



National Study of Caregiving

**nsoc & you**

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## 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). The study is conducted annually and can be completed online or by phone.

With four rounds of interviews completed, researchers have been using NSOC and NHATS to study how helping an older adult with daily activities affects things like health, work, and well-being. Research from NSOC can inform how to improve the care experience for those helping older adults.

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

## A Little Thanks May Go a Long Way

Helping a spouse or partner with their day-to-day activities can be challenging at times. Is there anything that can be done to help the caregiver manage better?

Recent research with NSOC suggests that a little appreciation may go a long way.

Researchers found that caregivers who felt appreciated by their spouse were more likely to have better overall well-being. Spouses who felt appreciated also reported fewer feelings of being overloaded—that is, having more than they can handle.

## NSOC by the Numbers

**7,400+** NSOC participants to date

**680+** Researchers using NSOC data

**160+** Scientific publications or presentations

**50+** Journals where research is published



## A Day in the Life

What does a day in the life of a caregiver look like? Thanks to NSOC participants who completed a “time diary” interview, researchers are able to study how caregivers spend time on a typical day.

They found on average about 2 ½ hours a day was devoted to caregiving. Most of that time (80 minutes) was spent on household activities like preparing meals and doing laundry for the care recipient. The rest of the time was split among providing physical or medical care like helping with grooming or medications (20 minutes), socializing with the care recipient (30 minutes), or providing transportation (20 minutes).

	Minutes of Care Yesterday
Any type of care	156
Household care	83
Physical and medical care	20
Socializing with care recipient	31
Transportation	22

Those helping someone with dementia spent more time providing physical and medical help and less time providing transportation.

Caregivers who provided more physical and medical care reported more worry, sadness, and stress than those who spent less time on this kind of care.

Research like this draws attention to the needs of family caregivers and adds to discussions about how best to support family members who are called upon to provide help with medical care.

## We Are Family

Stepfamilies have become more common over the years. But do older adults with adult stepchildren receive as much care as those with only biological children?

A recent study using NHATS suggests there is a “step gap” in care. Older adults in need of care who have biological families are twice as likely as those in stepfamilies to receive care from an adult child.



## Caregiving in the Time of COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic changed all of our lives in big and small ways. A recent study looked at whether the pandemic changed how much help caregivers provided.

More than half of all caregivers did not change how much help they provided. But about one-third reported that they increased the amount of time spent providing help, most often because they did not want the NHATS participant to go out.

One in ten decreased care time. The most common reason for a decrease? Caregivers were concerned about exposing their loved one to COVID-19.

*Thank you for your participation in NSOC.*

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

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