



April 2017

Welcome and Thank You!

Welcome to this edition of *NHATS & you*, a newsletter designed especially for National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) participants. Thanks to you and more than 9,000 others like you who have joined us in this important research study, we can study how daily life changes as Americans age. More than 100 scientific papers and presentations have now used information from NHATS, and the list is growing.

A New Measure of Success

Most older adults want to stay independent. But what happens when walking and other basic movements become challenging?

New research with NHATS focuses on those who use walking aids and other devices to manage their daily activities without help. Older adults who are part of this group report high wellbeing and are able to continue to participate in activities that they enjoy. Researchers are beginning to recognize this behavior as a sign of successful aging.



For the first time researchers are able to characterize not only the size but also the makeup of this group. About one in four older adults successfully manages daily activities with devices. This behavior is more common among those ages 80–89, those with more children, and those living in homes with environmental features – like grab bars and a seat for the tub or shower – already installed.

Participating in Activities that Matter

NHATS provides clear evidence that most older adults continue to participate in activities that matter to them. In 2015, over 80 percent of older adults reported visiting with family or friends in the prior month.

However, it may be difficult for some people to leave their homes to do these activities. Researchers have used NHATS to learn about older adults who are unable to leave their homes on their own.

Approximately 5 percent of older adults never left home in the prior month and another 14 percent did so only with help or difficulty. Researchers are studying how best to keep these seniors connected to activities that matter to them.



Focus on Caregiving

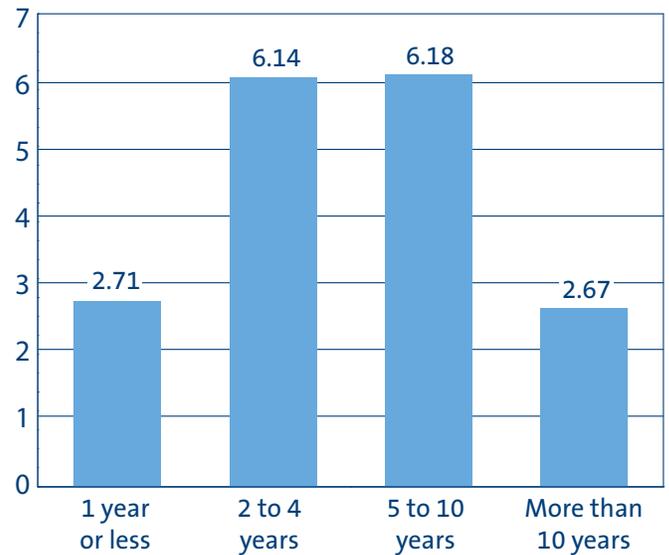
For the third time, researchers will be conducting the National Study of Caregiving (NSOC). NSOC is a national study of people who help their older family members and friends with daily activities.

The first round of interviews has received a lot of attention from researchers and policymakers alike. A new report from the National Academy of Sciences highlights a number of key findings from NSOC, including the following:

- At least 17.7 million individuals in the United States are family caregivers of someone age 65 and older who has a significant impairment.
- Family care is not a short-term commitment. Nearly 12 million caregivers have provided help for 2 to 10 years, and another 2.5 million for more than 10 years (see figure).
- Over their lifetime, a typical adult can expect to care for an older family member or friend for 6 years.

The third round of NSOC will allow researchers to study how caregiving changes over time.

Millions of Caregivers by Years of Help



Coming Soon...

We will continue to keep you informed of exciting new research that uses NHATS data. As findings are published, we will make these results available in future newsletters.

Thank you for your continued participation in NHATS!

www.mynhats.org

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