Dear Editor,

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a huge impact on people’s lives, especially those of older adults. In the first year of the pandemic, the “stay-at-home policy” to avoid COVID-19 infection led to greatly limited physical activity (PA) and an increased risk of incident frailty in community-dwelling older adults. However, in the second year of the pandemic, vaccination and other political measures were promoted, and the overall social atmosphere seemed to be different. This study aimed to observe changes in PA and social activity (SA) in older adults during this pandemic and to explore the factors associated with recovery from or progression to frailty in older adults from January 2021 to January 2022.

We conducted online baseline and first and second follow-up surveys in April 2020, January 2021, and January 2022, respectively. This study excluded older adults who were frail at the baseline survey and those who did not respond to the follow-up surveys. Among the 1600 baseline survey participants, 388 were already frail, and 275 and 140 older adults did not respond to the first and second follow-up survey, respectively (final number of participants: 797; follow-up rate: 65.8%).

We investigated PA and SA at six time points according to the waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan: January 2020 (by recalled answer at baseline survey), April 2020 (at baseline survey, PA only), August 2020 (by recalled answer at follow-up survey), January 2021 (at first follow-up survey), August 2021 (by recalled answer at second follow-up survey), and January 2022.

Figure 1  PA, physical activity; SA, social activity. Both PA and SA showed a worsening trend in the first year but a recovery trend in the second year of the pandemic (a). Of the 116 participants who were frail in January 2021, 61 (52.6%) had recovered to non-frailty in January 2022, and of the 681 participants who were non-frail in January 2021, 57 (8.4%) had progressed to frailty in January 2022 (b).
Dear Editor,

Revisions of the diagnostic criteria for sarcopenia from the Asian Working Group for Sarcopenia (AWGS) and the European Working Group on Sarcopenia in Older People have made screening to identify early signs more important.1,2 We developed a novel self-screening method for sarcopenia using polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, focusing on the most popular sizes to address the aforementioned concerns. PET bottles have become the most commonly used packaging material for beverages worldwide.3,4 Previous reports have shown that opening the cap of a PET bottle is associated with muscle and grip strength, and that it is a basic activity of daily living.4,5 The present study included 129 older adults (mean age 78.5 ± 8.3 years, 79 men and 50 women) who were users of daycare for older adults facilitated by the Japanese long-term care insurance system. This cross-sectional study was carried out at a

The inability to open a polyethylene terephthalate bottle cap can predict sarcopenia

Keywords: elderly, hand strength, polyethylene terephthalate bottle, PET bottle, sarcopenia.

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