

Initiatives of Cooperating Organizations

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Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine
Department of Preventive Psychiatry

Nonprofit Organization Miyagi Prefecture Danshukai

Japan Social Worker Association for Alcohol Related Problems

Supporters Club Members

Disaster relief for alcohol-related issues

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1. Overview of Support

Four years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, and during this time, the Medical Corporation Tohokukai Tohokukai Hospital (hereinafter referred to as our hospital) has been providing disaster relief for alcohol-related problems. The following is a summary of the support.

Figure 1 shows the number of monthly support cases over the four years. The total number of support cases was 550, with an average of about 11 per month.

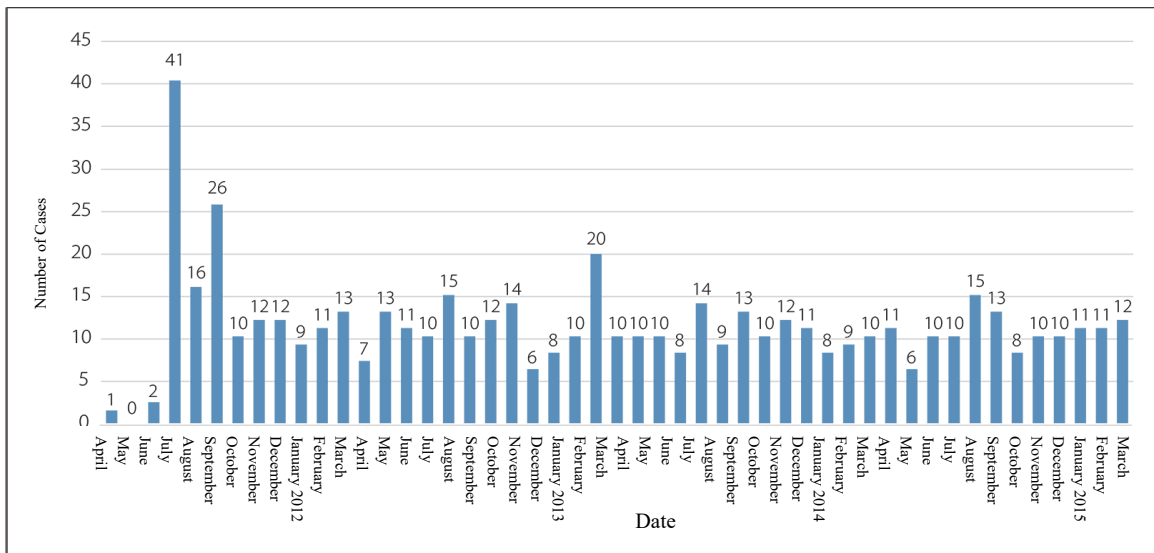


Figure 1 Monthly Support Cases (N=550 March 2011 – March 2015)

Figure 2 shows the number of support target individuals by region. Minamisanriku Town, which has continued regular support, has the largest value, followed by Kesenuma City and Sendai City. In Naruko, which is not a coastal area, many disaster victims live in inns and hotels as secondary shelters, and this achievement is a result of the group work of the disaster victims there. The breakdown of "Others" is Rifu Town, Fukushima Prefecture, Iwate Prefecture, etc.

Most of the activities implemented in the area indicated by the shaded bar graph are cooperated with the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center and account for about 70% of the total.

