There are several numbers that are important to sociology. One such number is twenty-one. That is the percentage of Japan that is made up by individuals who are over the age of sixty-five. As of June 30, 2006, the percentage of older residents in Japan is the highest in the world.

Sociologists need to understand why this is the case. One explanation is that elders are looked upon for their wisdom and experience that comes along with the long life they have lived. It would be reasonable to say that because of the reverence of the elderly, the Japanese take very good care of their elders. It is possible that because of this care, the elderly percentage of population was able grow to the size that it is at. This interdependence is an important topic for studying the social structure of Japan, and it could be referenced in the study of other cultures as well. It is worth considering that the country with the second highest elderly population, Italy, is also known for its emphasis on family. This evidence supports the previous claim.

This number is important to the study of how social structure relates to other fields of research. If one were to look into the correlation between feelings towards older people in society and their health, for example, a relationship could be found. If findings are significant, new procedures for ensuring the health of one’s aging parents could be proposed.

It should be noted that the high elderly population could be caused by things other than the reverence of the elders. Japan tends to encourage its citizens to remain active and health is a priority. In fact, Japanese businesses are famous for having employees
participate in organized morning exercises at the office. In addition, one could make the argument that because they eat raw foods, such as sushi, that their bodies are able to build up immunity to diseases that are normally destroyed in the cooking of food. In addition, the percentage of other age groups must be looked at. It could just be that in contemporary Japan, families are having fewer children than they did in the past, which mirrors the projected baby boom retirement expected in the United States in the next decade.

\[^{1}\text{Jiji Press English News Service. Red Orbit.com} \]

\[^{2}\text{Jiji Press English News Service}\]

\[^{3}\text{Jiji Press English News Service}\]