

Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer Caregivers: Results from the Global Carer Well-being Index

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RESULTS

- 63% of all caregivers were women, with a **60/40 female to male** split in the cancer caregiver group.
- **Average age of starting caregiving was 39.0** in cancer caregivers, and 37.2 in non-cancer caregivers.
- Cancer caregivers were **more likely to be in the 60+ age group** (15 vs 11%) than non-cancer caregivers.



RISING DEMANDS

Juggling responsibilities:

- 29% report more difficulty balancing work with their care duties

Increased dependence:

- 42% say person they care for is relying on them more than ever before; which is higher than the average across all caregivers surveyed (39%)

Time increase:

- Pre-pandemic, spent an average of 16+ hrs/week providing care; 34% expect an increase to 30+ hrs/week, even after the pandemic



CHANGED RESPONSIBILITIES

Increased technology use:

- 53% have increased responsibility managing medical appointments virtually
- 63% need additional training on telehealth and other online tools

Emotional Support:

- 58% are providing more emotional support than before
- 91% state they are putting the needs of those they care for above their own

Work / care balance:

- 58% feel that being an unpaid caregiver has negatively impacted their paid work responsibilities



TOLL ON CAREGIVERS

Emotional health:

- 67% say pandemic has worsened emotional health
- 28% feel they have no-one to turn to for support

Physical health:

- 50% say the pandemic has worsened physical health
- 61% report lack of sleep
- 77% report unprecedented levels of burnout

Financial health:

- 58% say the pandemic has worsened their financial status - household and medical bills, further impacted by reduced working hours and a lack of financial support



INEQUITIES IMPACTING CAREGIVERS

Public and private sector support:

- 73% have never received support from local government, which is higher than other caregivers (66%)
- 84% never from private companies, 77% never from non-profit organizations

Understanding benefits:

- 92% report that help navigating the health and social services / care system is important to ensure they can provide the care needed.

Employer support:

- 96% feel that employers should provide additional flexibility policies and support for caregivers
- 63% have never received support from their employer

HIGHLIGHTS: Cancer caregivers were more likely to report...



71 vs 63%

...that COVID has made caregiving harder than caregivers in other groups (e.g.; dementia, Parkinson's disease)



67 vs 61%

...that COVID has worsened their emotional/mental health than caregivers in other groups (e.g.; spinal cord injury, congestive heart failure)



61 vs 56%

... a positive impact on the relationship with the individual they are caring for because of the pandemic

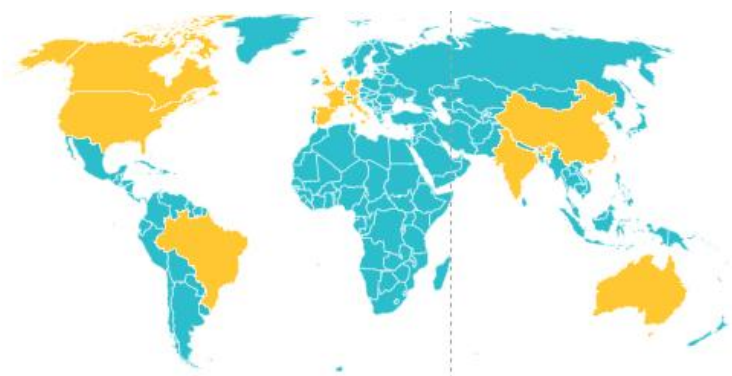


26 vs 13%

...becoming a caregiver in the last year than caregivers in other groups (e.g.; muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis)

BACKGROUND

- The Carer Well-being Index was:
 - a **global** study commissioned by Embracing Carers™
 - done in partnership with **9 global caregiving organizations**
 - conducted in **12 countries** (United States, Canada, Brazil, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain,
 - designed to explore the **impact of the pandemic** on the **health and well-being of unpaid caregivers**



METHODS



- The survey was conducted:
 - via online and phone methodologies
 - from September 3 – October 27, 2020
 - with 9,000 unpaid (informal) caregivers caring for someone with a:
 - Long term illness (e.g.; cancer)
 - Physical disability (e.g.; spinal cord injury)
 - Cognitive mental condition (e.g.; Alzheimer's)
- Sample size for **cancer caregivers** was **N=1035**, including 109 from USA and 102 from Canada
- Statistically significant differences between cancer carers and all other carers were evaluated using the Chi-square test with $p \leq 0.05$

SOLUTIONS



Address Emotional / mental well-being:

Provide more respite services that are accessible, flexible and easy to secure, especially for unpaid caregivers of people with cancer who have complicated requirements and very specific needs



Provide training and support:

Provide supportive training on access and effective use of telehealth and other online resources, especially for those managing medical appointments and ongoing treatment for those with cancer



Reduce inequalities:

Incentivize employers and educational environments to develop support programs for employees and students who support people living with cancer (e.g.; flexible working/study hours, paid medical leave)

ROLE of the HEALTH CARE PROVIDER



There are ways HCPs and their team can help recognize and support cancer caregivers:

- 1. Formally recognize family caregivers** as part of the patients inter-disciplinary healthcare team.
 - Does the caregiver have the information they need to support their loved one?
- 2. Inquire about the family caregiver's health and well-being** and if possible access if changes over time.
 - Are they having trouble sleeping, issues with balancing work and caring? Do they need to talk to someone?
- 3. Have resource materials** specific to family caregivers unique needs.
 - Are their local support groups, respite care resources, etc. that you can refer a family to?

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