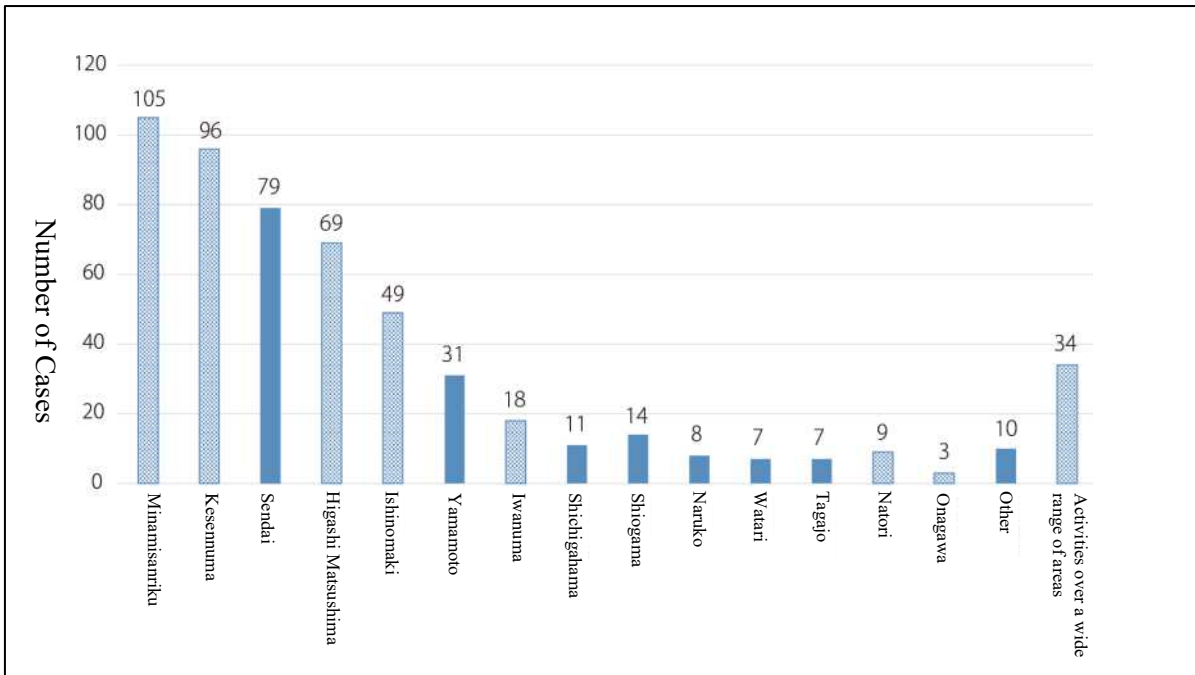


Figure 2 Number of Support Cases by Region (N=550 March 2011 – March 2015)

*Activities such as prevention meetings and conferences related to the wide range of disaster-stricken areas were counted as activities of “Sendai,” but the "Activities over a wide range of areas" category was created from the statistics of March 2015.

2. Philosophy of Support for Supporters

Figure 3 shows the number of cases by specific contents of support activities. Networking within the region, such as coordinating and discussing with each other until activities are actualized, is indispensable to support activities. Therefore, "network coordination activities" are the basis of support. From the start of our activities, our hospital has established a policy of " support for supporters" as a pillar and has been focused on empowering local supporters. We have incorporated activities such as role-play and experiences from individuals into our training so that it can be applied for on-site practices. In addition to these statistics, we conducted a practical training course for alcohol dependence treatment at our hospital with the help of the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center for mental health care center staff members, healthcare workers in the affected areas, and administrative supporters. A total of 76 supporters took part in intensive training for 3 days to 1 week for a total of 131 days. This will be continued in 2015.

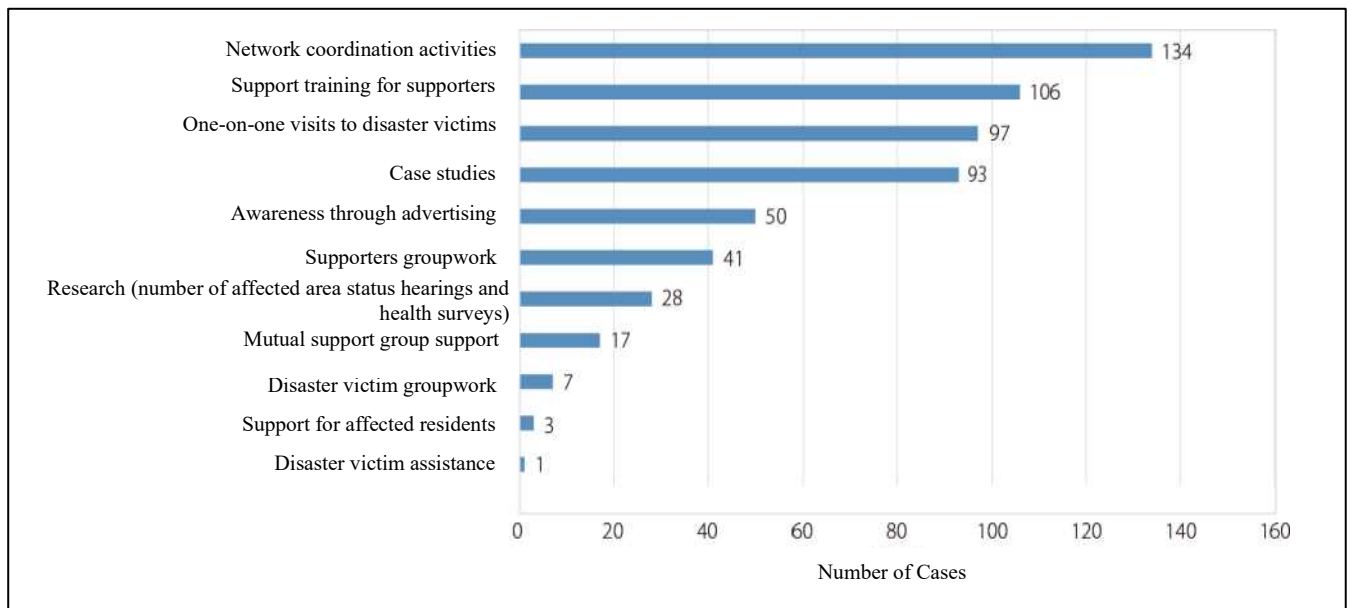


Figure 3 Number of Cases by Type of Support [(some duplicates) March 2011 – March 2015]

