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BY THE NUMBERS

Stress and caregiving

Unpaid caregivers for older adults—mainly family—were more than three times as likely to have suicidal thoughts or to use substances to cope with COVID-19 stress in June than they were in May, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data

By [Tori DeAngelis](#) Date created: November 1, 2020 1 min read

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66.6%

Percentage of unpaid caregivers for older adults who reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health symptom in the 30 days before taking a survey of 5,470 Americans conducted June 24–30, 2020. Approximately 40.4 million Americans provide unpaid care for people ages 65 and older, and about 90% of them are related to the person.⁽¹⁾

32.9%

Percentage of unpaid caregivers who reported mental or behavioral health problems such as anxiety, depression or substance use in the 30 days before taking the June survey. That compares with 6.3% of respondents who weren't caring for older family members. Unpaid caregivers were also 3.33 times more likely to report using substances to cope than they were in May.

30.7%

Percentage of unpaid caregivers who reported thinking seriously about suicide in the 30 days before completing the June survey. That compares with 3.6% of those not providing unpaid care for older adults, and it is higher than suicide-ideation rates in other high-risk groups including essential workers (21.7%), young people ages 18–24 (25.5%), Hispanics (18.6%) and Blacks (15.1%).

Sources: Czeisler M.É., et al. (2020). Mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic—United States, June 24–30, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.⁽¹⁾. Unpaid eldercare in the United States—2017–18 summary. Economic news release from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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