

February 2017

## Welcome and Thank You!

Welcome to this edition of *nsoc & you*, a newsletter designed especially for participants in the National Study of Caregiving. NSOC is a national study of people who help older family members and friends who are part of the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) with their daily activities.

With two rounds of interviews completed, researchers can now gain insight into how helping an older adult with daily activities affects things like health, work, and well-being. A third round in 2017 will help researchers understand how things change over time—both for those who continue to help and those who stop.

Thanks to you and more than 2,000 others like you who have joined us in this important research study, NSOC is already being used to inform how to improve the care experience for those helping older adults. This newsletter highlights a few recent findings.

## Who Provides Help and How Much?

In 2011, 18 million friends and family members provided 1.3 billion hours of help each month to the more than 9 million older adults who needed assistance with daily activities.



**9**  
million  
older adults  
receiving help



**18**  
million  
helpers



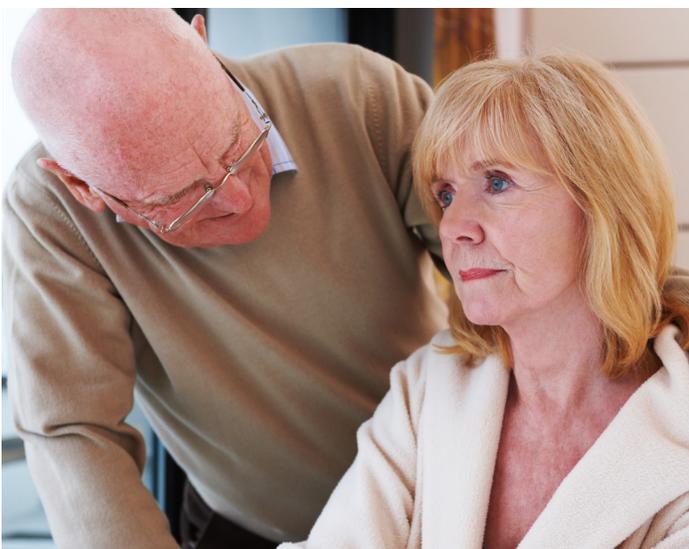
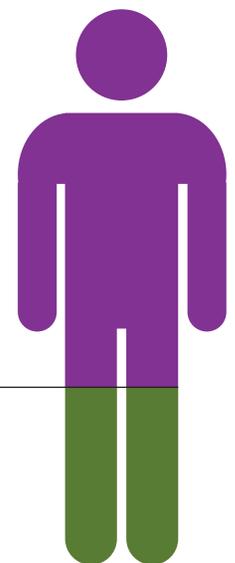
**1.3**  
billion  
hours

Family members are the main source of help: 2 out of 3 helpers are spouses or adult children of older adults. On average, each helper spends about 75 hours a month on caregiving, about the same as a half-time job.

## 2 Out of 3 Helpers Are Spouses or Children

**68%**  
Spouses and children

**32%**  
Others

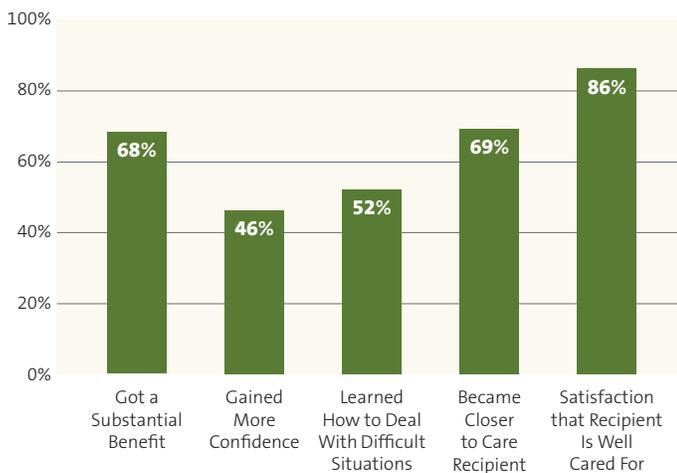


## Benefits and Challenges of Care

Much research has underscored the challenges of helping out older adults, and for some the challenges can be substantial. But NSOC participants also report many benefits of providing care.

In fact, most helpers—7 out of 10—report substantial benefits of helping. Over 80% report that helping gives them satisfaction that their relative is well cared for.

### Helpers Reporting the Benefits of Helping



Only a relatively small number of helpers—1 out of 10—report substantial negative outcomes such as exhaustion, having too much to do, or having too little time for themselves. These challenges are most common for people helping relatives with dementia (a group of conditions where loss of memory interferes with daily life) and those who have health problems themselves.



### A Special Challenge: Helping with Medical Care

Helping a loved one with their medical care can be especially challenging. Helpers who assist with health care visits and with prescription medications are more likely to experience emotional, physical, and financial difficulties. They are also more likely to find that care responsibilities keep them from doing other activities that they enjoy. For those who still work, helping can make it harder for them to get their work done.

Based on findings from NSOC, health care professionals are discussing how to improve the experience of family caregivers. Some are recommending that providers assess and train caregivers before giving them complex tasks to do at home. Others are focusing on how to improve communication between health care providers and family helpers.

*Thank you for your participation in NSOC!*

[www.mynhats.org](http://www.mynhats.org)

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