

# Chapter 12

## Caregiving in Vietnamese Families

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## Caregiving in Vietnamese Family

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One feature of the Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in Viet Nam (LSAHV) is the survey of primary and potential caregivers. This component of the study was primarily designed to ensure additional anchors or modes to contact the older people respondents in succeeding surveys. At the same time, as the first initiative to understand provision of care amongst older persons (OPs) in the country, the survey provides initial impressions on caregiving as a family affair.

Viet Nam traditionally views the family as an important factor in the care of older people. The strong influence of Confucian philosophy is reflected on how the Vietnamese culture defines its moral, philosophical, and social norms (Yao, 2000). Relationship within the family is anchored on the idea of filial piety which shapes parents' expectation of old-age support from children. This is manifested in co-residency, close contacts between parents and children, and financial support and instrumental care, especially for ageing and frail family members (Giang and Pfau, 2007). The family responsibility to care for its older members is not only confined to daily practice but is also strengthened further by government policies (Dam et al., 2009; Truong, 2015). The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2009) stipulated in Chapter 2, Section 1, Article 10 of the Law on the Elderly that children, grandchildren, and other relatives have the duty to ensure the well-being of the older adults in the family. This implies that family members are considered the primary caregivers of older people (Truong, 2015).

As discussed in Chapter 11, informal family caregiving refers to the provision of help and assistance to relatives and friends who cannot take care of themselves. In their seminal work on exploring the concepts and measures of caregiving, Pearlin

et al. (1990) situated caregiving within the context of established roles such as wife–husband or child–parent. A study by Tran (2016, as cited in Tran, 2017) on care provision for older people in Viet Nam found that an overwhelming majority of OPs are self-reliant when it comes to their daily needs. Their spouse and co-resident children were reported as the next care providers for the OPs' daily needs. In contrast, when OPs get sick, most of those who provide care are their co-resident children, with the spouse as the next commonly cited caregiver.

The commitment to ensure the welfare of one another in such a relationship is manifested by the affective component of 'caring'; caregiving, on the other hand, is the behavioural expression of this commitment. With the emergence of health concerns often associated with ageing, the ordinary exchange of assistance between husband and wife and amongst children and parents is transformed to an 'extraordinary and unequally distributed burden' (Pearlin et al., 1990, p.583).

Like most countries in Asia, family caregiving is often assumed by women in Viet Nam (Tran, 2017). However, this family support model is being challenged with the social and economic transformation in the past decades. Economic development opened opportunities for women to participate in the labour force. The migration of women to urban areas has led to a change in gender roles where men are assigned the tasks previously confined to women and, increasingly, social institutions are taking over a lot of functions of a traditional family (Tran, 2017).

This chapter presents results of the caregiver survey to explore the extent of primary caregiving provisions as well as expectations of caregiving amongst OPs who had not identified a primary caregiver yet at the time of the survey. Characteristics of both primary and potential caregivers are explored. In addition, the survey also explores questions on caregivers' assessment of OPs' needs, their attitudes on their caregiving role, and, amongst primary caregivers, their current workload. Results were presented by considering the OPs' age and sex.

As shown in Table 12.1, a total of 3,619 respondents participated in the caregiver survey: 2,645 respondents identified themselves as primary caregivers whilst 974 people were potential caregivers.

## Primary Caregivers

The concept of primary caregiving was not explicitly defined in the survey. The OP respondents were asked the question: ‘Do you have a primary caregiver at the moment?’ An affirmative response was followed up by asking permission to interview the person mentioned and getting his/her contact details. For those who said that they do not have a current primary caregiver, they were asked the question: ‘Do you have a person in mind whom you think will take care of you when you need one?’ Those who responded ‘yes’ were also asked permission to interview the person mentioned and their contact details were also noted down.

Seven in ten caregivers interviewed were primary caregivers. There were slightly more primary caregivers amongst male OPs (75%) compared with 72% of female OPs. As expected, the proportion with primary caregiver increases with the age of the OP. Eighty-two percent of OPs aged 80+ have a primary caregiver, compared to 76% of those aged 70–79 and 70% in the 60–69 group.

On the characteristics of the primary caregivers, male and female caregivers have an almost equal percentage (48% vs 52%) as shown in Table 12.2. However, there is a clear gender preference of primary caregiver as 65% of female OPs have male caregivers, and consequently majority of male OPs have female caregivers (72%).

**Table 12.1. Type of Caregivers by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Type of Caregiver	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Primary	75.2	71.6	69.4	75.9	81.7	73.2
Potential	24.8	28.4	30.6	24.1	18.3	26.8
N	1,599	2,020	1,521	1,191	907	3,619

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

Almost a third of primary caregivers belong to the age group 60–69 (28%), followed by those aged 30–39 (22%). A bigger proportion of male OPs have older primary caregivers: 38% in the age group 60–69. In contrast, the primary caregivers of female OPs are aged 30–39 and 40–49 (47%). This is validated by the mean age of caregivers: amongst male OPs, the average age of caregiver is 56 whilst amongst female OPs, 50 years old.

Majority of primary caregivers are married (83%) and this number is consistent between the sexes and across the age groups of OPs. About two in three caregivers reached elementary to high school education. Sixty-seven percent are currently working whilst 29% have stopped working completely.

Less than 2% of primary caregivers received training in caregiving, slightly higher than those taking care of female OPs; the proportion with caregiving training also increases with the age of OPs.

**Table 12.2. Characteristics of Primary Caregivers by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Characteristics	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Age						
Below 20	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
20-29	4.2	6.0	7.3	2.2	3.1	5.2
30-39	16.6	25.7	25.5	22.5	9.6	21.5
40-49	10.3	21.9	9.4	22.7	27.7	16.5
50-59	17.2	15.0	12.0	11.6	32.3	16.0
60-69	37.9	18.8	40.8	12.4	11.4	27.6
70-79	10.7	9.9	4.7	25.2	6.0	10.2
80+	3.1	2.8	0.2	3.4	9.7	2.9
Mean age	55.63	49.80	50.74	53.20	53.94	52.43
<i>N</i>	1,194	1,451	1,051	860	734	2,645
Sex						
Male	28.0	64.4	48.1	51.0	41.9	47.6
Female	72.0	35.6	51.9	49.0	58.1	52.4
<i>N</i>	1,182	1,438	1,043	855	722	2,620

Characteristics	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Marital status						
Never married	7.0	14.3	11.3	9.3	12.1	10.9
Currently married	87.0	79.3	83.1	84.7	79.9	82.9
Living in	4.2	1.8	3.9	2.2	1.3	2.9
Separated/Divorced/Annulled	1.2	2.7	1.4	2.5	3.1	2.0
Widowed	0.5	1.9	0.3	1.3	3.6	1.2
<i>N</i>	1,190	1,451	1,050	860	731	2,641
Education						
No schooling/preschool	24.8	18.1	19.2	24.9	22.1	21.2
Elementary-High school	64.2	65.5	66.3	60.8	66.4	64.9
Vocational Education	4.6	4.1	4.8	3.6	3.7	4.3
College+	6.3	12.3	9.7	10.7	7.8	9.6
<i>N</i>	1,191	1,448	1,050	858	731	2,639
Work status						
Working	59.2	73.5	68.1	64.3	66.9	66.9
Stopped working completely	35.6	23.0	27.1	32.3	28.9	28.8
Never worked	5.2	3.6	4.8	3.4	4.2	4.3
<i>N</i>	1,190	1,450	1,048	860	732	2,640
% with caregiver training	1.1	2.3	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.7
<i>N</i>	1,187	1,448	1,046	857	732	2,635

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

An overwhelming majority of caregivers are the children (44%) or spouse (43%) of the OPs (Table 12.3). Sixty-three percent of caregivers are the wives of the male OPs, whilst sons/daughters comprise the bulk of primary caregivers of the female OPs. In addition to the apparent involvement of family members in providing care for the OPs, 9 in 10 of caregivers live with the OPs. A slightly higher percentage (94%) of primary caregivers who take care of male OPs live with the OPs, compared to female OPs (89%).

