



National Study of Caregiving

nsoc & you

Volume 11 – Issue 1

May 2021

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 three rounds of interviews completed, researchers have been studying how helping an older adult with daily activities affects things like caregivers' health, work, and well-being. Starting this year, the study will take place annually and will help researchers understand the changing lives of those caring for older adults.

This newsletter highlights a few recent findings. Thank you for being a part of NSOC.



Photo is for illustrative purposes only. Any person depicted in the photo is a model.

Are You a Generalist or a Specialist?

Older adults often rely on assistance from more than one caregiver.

Some caregivers are considered “generalists” who help out with many different kinds of tasks—for instance, running errands as needed and helping with more personal tasks like bathing and dressing. Other caregivers “specialize” in one type of task—for instance, the caregiver who always takes the care recipient to the doctor. With time, as care needs change, “specialists” often become “generalists.”

About half of older adults have both generalists and specialists in their care networks.

NSOC by the Numbers

5,500+ NSOC participants to date

500+ Researchers using NSOC data

80+ Publications in scientific journals

40+ Journals where research is published



Meeting the Challenge

Helping a spouse or partner who has health problems can be challenging, and these difficulties may be physical or emotional in nature. A recent study investigated factors that might make caregiving a little less challenging.

Caregivers who report a greater purpose in life have fewer physical caregiving difficulties. For women who are caregivers, having a strong sense of purpose in life also is linked to fewer emotional care-related difficulties.

Feeling your life has meaning or purpose could serve as an important resource for combating the difficulties of caregiving.

Accentuating the Positive

Providing care can be stressful, but NSOC-based research is drawing attention to the positive.

Caregivers report that they benefit from caregiving in many ways. For instance, helping makes them feel closer to the care recipient, more confident in their ability to provide care, and more satisfied that their loved one is well cared for.

Spotlight on Dementia Caregiving: The Value of a Good Night's Sleep

Can caring for your Mom or Dad interfere with a good night's sleep? A recent study found that caring for a parent with serious memory problems often can create issues for you, their caregiver. About half of all dementia caregivers had trouble falling back asleep when they woke up during the night. This pattern is especially strong for adult children caring for a parent with dementia.

Caregivers experiencing feelings of burden were more likely to have trouble falling back asleep. On the other hand, caregivers who had other family members or friends to help them out had better sleep quality.



Photo is for illustrative purposes only. Any person depicted in the photo is a model.

Thank you for your participation in NSOC.

www.mynhats.org

1-855-421-1182



This study is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging.