

More than 1 in 4 Americans over 50 are now caregivers

August 7 2024, by Dennis Thompson



More than 1 in 4 Americans 50 or older are now caregivers, looking after at least one family member or friend who has a health problem or disability, a new poll has found.

In all, 30% of all people in their 50s and early 60s provide care to at least one person, the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging found.

By comparison, only 23% of people over 65 are caregivers, results show.

The poll also found that 1 in 10 caregivers in their 50s and early 60s are juggling the care of three or more people.

"Nationwide, these data confirm that caregiving for family and friends who have [health](#) challenges falls unevenly on people in their 50s and early 60s, and [women](#)," said Sarah Patterson, a University of Michigan demographer who worked with the poll team on the new survey.

About 32% of women aged 50 or older are caregivers, compared with 22% of men in the same age group, the poll found.

The poll also provided more information about who needs all this care.

About 23% of caregivers look after someone with an intellectual or developmental disability, while 66% care for a senior with a health problem or disability.

The most common health concern that required caregiving was a [physical disability](#) or mobility problem, affecting 59% of those needing care.

The next most common were memory or thinking issues, affecting 42%, vision or hearing impairments at 28% and mental health concerns at 22%.

The results "show us more about the specific health issues and disabilities they're helping loved ones with, and about the need for more

awareness of existing [support programs](#) for [older adults](#) and their caregivers," Patterson said in a university news release.

When asked who should be covering the cost of caregiving, 45% of people aged 50 and older felt the government should take the lead, while 27% said the person receiving care should pay. About 18% said it should be family or friends.

The poll also found that 61% of caregivers didn't know about Area Agencies on Aging, which are local or regional groups that offer support to caregivers, seniors and the disabled.

"We hope these data will help policymakers and others understand who is providing care," said poll director Dr. Jeffrey Kullgren, an associate professor of internal medicine at Michigan Medicine. "We also found that the majority of caregivers may not know about local or regional services that could help them or the person they're caring for."

The survey was conducted among nearly 3,400 people, including more than 900 [caregivers](#), researchers said. The [poll](#) took place in February and March.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [caregiving](#).

© 2024 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: More than 1 in 4 Americans over 50 are now caregivers (2024, August 7) retrieved 8 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-americans-caregivers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.