**Table 12.3. Relationship and Living Arrangement of Primary Caregivers to/with Older Persons, by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Relationship and Living Arrangement	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Relationship to older person						
Wife/Husband	62.6	26.6	55.3	39.8	15.2	43.2
Son/Daughter	31.7	55.3	37.4	49.4	57.1	44.4
Son-in-law/ Daughter-in-law	3.5	12.9	4.4	8.1	20.4	8.6
Grandson	0.7	1.9	0.4	1.0	4.6	1.4
Parents	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.7

Relationship and Living Arrangement	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Parents-in-law	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1
Siblings	0.0	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.0	0.5
Other relative	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
Adopted child	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3
Not related	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	1.6	0.5
<i>N</i>	1,188	1,448	1,047	858	731	2,636
Living arrangement with Older Person						
Lives with Older Person	93.6	88.6	92.1	90.3	88.5	90.9
Lives next door	4.5	7.0	4.4	6.0	9.5	5.8
Lives in same commune	1.2	2.0	1.2	2.5	1.7	1.6
Lives in same city	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.4
Lives in same province	0.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.8
Lives in same province	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.4
<i>N</i>	1,191	1,447	1,046	860	732	2,638

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

About two-thirds of primary caregivers considered themselves of average health whilst 2 in 10 assessed themselves as very healthy (Table 12.4). Twenty-six percent of primary caregivers of female OPs rated themselves as very healthy, 9-percentage point higher than primary caregivers of male OPs. Conversely, more primary caregivers of male OPs than those of female OPs rated their health as 'average' (67% vs 61%, respectively). The relatively better self-assessment of health status amongst the primary caregivers of female OPs reflects the fact that children are likely to take care of their mother in old age, whilst the wives usually assume primary caregiving responsibility to their husbands, which implies that they themselves may be facing some health concerns.

**Table 12.4. Self-Assessed Health of Primary Caregivers of Older Persons by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Self-Assessed Health Status	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Current health status						
Very healthy	17.3	25.7	23.0	21.7	18.8	21.8
Healthier than average	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.6
Of average health	66.8	60.9	64.9	62.8	61.3	63.6
Somewhat unhealthy	11.3	8.4	7.5	10.6	14.9	9.8
Very unhealthy	0.8	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1
Not sure	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
<i>N</i>	1,189	1,450	1,050	857	732	2,639

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

Aside from the caregivers' assessment of their own health, the survey also allowed caregivers to assess the OP's functional health, i.e. the ability to perform activities of daily living (ADLs). Tables 12.5 and 12.6 present the caregivers' perception of the OP's health and needs for assistance.

A quarter of caregivers reported that the OP whom they are taking care of have difficulty in performing at least one ADL (Table 12.5). The percentage is higher amongst female OPs (29%) than male OPs (21%). Furthermore, an increasing percentage of caregivers assessed that the OP they are taking care of have experienced at least one ADL difficulty as the OP gets older. At age 60–69, only 12% of OPs were assessed by their primary caregivers as having experienced difficulty in performing at least one ADL. In contrast, 56% of OPs aged 80 and above have difficulty in at least one ADL, according to the primary caregivers. Twenty-one percent of primary caregivers cited going outside or leaving the house as the most common activity the OP finds difficulty to perform. This is followed by walking around the house (14%), standing up from a bed/chair or sitting on a chair (14%), and taking a bath/shower by oneself (13%). More female OPs were assessed by the primary caregivers as having difficulty in undertaking all seven ADLs. Age is also associated with OPs' difficulty in performing ADLs. In all activities, a higher percentage of primary caregivers, who assessed that the OPs have difficulty in doing the ADLs, is observed amongst the 80 years old and older.

**Table 12.5. Primary Caregivers' Perception on Older Persons' ADL Difficulty by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Assessment of Primary Caregiver of Older Persons' ADL Difficulty	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
% of caregivers who assessed that older persons with difficulty performing the following activities						
Take a bath/shower by oneself	10.2	15.3	5.9	9.9	35.9	13.0
Dress	7.0	12.2	4.0	6.9	29.2	9.8
Eat	6.0	8.0	2.5	5.3	21.9	7.1
Stand up from a bed/chair, sit on a chair	10.2	16.8	5.5	12.6	37.3	13.8
Walk around the house	10.4	17.7	5.6	14.3	37.6	14.3
Go outside (leave the house)	17.0	24.5	9.3	22.3	51.1	21.1
Use the toilet	7.1	12.3	4.3	8.0	27.2	9.9
% of caregivers who assessed that older persons with at least one ADL difficulty	20.5	28.6	12.5	26.0	56.3	24.8
<i>N</i>	1,191	1,451	1,050	860	732	2,642

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.



