

# Do Fewer Caseworkers Lead to More Caseloads? Evidence from Public Assistance in Japan\*

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## Abstract

There are the two opposing views on the effects of caseworkers on public assistance caseloads in Japan. The first view argues that caseworkers with more caseloads accept applicants without due assessments, which implies that fewer caseworkers leads to more caseloads. The second view on the other hand argue that caseworkers reject applications more often when overall capacity of caseworkers is small, which then implies more caseworkers leads to more caseloads. This study examines which view better explains observed relations between caseloads and caseworkers. First, our analysis shows that more caseloads lead to more caseworkers, which is natural since central government prescribes that local governments maintain one caseworker for every eighty assistance receiving households. In particular, while old households do not affect the number of caseworkers, single-mother or disabled/sick/injured recipients are effective in increasing caseworkers. Secondly, we examine the effects of caseworkers on caseloads. While we do not find evidence for the effects of aggregated caseloads on caseworkers, we do find that more caseworkers lead to more, not less, public assistance households with single-mother and disabled/sick/injured.

**Key Words:** Public Assistance, caseloads, caseworkers, dynamic panel analysis

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