

Sharing caregiving for older adults and paid work: couples in the UK Household Longitudinal Study

High income countries have seen an expansion of older age morbidity and much of the caregiving this entails is provided informally. Increasing retirement ages and women's labour market participation are increasing employment rates in midlife and early older age, therefore balancing paid work and informal caregiving is of increasing importance. We investigate how caregiving and paid work are shared by couples, and the extent to which this is socially patterned.

Six waves of the UK Household Longitudinal Study were analysed. Our sample was restricted to co-resident, opposite sex, working age couples where one or both partners was an informal caregiver (4834 couples). Couples were categorised according to both partners' hours of paid work (0, ≤ 35 , > 35 hours/week) and informal caregiving.

In 27% of couples both partners were caregivers, whilst in 31% and 42% of couples only the man or woman, respectively, were caregivers. In the most common arrangements only the woman was a caregiver, the man worked full time and the woman worked either full time (12%) or part time (14%). In 11% of couples neither partner was in paid work.

Multinomial regression analyses show that partners' sociodemographic characteristics and characteristics of the caring relationship predict how couples share informal caregiving and paid work. For example, compared to couples where the man works full time, the woman works part time and only the woman has a caring responsibility, couples with a more highly educated woman were more likely to share caregiving and paid work more equally ($\beta=0.17$, 95%CI 0.07, 0.26).