



## Questions and Answers about Elder Care and the Workplace: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet

### Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets that provide statistical answers to some important questions about work–family and work–life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Elder Care at the Workplace. (Last updated: August 2008)



#### How many people have elder care responsibilities?

- ✓ **Fact 1** "When asked whether they had, in the past year, 'provided special attention or care for a relative or in-law 65 years old or older, helping them with things that were difficult or impossible for them to do themselves', 35 percent of wage and salaried workers (of all ages and both genders) said they had. And among those who had provided elder care, 36 percent took some amount of time away from work" (Families and Work Institute, 2002, p. 30).
- ✓ **Fact 2** In 2002, "35 percent (of employees) have had significant elder care responsibilities in the past year (equal proportions of men and women) and 17 percent have these responsibilities currently (slightly more women than men)" (Families and Work Institute, 2002, p. 29).



#### What is the impact of elder care on employed caregivers?

- ✓ **Fact 1** "Nearly 60% of those caring for an adult over the age of 50 are working; the majority of those work full-time" (MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving, 2006).
- ✓ **Fact 2** "At least 6 out of 10 employed caregivers reported that they had made some work-related adjustments as a result of their caregiving responsibilities" (MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving, 2006).
- ✓ **Fact 3** "When asked whether eldercare responsibilities carried with it a stigma in the workplace, the majority of both men and women reported that there was no stigma (87% of the men and 76% of the women)" (National Alliance for Caregiving & The Center for Productive Aging at Towson University, 2003).
- ✓ **Fact 4** "A quarter of the men and 28% of the women reported they shared a residence with the elderly they were helping" (National Alliance for Caregiving & The Center for Productive Aging at Towson University, 2003).



### How many employees do elder care responsibilities influence?

✔ **Fact 1** In 2002, "35 percent (of employees) have had significant elder care responsibilities in the past year (equal proportions of men and women) and 17 percent have these responsibilities currently (slightly more women than men)" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 29).



### How does elder care impact the workplace?

✔ **Fact 1** "5% of employed caregivers lost job benefits" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 2** "4% of employed caregivers turned down a promotion" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 3** "62% of employed caregivers changed daily schedule, went in late, left early, or took time off during work" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 4** "52% of the women (2,187,282) and 34% of the men (953,431) have experienced workday interruptions as a result of caregiving" (MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving, 2006).

✔ **Fact 5** "10% of employed caregivers worked fewer hours, took less demanding job" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 6** "...about 13 percent of all wage and salaried workers currently take some time off work to meet elder care responsibilities in a given year" (Families and Work Institute, 2002, p. 30).

✔ **Fact 7** "Nearly a quarter of the respondents reported that they had to refuse overtime work [because of elder care responsibilities] (21%), with women more likely reporting this effect than men" (National Alliance for Caregiving & The Center for Productive Aging at Towson University, 2003).

✔ **Fact 8** "6% of employed caregivers gave up work entirely" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 9** "A total of 5% of the men and 7% of the women reported that they left the workplace as a result of caregiving" (MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving, 2006).

✔ **Fact 10** "3% of employed caregivers chose early retirement" (Hunt, 2004).

✔ **Fact 11** "(27%) of the respondents- men and women alike- report they are considering a job change as a result of their [elder] caregiving/work experiences" (National Alliance for Caregiving & The Center for Productive Aging at Towson University, 2003).



✔ **Fact 12** "...the parents of teenagers are more overworked than parents with younger children. In addition, we found that employees with elder care responsibilities tend to be more overworked than employees without these responsibilities" (Galinsky et al., 2005, p. 6).



### How do companies support their employees who provide elder care?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 NSE, "small and large employers are equally likely (81%) to allow employees time off to provide elder care without jeopardizing their jobs" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 17).

✔ **Fact 2** According to the 2005 NSE, "79 percent of employers say that they provide paid or unpaid time off for employees to provide elder care without jeopardizing their jobs" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 17).

✔ **Fact 3** According to the 2005 NSE, of the, "92 percent of employers that have at least eight work life initiatives (such as flexible work schedules, family leave, child care or elder care assistance)...39% say that they want to support employees and their families" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 2).



### Do employees have access to elder care resource and referral services?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 NSE, "29 percent (of employers) provide employees with information about elder care services" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 17).

✔ **Fact 2** "About 33% of the large employers nationwide have an eldercare program to serve employees with eldercare responsibilities" (MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving, 2006).

✔ **Fact 3** "...the proportion of employees having access to elder care resource and referral services through their employers has more than doubled in the past decade—from 11 to 24 percent" (Families and Work Institute, 2002, p. 45).

✔ **Fact 4** According to the 2005 NSE, "employers in 2005 were more likely (34%) to report that they offered Elder Care Resource and Referral services than employers in 1998 (23%)" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 18).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. Visit a topic page on Elder Care at the Workplace at: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=30>  
Topic pages provide resources/information including statistics, definitions, overviews & briefs, bills & statutes, interviews, teaching resources, audio/video, suggested readings and links.
2. Visit our database of academic literature with citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Elder Care at the Workplace. You can connect to this database at:



[http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=BCL\\_WF](http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF)



## References

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Bond, J., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National study of employers*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

This study was designed to build on the 1998 Business Work-Life Study and therefore provides data on changes that have occurred over the last 7 years. "The 2005 NSE sample included 1,092 employers with 50 or more employees- 66 percent are for-profit companies and 34 percent are nonprofit organizations; 44 percent operate at only one location, while 56 percent have operations at more than one location...(The survey was conducted) using telephone interviews with human resource directors. Harris Interactive staff conducted the interviews from September 23, 2004 to April 5, 2005. Employers were selected from Dun & Bradstreet lists, using a stratified random sampling procedure in which selection was proportional to the number of people employed by each company to ensure a large enough sample of large organizations. The response rate was 38 percent, based on the percentage of all companies on the call-list that completed interviews" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 1).

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Families and Work Institute (2002). *Highlights of the national study of the changing workforce. No.3*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v). Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25 year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NCSW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

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Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., Kim, S.S., Backon, L., Brownfield, E., & Sakai, K. (2005). *Overwork in America: When the way we work becomes too much, Executive Summary*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"Data for this report came from telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,003 wage and salaried employees in the U.S. workforce" (p. 2).

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Heymann, J. (2000). *The widening gap: Why America's working families are in jeopardy-- and what can be done about it*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

The National Survey of Daily Experiences (Daily Diaries Studies) asked a "nationally representative sample of 1,031 Americans whether they had had to cut back on their normal activities in the preceding twenty-four hours to help family members meet their needs. The 870 working Americans in the national Daily Diaries Study were telephoned for eight days in a row. When study participants were away from their homes, they were given an 800 number to call and report their experiences" (Heymann, 2000, p.218).

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Hunt, G. (2004). Caregiving and the workplace. In C. Levine (Ed.), *Always on call: When illness turns families into caregivers* (pp. 126). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

"This study is based on a national survey of 6,139 adults from which 1,247 caregivers were identified. The interviews included 200 African-American, 200 Hispanic and 200 Asian-American caregivers who were obtained through oversampling using additional targeted and surname



samples for Hispanic and Asian-American caregivers. Most interviews were conducted in English over the telephone between September 5 and December 22, 2003. A Spanish version of the interview was initially offered to non-English speaking people of Hispanic descent.”

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MetLife Mature Market Institute & National Alliance for Caregiving (2006). *The MetLife caregiving cost study: Productivity losses to U.S. business*. Westport, CT: MetLife Mature Market Institute. Retrieved April 25, 2007, from [http://www.pascenter.org/frames/pas\\_frame.php?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.caregiving.org%2Fpubs%2Fdata.htm](http://www.pascenter.org/frames/pas_frame.php?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.caregiving.org%2Fpubs%2Fdata.htm)

“Since the release of the 1997 MetLife Study of Employer Costs for Working Caregivers, new research has helped us better understand the issues facing employed caregivers and their employers new workplace programs have been developed and more employees are reporting involvement in eldercare. In 2004, the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP issued the findings of a survey of U.S. caregivers which forms the basis of this update of the costs to employers of caregiving employees.<sup>1</sup> Findings are based on a Level of Burden Index, with Level 1 being the lowest in caregiving intensity and level 5 being the highest. Intense caregivers (Levels 3 – 5) are defined as doing personal care tasks (such as bathing, dressing, feeding as well as other tasks) for an average of 12 to 87 hours per week; levels 1 and 2 are caregivers providing, on average, fewer than 10 hours of care per week of less intense tasks, such as taking someone to a doctor’s appointment or doing housework for them.”

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National Alliance for Caregiving & The Center for Productive Aging at Towson University (June 2003). *The MetLife study of sons at work: Balancing employment and eldercare*. Westport, CT: Mature Market Institute.

“An increasing percentage of the workforce is actively involved in caring for a relative or friend age 50 or over, and studies have shown that nearly half of those caregivers are men<sup>1</sup>. Through an on-line survey of nearly 1400 employed caregivers at three Fortune 500 companies, this study looks at how caregiving situations are different for employed men and women who are providing eldercare, and how gender makes a difference in balancing work and family.”

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