

Understanding Male Caregivers' Emotional, Financial, and Physical Burden in the United States

An Opportunity to Strengthen Our Caregiver Support System

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In the Care of Others...

- Mr. Billy takes his 94-year-old mother out to lunch almost every day. She anoints herself with a cocktail of perfumes and creams, selects a stylish outfit from her formidable closet, and completes her always trendy look with a statement necklace. They drive through Los Angeles, meet Billy's best friend, and enjoy the sights and the company as much as the meal.



- For seven years, Billy has served as his mother's medical advocate, administrator, driver and companion. A retired, single man in his 70s, but **Billy isn't your typical caregiver!**
- He is part of a growing trend that is rapidly reshaping eldercare in the United States.

Background

- The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be over the age of 65.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the nursing home population of the U.S. **fell from 1.6 million to 1.3 million**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Nursing home **daily** rates oscillate between \$300 and \$400 in Connecticut!
- Medicare, the health insurance program for those 65 and older, covers only up to 100 days.

- 80% of long term care hours for the elderly are provided as informal (unpaid) care by **family and friends** (Kaye, 2010).
- Statistically, the average caregiver is a 49-year-old woman, according to the National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP Public Policy Institute.
- Now 40% of informal (**unpaid**) family caregivers are **men, up** from 34% in 2009 (AARP & NAC, 2015).
- An estimated 16 million men serve as caregivers, with about half of them choosing the role and the other half taking it on out of necessity.

- **The reality is changing, but policies have a lag.** Outreach continues to be very feminized, and a lot of it is ineffective because men and women care differently.
- Outreach targeting only middle-aged women is unlikely to resonate with this new generation of caregivers.
- Just as the caregiving population is becoming more male, it's also becoming more diverse. For instance, it's estimated that between 13% and 17% percent of all caregivers are Hispanic, for example, but for millennial caregivers, that number jumps to 32%.

Goal(s)

To study

- the ***emotional, financial, and physical*** burden that male caregivers face in United States and how these burdens vary depending on **caregiver's relationship** to the elderly as husbands or partners, sons, sons-in-law, grandsons and others (brothers, grandsons, sons-in-law, other relatives, and friends).
- the impact of caregiver characteristics, tasks and resources (caregiving training and support) for each subgroup.

Database

- National Study of Caregiving (NSOC) is a supplement to the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS).
- NSOC respondents are family caregivers and unpaid unrelated helpers aiding with mobility, self-care, household activities, transportation, or medically oriented tasks.
- Through a telephone interview, caregivers were asked about the provided types, duration, and intensity of care, how it affected them (emotionally, physically, and financially), and the support services that they used. Qualitative variables.
- 2,007 caregivers in 2011 and 2,204 in 2015 (not longitudinal).

Research Questions

- How did caregiver personal characteristics, tasks and resources impact the emotional, financial, and physical burden of male caregivers?
- How did emotional, financial, and physical burden vary depending on caregiver relationship to the elderly as husbands or partners, sons, sons-in-law, grandsons and others.

Hierarchical Logistic Regression

- Is caregiver's relationship related to their burden levels?
- How did each burden (emotional, financial, and physical) vary depending on caregiver characteristics, tasks, and support availability/ utilization?

Findings

- Men caregivers **DO FACE** caregiving burden, have weak support networks and are less likely to seek out programs which increase their caregiving capabilities and help them cope with this burden.
- Men caregivers are **NOT** a monolithic group.
- **ALL** caregivers experienced these three burden types, particularly elevated **emotional** stress.

Additional Findings

- **Sons** reported the highest **emotional and financial** strain levels.
- Assisting with **personal care** was the **most stressful** task.
- Caregivers **vastly under-utilized** support and training.
- **Burden suppressants** included having family and friends help with caregiving, having time to decompress, and feeling appreciated by the care recipient.

Implications

- **Unmet service needs increase caregiver burden.** Several resources can alleviate caregiver burden and increase competence, including personal networks, respite time, information access, and skill development.
- Only a **small percentage** of male caregivers **looked for any type of help or skill development**, including support groups, respite care, training, or information. **The supply was there, and the demand was there, but they aren't meeting.**

- There is imply **no one-size-fits-all** resource package for all caregivers or all male caregivers, it is important to tailor these services according to the caregiver's needs and personal characteristics.
- Devising future **policies** that intentionally **include relationship and burden type** to encourage improved and more caregiving from men while supporting their well-being.
- Long-term care planning is a complex process that **cannot** be relayed to families only.

What would help?

- Better integrating long-term care into the health care system.
- Tax breaks for caregivers, paid leaves of absence from the workplace and even compensation for home-based care of family members.
- Currently, Medicare does not pay spouses to provide personal care for their husbands or wives, but 14 states do allow for public assistance programs, including Medicaid, to compensate spouses in certain situations. Expanding such programs would help.

- Adequate **training** and **information** for family members that appropriately conveys this type of planning is vital to ensure that all caregiver understand their options.
- **IF IT TAKES A VILLAGE** to raise a child, as the saying goes, it just might take a country to care for elderly—and their caregivers!

López Anuarbe M. and Kohli. P (2019). Understanding Male Caregivers' Emotional, Financial, and Physical Burden in the United States, *Healthcare*, 7(2). E72.