

# Resettlement and Employment of Paraplegic Patients in Japan

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Since 1965 the Orthopaedic Department of Tokushima University in Japan has been involved with the management of paraplegic patients. This paper is the result of a survey of the social recovery of 65 such patients studied over a period of more than 5 years (average of 14.4 years).

Thirty-one of the 65 patients (47.7%) are employed and 31 are unemployed; and 3 of the patients are housewives. Ten are involved in independent enterprise, 7 are otherwise employed, 6 work in an Industrial Rehabilitation Centre, and 5 have clerical occupations. (Table I). Most of those who are

**Table I** Social Recovery—Employment

Employment	Thoraco-lumbar lesion		
	Conservative 44 cases (%)	Operative 21 cases (%)	Total 65 cases (%)
Employed	20 (45.5)	11 (52.4)	31 (47.7)
Industrial rehabilitation centre	4 (9.1)	2 (9.5)	6 (9.2)
Office work	2 (4.5)	3 (14.3)	5 (7.7)
Independent enterprise	8 (18.2)	2 (9.5)	10 (15.4)
Worker	4 (9.1)	3 (14.3)	7 (10.8)
Job at Home	2 (4.5)	1 (4.8)	3 (4.6)
Housewives	3 (6.8)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.6)
Unemployed	21 (47.7)	10 (47.6)	31 (47.7)

unemployed receive accident compensation or some other form of pension. The monthly incomes of the 65 patients are:

- 7 (10.8%) less than US\$ 312
- 11 (16.9%) US\$ 312 to US\$ 625
- 18 (27.7%) US\$ 625 to US\$ 1250
- 13 (20.0%) US\$ 1250 to US\$ 1875
- 3 (4.6%) more than US\$ 1875
- 13 (20.0%) no answer

The Japan Sun Industries have been developed for paraplegic people in Japan, and there are three types of factories. (a) The training workshop, set up by the Welfare Law for the disabled, (b) The Industrial Welfare Factory, also set up by the Welfare Law, and (c) Six companies representing a joint venture by Sony corporation, Hoda Manufacturing Company, Mitsubishi Corporation, Omron Electrical Company, and the Nippon Denso Company. In the Sun Industries about 870 disabled people work alongside 300 non-disabled fellow workers. In Table II there is a breakdown of the paraplegic workers in the Japan

**Table II** Number of Paraplegics in Japan Sun Industries

	Male	Female	Total
Training workshop	22	3	25
Industrial welfare Factory	26	3	29
Joint-ventured Company	49	7	56
Total	97	13	110

Sun Industries. The average monthly salary of all the disabled in the Training Workshop is US\$ 312 and for the paraplegic workers is US\$ 437. This appears to be small, but the Government supports the daily living expenses of these workers, so that they have little extra to pay, and also they require to live in dormitories which are provided by the Institute or by the Government. The average monthly salary of the employed disabled is US\$ 905.

Concerning the monthly salary of paraplegic workers, the highest is US\$ 2800 and the lowest US\$ 750, the average salary being US\$ 1060. The paraplegic patients make good workers, and their incidence of absenteeism is low, 2.3%, much better than those of non-disabled workers in Japan. A White Paper by the Labour Ministry states that the average absenteeism in the ordinary company or factory overall in Japan is about 4.8%.

The actual production of the paraplegic worker is also splendid, the average for non-disabled workers in Japan being 4.2% but for our paraplegic workers 1.4%. When we investigated the endurance power of these workers, it was discovered that they showed no increase in fatigue during the working day, and that their production rate remained the same throughout the day.

If paraplegics are given the opportunity to work, and a place to work, they will prove to be good workers, needing only a minimum of medical attention.