3. Changes in Support Activities

Figure 4 shows the yearly comparison of the main support cases. Soon after the earthquake, we distributed flyers to various areas to raise awareness of alcohol and investigated the affected areas. During this time, we partnered with a private support organization and provided regular insomnia consultations at container type temporary housing in Minamisanriku Town. We continued to provide regular support even after the withdrawal of the private organization from the area through “Supporter Groupwork” sessions twice a month in cooperation with community health nurses and the Social Welfare Council's Support Center for Disaster Victims. This group work became an effective method for supporting supporters in case of a large-scale disaster that could not be dealt with individually, by conducting case studies and supporter care at the same time. As the number of case consultations and individual cases increased, the demand for training on knowledge and skills from local supporters also increased. As the supporters learned, the number of support cases gradually increased, which is shown in this graph. We hope that the continuation of this cycle will raise the level of all-purpose support, not limited to alcohol-related issues in the region.

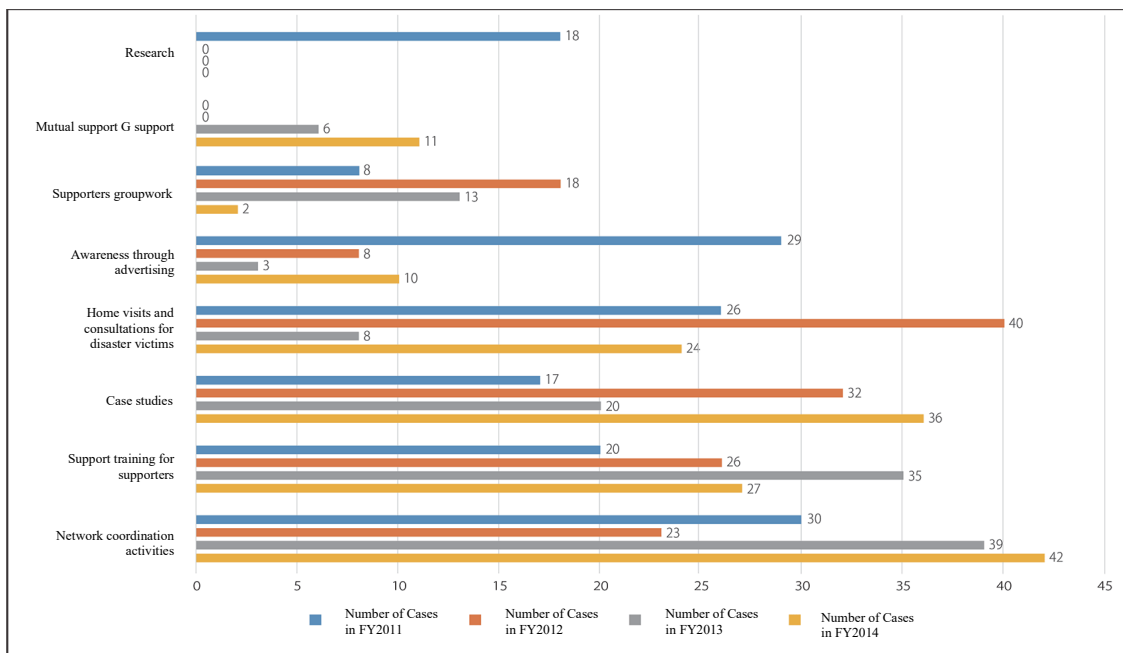


Figure 4 Main Support Cases by Year

*The "mutual support G support" item was separated from "support training for supporters" from the December 2014 statistics and counted separately.

4. In Summary

In FY2014, we focused on regional development support by conducting Self-Help Groups (hereinafter referred to as SHG), which were said to be indispensable for the recovery of addiction. SHG activities in coastal areas were sparse, resulting in people's vulnerabilities to be exposed. Another important aspect of regional empowerment is the power of the parties involved. With the cooperation of the NPO Miyagi Prefecture Danshukai and A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous), our hospital has been able to conduct training and group work sessions in which the individual, supporters, and families can work together. The efforts will continue in FY2015. Seeds that have been planted in the region have begun to sprout from the "local soil."