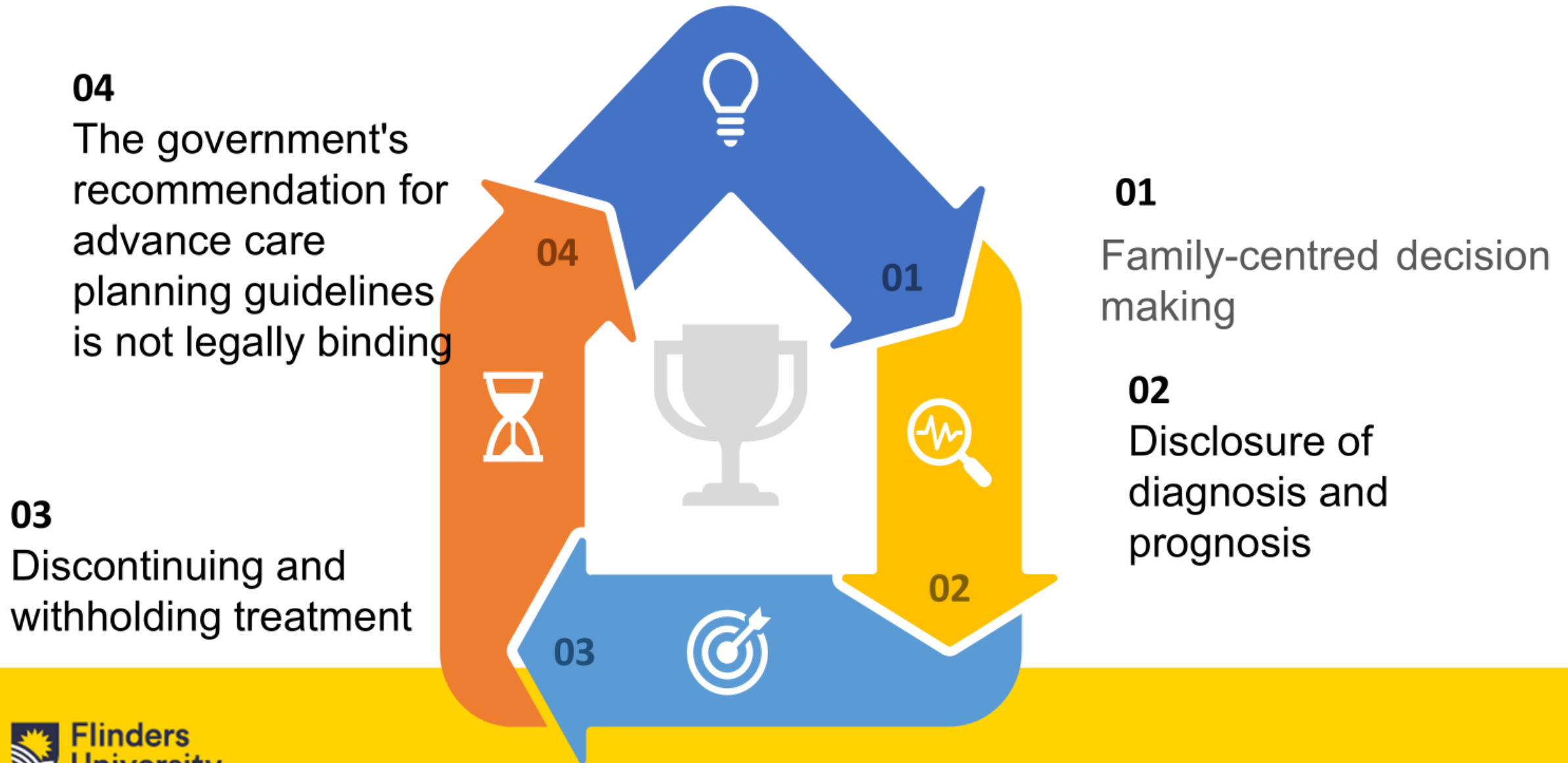
What is Japanese culture?

