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HIKIKOMORI; SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL IN JAPAN INFLUENCED BY INCREASED ADAPTATION TO ECONOMIC CHANGES AND MODERNIZATION WHILE HOLDING ON TO TRADITIONAL VALUES

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Studies show that there may be more than 1 million Hikikomoris (individuals who withdraw in their rooms for over 6 months,) in Japan, the majority being adolescent to young adult males living dependently on their parents. It is said that approximately 70% of them meet diagnostic criteria of a psychotic, mood, anxiety, developmental or personality disorder. It is noteworthy that while these psychiatric conditions seem to be universal, the very phenomenon of hikikomori is prominent only in Japan. Why only in Japan? The Japanese culture carries many social norms and structures that shape those diagnoses to present in this form. These include the expectation that children live with parents until marriage, the intense academic competition and the mother-son bond being more valued than the parents' relationship as a couple. On top of that, Japan has experienced an increased adaptation towards western cultures while still holding on to the traditional virtues, as well as going through the huge economical bubble followed by the depression. The IT development has changed the communication around the world allowing people to chat and make transactions without interacting with anyone. The combination of changes and tradition is likely the major factor of Japan's hikikomori phenomenon.