

The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Study: Caregivers in Canada, 2012

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Study: Caregivers in Canada, 2012

In 2012, about 8.1 million individuals, or 28% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, provided care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs.

New data from the 2012 General Social Survey showed that women represented the slight majority of caregivers at 54%. The survey also found that caregiving responsibilities most often fell to those aged 45 to 64, with 44% of caregivers in this age category.

Ailing parents were the most common recipients of care, with 39% of caregivers looking after the needs of their own parents and another 9% doing so for their parents-in-law. The least common were spouses, at 8%, and children, at 5%.

For the first time, the survey looked at the types of health conditions requiring care. Age-related needs topped the list, with 28% of caregivers providing care for these needs. Cancer was next at 11%, followed by cardio-vascular disease at 9%, and mental illness at 7%.

Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents report the highest levels of caregiving

The proportion of caregivers varied across provinces, with Saskatchewan and Manitoba having the highest rates of caregiving in 2012 at 34% and 33%, respectively. Also above the national average were Nova Scotia (31%) and Ontario (29%).

In contrast, Quebec had a lower rate than the national average. About 25% of Quebecers reported that they had provided care to an ill, disabled or aging family member or friend in 2012.

Other provinces were not significantly different from the national average.

Providing transportation most common form of care

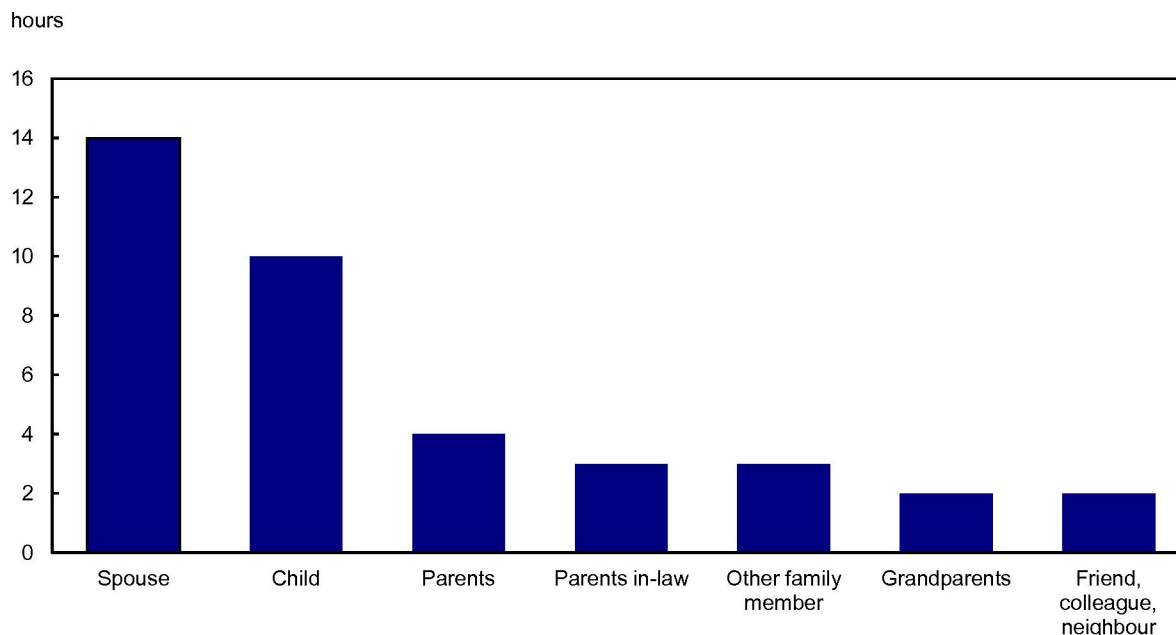
The most common type of help, provided by 73% of all caregivers, was transportation to run errands, shop, or attend medical appointments. The next most frequent types of activities were house cleaning and meal preparation at 51%, followed by house maintenance and outdoor work at 45%.

Some other tasks were provided by a lower proportion of caregivers, but were done more frequently. These tasks (including medical treatments and personal care, such as help with bathing and dressing) were provided by less than 1 in 4 caregivers. However, two-thirds of those who performed these activities did so at least once a week.

More time spent caring for ill or disabled children and spouses

Overall, caregivers typically spent 3 hours a week caring for an ill or disabled family member or friend. However, this amount varied depending on the relationship between the caregiver and care receiver.

Chart 1
Median number of hours per week spent on caregiving, 2012



Caregivers of spouses and children devoted the most time to helping activities. Spousal caregivers typically spent 14 hours a week on some form of care, while caregivers of children (including adult children) spent 10 hours per week.

Caregivers of parents, the largest segment of caregivers, typically spent 4 hours, while caregivers of grandparents and friends spent the fewest number of hours per week, at 2 hours.

Women were more likely than men to spend the longest hours on caregiving activities. In 2012, 17% of women providing care devoted 20 or more hours a week to these tasks, compared with 11% of men.

Over one-quarter of caregivers "sandwiched"

Over one-quarter (28%) of caregivers, or 2.2 million individuals, could be considered "sandwiched" between caregiving and raising children. Most of them were women between the ages 35 and 44, and were helping their parents or parents-in law, while also having at least one child under 18 living at home.

Impacts greatest for caregivers of children and spouses

The survey also examined the psychological, financial and employment consequences of caregiving among those who provided 2 or more hours of care per week. At greatest risk of negative consequences were caregivers of children and spouses, reflecting their greater intensity of care.

About half of caregivers providing care to children (51%) and spouses (46%) reported at least five symptoms of psychological distress, such as depression, feelings of isolation and disturbed sleep. This compares with 30% of those caring for their own parents and 8% caring for a grandparent.