- Reliance on expertise “Omakase”
- Dependence “Amae”
- Public appearance “Sekentei”
- Non verbal communication “Ishindenshin”
- Compassionate approach “Omoiyari”



HARMONY

Complex cultural issues



Demography participants

Pseudonym	Nursing experiences(years)	Highest education	Additional EOL education	Male /Female Age
Takuya	17	Master of Nursing		Male 43
Akiko	19	Master of Nursing		Female 47
Mikako	28	Master of Nursing		Female 56
Tomoko	30	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 50
Sato	35	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 56
Hanako	40	Graduate DIP	Yes	Female 65
Sachiko	22	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 42
Chie	12	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 36
Yuriko	38	Graduate DIP	Yes	Female 58
Yoshi	25	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 42
Eri	14	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 34
Mayumi	18	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 39
Naomi	26	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 49
Saki	30	Graduate DIP		Female 54
Keiko	38	Graduate DIP	Yes	Female 59
Yoko	40	Graduate DIP	Yes	Female 62
Asako	20	Bachelor of Nursing		Female 40
Hide	22	Master of Nursing		Male 48

Demography participants summary

Average age 48 years old

Average nursing experience 26 years

Education

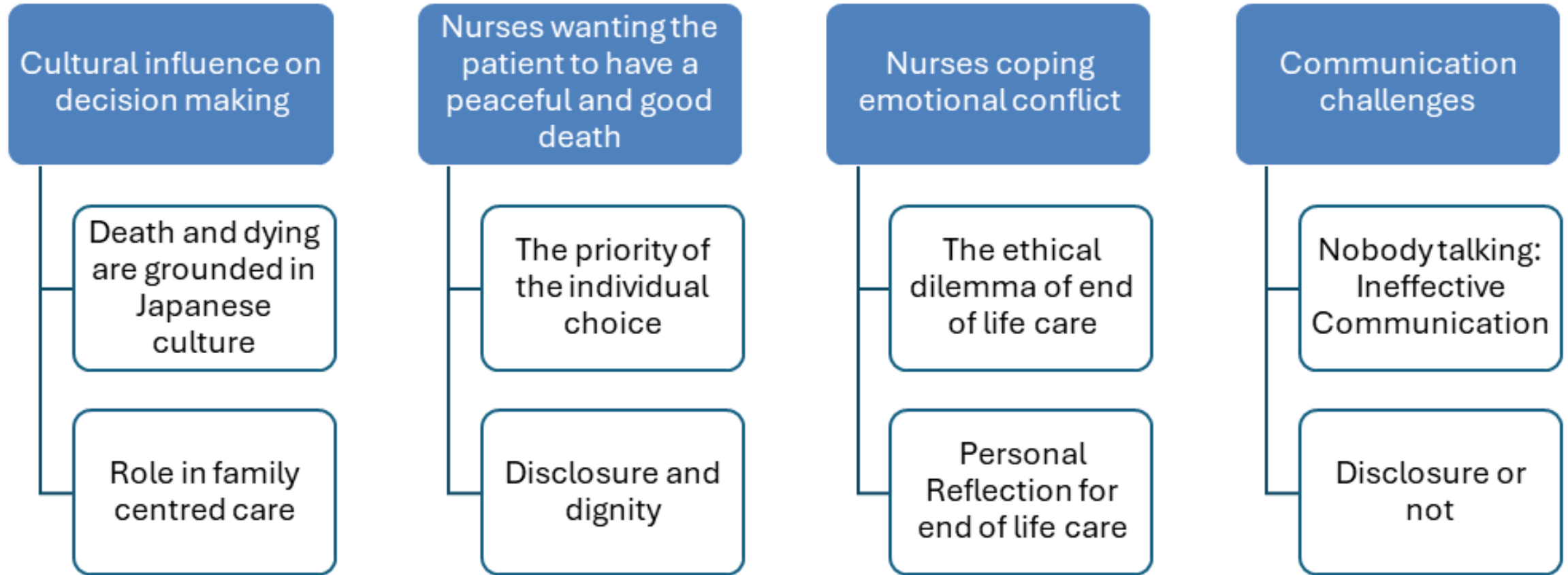
Master of Nursing 2 male nurses 2 female nurses

Bachelor of Nursing 9 female nurses

Nursing diploma 5 female nurses

4 nurses attended End of life care seminar

Nurses Findings



Summary

- Nurses wanting the patient to have a peaceful and good death
- Patients and family having emotional conflicts and values with interpersonal relationships
- Who is making the decision at end of life care?
- Nobody talking clearly, or wanting to initiate further steps
- Culture influencing on decision making
- Death and dying grounding in Japanese culture

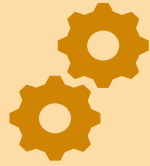
Key discussion points

01



**Non-inclusion
of a dying
person in
decision
making**

02



**Strong
cultural
influences and
hierarchical
situations**

03



**Changing
attitudes and
approaches
Conflicts and
responsibilities**

04



**Education
Public
Awareness**

References

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Thank you so much! Any questions?

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