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Almost One-Third of U.S. Adult Population Plays Caregiver Role in Households Across America: 65.7 Million Caregivers Comprehensive Report Details the Prevalence, Implications, Costs of Caregiving and Demographics of Caregivers

Caregiving is still mostly a woman's job and many women are putting their career and financial futures on hold as they juggle part-time caregiving and full-time job requirements. This is the reality reported in *Caregiving in the U.S. 2009*, the most comprehensive examination to date of caregiving in America. The sweeping study of the legions of people caring for adults, the elderly and children with special needs reveals that 29% of the U.S. adult population, or 65.7 million people, are caregivers, including 31% of all households. These caregivers provide an average of 20 hours of care per week.

[*Caregiving in the U.S.*](#), which was funded by [MetLife Foundation](#) and conducted for the [National Alliance for Caregiving](#) in collaboration with [AARP](#) by [Mathew Greenwald & Associates](#), is the result of interviews with 1,480 caregivers chosen at random. The study was designed to replicate similar studies conducted in 2004 and 1997 and includes, for the first time, a sampling of those caring for children as well as those caring for adults over the age of 18. www.aarp.org/caregivingus

Among the findings: American caregivers are predominantly female (66%) and are an average of 48 years old. Most care for a relative (86%), most often a parent (36%). Seven in ten caregivers care for someone over age 50. One in seven caregivers provides care, over and above regular parenting, to a child with special needs (14%). Caregiving lasts an average of 4.6 years.

The study also revealed that both caregivers of adults and their care recipients are now older than their counterparts were five years ago. Among caregivers of adults (ages 18 or older), the average age of the caregiver rose from 46 to 49. The change can be attributed to a decline among younger caregivers (those under the age of 50) and a shift upward among caregivers age 50 to 64. Among caregivers of adults, the average care recipient's age increased from 67 to 69, mainly because of an increase in the percentage age 75 or older (from 43% to 51%).

The main reasons people need care are old age (12%), Alzheimer's disease (10%), mental/emotional illness (7%), cancer (7%), heart disease (5%) and stroke (5%). However, the list of illnesses/problems for which children need care is quite different. It is led by ADD/ADHD, autism, mental/emotional illness and developmental delay/mental retardation. Caregivers of children provide the most time-intensive care. Increasingly, the study reports, there is a use of

Click Here for Companion Studies:

[Caregivers of Children Under 18](#)

[Caregivers of Younger Adults](#)

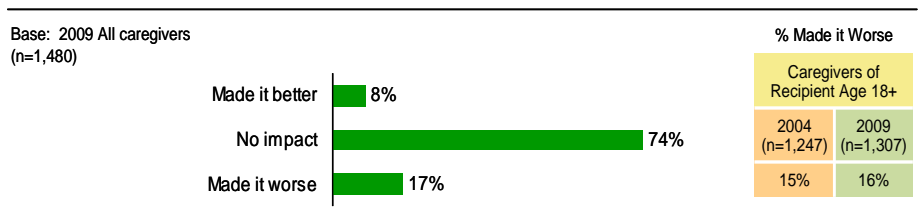
[Caregivers of Adults 50+](#)

Profile of Caregivers	Total (n=1,480)
Household Income	
Less than \$30,000	22%
\$30,000 to \$50,000	18
\$50,000 to \$99,999	32
\$100,000 or more	19
Did Not Specify	9
Current Employment Status	
Working	57%
Retired	15
Homemaker	10
Unemployed and seeking work	7
Disabled, Student, Other	10
Race/Ethnicity of Caregiver	
White	72%
Black/African American	13
Hispanic	12
Asian	2
Other	2

prescription medication for adult care recipients.

Caregivers are also receiving more help than they were five years ago, which is encouraging news, since one in six caregivers (17%) report that caregiving has had a negative impact on their health. Since 2004, there has been a sharp increase in the share of caregivers of adults who say they are getting help from other unpaid caregivers—up nine

Impact of Caregiving on Health

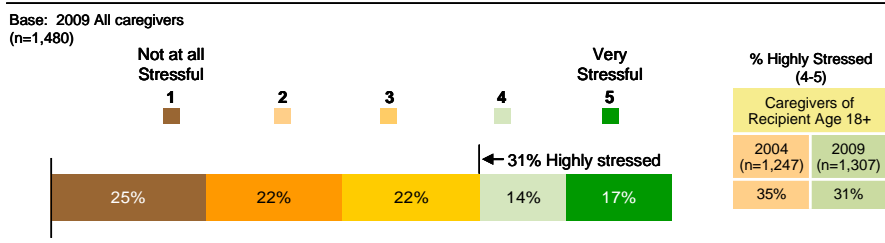


percentage points among those not caring for an adult in a nursing home. However, during the same time period, there has been a six percentage point decrease in those who report that their recipient uses paid help, a decrease that could potentially be linked to the recent recession.

“More and more people who are 65-plus are providing care to both children and adults,” said Gail Hunt, president and CEO of the National Alliance for Caregiving. “The shift to an older population of caregivers points to a real need for assistance for these individuals from family, friends, employers and social service programs. With more support for caregiving, older and disabled people would be able to do what is so important to them, to remain in their own homes with those they love.”

“Now in addition to family and work, boomers have added caregiving, the equivalent of a part time job, to

Emotional Stress of Caregiving



their responsibilities,” said Elinor Ginzler, AARP Senior Vice President for Livable Communities. “Their work, health and time with family and friends already bear some of the cost for this amped up juggling act. Caregivers need help and information to continue to keep all the balls in the air and assure that

they don’t end up paying further with their own retirement security.”

“Caregivers report they need help looking after their loved ones, but they also need help managing their own stress,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “Those surveyed suggested potential solutions for these challenges, including greater access to information resources, emergency response devices, transportation assistance, and respite services for caregivers.”

Methodology

Caregiving in the U.S. is based primarily on quantitative telephone screenings of 6,806 adults and interviews with 1,480 caregivers age 18 or older. Caregivers are defined as those who provide unpaid care to an adult or a child. The interviews included a random sample of 1,000 caregivers reached using random digit dialing and an additional 601 interviews consisting of 200 African American caregivers, 201 Hispanic caregivers, and 200 Asian American caregivers. The results were weighted by household, based on the race/ethnicity and age of the householder, and type of household (family or non-family).

The **National Alliance for Caregiving** is a nonprofit coalition of more than 40 national organizations that focuses on issues of family caregiving across the life span. Established in 1996 by founding members AARP, the American Society on Aging, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the National Council on Aging, and the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs, the Alliance was created to conduct research, do policy analysis, develop national programs,

increase public awareness of family caregiving issues, and work with state and local caregiving coalitions. The Alliance also represents the US often at international caregiving conferences.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.5 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's 40 million members and Americans 50+; AARP Segunda Juventud, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

MetLife Foundation, established in 1976 by MetLife, has been involved in a variety of healthy aging initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental fitness, health and wellness programs, aging in place initiatives, and civic engagement opportunities. For more than 20 years, the Foundation has supported research on Alzheimer's disease and provided support for a number of caregiver initiatives, including education and outreach activities, caregiver videos, Alzheimer's education and awareness resources, and resources for the Hispanic community.

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