In addition, 34% of those caring for their child and 33% of those caring for their spouse had to consult a medical professional as a result of their responsibilities, compared with 18% of those who took care of their parents. Caregivers of children or spouses were also more likely to sustain an injury while providing care.

Nevertheless, about 9 in 10 caregivers felt that the experience of providing care was rewarding. Moreover, 7 in 10 also expressed that their relationship with their care receiver had strengthened over the course of the previous 12 months.

One in five caregivers receive financial support

In 2012, 19% of caregivers received some form of financial support. Help from family and friends was the most common at 12%, followed by government programs at 7% and federal tax credit at 5%.

Those caring for their child and spouse received the most financial support from governments. In 2012, 30% of caregivers of children received government financial assistance, compared with 14% of caregivers of spouses and 5% of caregivers of parents.

Even though they received the most support from governments, 28% of those who cared for a child and 20% of those who cared for a spouse experienced financial difficulties. This compares with 7% among those helping their parents.

In addition, 52% of caregivers of children, 42% of caregivers of spouses and 28% of caregivers of parents said that they would have liked more help than they received, financial or otherwise.

Note to readers

Today, Statistics Canada releases two articles on caregiving in Canada, both based on new data from the 2012 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving. Similar data were last collected in 2007.

The first article, titled "Portrait of Caregivers, 2012", presents the number of caregivers and their characteristics, along with the types of help provided, the number of hours of care, the impacts of providing care, and financial support for caregivers.

The second article, titled "Family caregiving: What are the consequences?" discusses the psychological, physical and financial consequences of providing care, with a focus on the relationship between the caregiver and receiver.

Caregivers are defined as individuals aged 15 years and older providing help or care to either someone with a long-term health condition or a physical or mental disability, or someone with problems related to aging. In 2012, the survey collected information from 23,093 respondents living in the 10 provinces.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4502.

The articles "Portrait of Caregivers, 2012" in *Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey* (89-652-X) and "Family caregiving: What are the consequences?" in *Insights on Canadian Society* (75-006-X), are now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).

For more information on *Spotlights on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey*, contact Jodi-Anne Brzozowski (613-951-3230, jodi-anne.brzozowski@statcan.gc.ca), Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division.

For more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.gc.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

Employer pension plans (trusteed pension funds), first quarter 2013

The market value of Canadian employer-sponsored pension funds totalled \$1.2 trillion at the end of the first quarter, up 3.9% from the fourth quarter of 2012.

Pension fund investments in stocks grew 4.5% in the first quarter, surpassing the 3.1% gain in the value of shares on the Toronto Stock Exchange for the same period.

Investments in real estate assets grew 3.7% while the value of bond holdings edged down 0.2%.

Foreign investments increased in value by 6.9% and the share of pension fund assets held in foreign investments grew to 32.6% of total pension assets.

Pension fund revenues totalled \$36.1 billion in the first quarter, unchanged from the fourth quarter of 2012. Expenditures fell 3.6% to \$15.5 billion, increasing net income for a third straight quarter to \$20.6 billion.

Just over six million Canadian workers are members of employer pension plans. Of this group, five million workers are members of trusteed plans. The remaining one million members with employer pension plans are managed, principally, by insurance company contracts. Data in this release refer only to trusteed plans and their pension funds.

Table 1
Trusteed pension funds: Market value of assets by type

	Fourth quarter 2012 ^P	Fourth quarter 2012 ^P	First quarter 2013 ^P	First quarter 2013 ^P	Fourth quarter 2012 to first quarter 2013
	millions of dollars	% of total assets	millions of dollars	% of total assets	% change
Total assets	1,193,445	100.0	1,239,462	100.0	3.9
Bonds	443,295	37.1	442,324	35.7	-0.2
Stocks	372,931	31.2	389,600	31.4	4.5
Mortgages	12,993	1.1	13,212	1.1	1.7
Real estate	95,786	8.0	99,309	8.0	3.7
Short-term	41,501	3.5	44,757	3.6	7.8
Other assets	219,500	18.4	242,487	19.6	10.5
Assets, funds under \$10 million	7,439	0.6	7,774	0.6	4.5

^P preliminary

Table 2
Trusted pension funds: Revenue and expenditures

	Fourth quarter 2012 ^P	First quarter 2013 ^P	Fourth quarter 2012 to first quarter 2013
	millions of dollars		% change
Total revenue	36,138	36,136	0.0
Revenue from contributions	15,898	13,384	-15.8
Investment income	10,945	9,131	-16.6
Net profit on sale of securities	8,371	12,947	54.7
Miscellaneous revenue	588	419	-28.7
Revenue, funds under \$10 million	337	255	-24.3
Total expenditures	16,081	15,496	-3.6
Pension payments out of funds	11,770	11,722	-0.4
Cost of pensions purchased	163	72	-55.8
Cash withdrawals	2,038	1,783	-12.5
Administration costs	1,169	1,155	-1.2
Net loss on sale of securities	309	322	4.2
Other expenditures	545	364	-33.2
Expenditures, funds under \$10 million	87	79	-9.2
Net income	20,057	20,640	2.9

^P preliminary

Available in CANSIM: tables 280-0002 to 280-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2607.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).

New products and studies

New products

Building Permits, July 2013, Vol. 57, no. 7
Catalogue number 64-001-X (HTML | PDF)

Insights on Canadian Society
Catalogue number 75-006-X (HTML | PDF)

New studies

Family caregiving: What are the consequences?
Insights on Canadian Society

Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey: "Portrait of Caregivers, 2012", 2012, No. 1
Catalogue number 89-652-X2013001 (HTML | PDF)



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