

# UNH Research Finds Older Adults Not Receiving the Care They Need

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More than one-third of all adults in the United States aged 65 and older do not receive the care they need, according to new research from the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Unmarried men and women and those who live alone are particularly vulnerable.

"The graying of the U.S. population foretells a crisis in care," said [Rebecca Glauber](#), associate professor of sociology and Melissa Day, a doctoral candidate in sociology. "In 2012, about 43.1 million U.S. adults – 13.7 percent of the population – were ages 65 and older. By 2050 those figures are estimated to climb to 83.7 million and 20.9 percent. The aging of the baby boomers accelerates this growth, and its effects ripple across our social institutions and pose challenges to individuals, families, care providers and policy makers."

Needing care is defined as being frail and having at least one functional limitation: needing help bathing dressing, taking medications, preparing food and performing other tasks associated with daily living. Thirty-six percent of the older adults who meet this criteria receive no care from family members, friends or paid providers.

Other findings on older U.S. adults include:

- Among the unmarried, 44 percent of men and 32 percent of women had an unmet need for care
- Among those living alone, 47 percent of men and 36 percent of women had an unmet need for care

- Men are more likely than women to receive care from a spouse (39 versus 15 percent)
- Women who need care are more likely than men to receive care primarily from a daughter (20 versus 7 percent) even when the woman's husband is alive

"As the population ages, policy makers must contend with the funding, provision and coordination of long-term care supports for older adults and their families, especially those who are unmarried and living alone," the researchers said.

To download a copy of the report, go to <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/vulnerability-older-adults>

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