

## **Robotics and Technology in Japanese Long-term Care**

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For many years, Japan has been promoting the research and development of robotics and technology, and the sector of long-term care is one of the forerunners within this strategy. This sector suffers from severe labor shortage while at the same time facing an increasing need for nursing staff. Robotics and technology promise comprehensive solutions. In our presentation we share some first insights into our research project “Sustainable long-term care: technology use, care migration and community building in Japan” (funded by Hamburg Innovation GmbH). We aim to assess, among others, the potential to intensify technology-based long-term care in Germany, following the Japanese example. The outcome of our pilot research trip to the metropolitan regions of Tokyo/Yokohama and Osaka/Kyoto/Nara, in January and February 2019, suggests that many care institutions only slowly adopt technical innovations. This is a surprising finding as it runs contrary to the electoral promises of Japanese politicians and the image of Japan abroad. According to our interviewees’ statements, the reluctant stance toward robotics and technology in Japanese long-term care is in particular due to the following three factors: 1. The long training period for the staff, in order to be able to use robotics and technology effectively; 2. The pronounced lack of time in nursing work: the exoskeleton, for example, requires too much time to be put on for it to be a practical support instrument in the daily work routine; 3. The widespread reluctance of nursing staff when introduced to newly developed technologies, and a preference of patients and their relatives for preserving human contact as the center of care work. Building on the insights that we have gained from our pilot study, we want to examine the discrepancy between the political desire, the economic necessity and the social rejection of robotics and technology in the daily routine of long-term care work.