**Table 12.6. Primary Caregivers' Perception of the Need for Assistance of Older Persons with ADL Difficulty by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Perception of Primary Caregivers of Older Person's Need for Assistance	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
% of caregivers who assessed that older persons with difficulty need assistance performing the following activities						
Take a bath/shower by oneself	72.3	84.5	67.3	73.4	88.0	80.0
<i>N</i>	149	230	56	96	227	379
Dress up	86.8	90.0	82.3	89.8	91.1	88.9
<i>N</i>	116	188	43	72	189	304
Eat	87.0	82.5	81.5	82.7	85.5	84.2
<i>N</i>	95	125	32	47	141	220
Stand up from a bed/chair, sit on a chair	75.3	84.5	80.5	73.7	84.9	81.3
<i>N</i>	146	270	60	114	242	416
Walk around the house	73.4	79.8	78.8	69.9	81.0	77.7
<i>N</i>	155	278	60	123	250	433
Go outside (leave the house)	88.3	87.5	88.1	79.6	92.3	87.8
<i>N</i>	233	407	90	187	363	640
Use the toilet	94.3	87.3	80.6	88.0	94.1	89.6
<i>N</i>	110	195	41	74	190	305
% of caregivers who assessed that older persons with at least one ADL difficulty need assistance						
	77.9	85.7	75.3	73.7	92.4	82.7
<i>N</i>	266	465	115	217	399	731

ADL = activities of daily living,

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

In addition to assessing the OP's ability to do ADLs without difficulty, the primary caregivers were also asked their perception of the need for assistance of OPs who are having difficulty in ADLs. Of the 2,642 primary caregivers interviewed, 731 reported that the OPs they are taking care of have difficulty in at least one ADL. Table 12.6 presents the results on caregivers' perception on the need for assistance of OPs with difficulty in performing at least one ADL.

Overall, 83% of primary caregivers think that the OPs who have difficulty in doing at least one ADL need assistance. Between male and female OPs, more primary caregivers perceived the females as needing assistance than the males. In the same manner, 92% of them viewed the OPs aged 80 and over and with difficulty in at least one ADL as needing assistance.

Table 12.6 shows that majority of primary caregivers perceived the OPs with difficulty in at least one ADL as needing assistance in all seven ADLs. More female than male OPs who were perceived to have difficulty in at least one ADL were assessed by their primary caregivers to be in need of assistance in four of the seven ADLs: taking a bath/shower by oneself, dressing, standing up from a bed/chair and sitting on a chair, and walking around the house. Meanwhile, more male than female OPs with difficulty in at least one ADL were reported by their primary caregiver as needing assistance in eating, going outside (leaving the house), and in using the toilet.

As can be seen in Table 12.7, daily assistance to OPs in doing household tasks make up the bulk of the primary caregiver's work. Half of primary caregivers reported that they assist the OPs in doing household tasks every day, more amongst those who take care of male OPs than amongst caregivers of female OPs. This function also increases with age, as 7 in 10 primary caregivers assist the OPs aged 80 and above in household tasks. In contrast, only 4 in 10 primary caregivers help in household tasks to those aged 60–69.

**Table 12.7. Assistance Given to Older Persons for Various Activities of Daily Living by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Assistance	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Percent who assist older person with the following activities of daily life:						
Household tasks	53.9	45.7	42.3	47.8	70.9	49.5
N	1,191	1,451	1,050	860	732	2,642
Personal care	14.0	20.8	10.6	16.0	38.6	17.6
N	1,187	1,445	1,049	856	727	2,632
Moving around the house, going on outings, visiting family or friends, etc.	16.8	23.2	11.8	21.4	41.6	20.3
N	1,190	1,450	1,049	859	732	2,640
Mean number of hours per week spent caring for OP						
Household tasks	23.53	20.45	18.70	23.86	23.36	22.01
N	355	348	226	207	270	703
Personal care	15.50	18.49	15.95	15.31	18.83	17.34
N	84	135	41	59	119	219
Moving around the house, going on outings, visiting family or friends, etc.	8.65	12.39	10.72	9.30	13.95	11.85
N	79	164	46	78	119	243

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

Assistance in personal care is higher amongst caregivers of female OPs than male OPs (21% vs 14%). Twenty-three percent of primary caregivers help female OPs move around the house, go on outing, and visit family or friends. This is 5-percentage point higher amongst caregivers of male OPs. In all activities, the percentage of primary caregivers helping OPs increases with age, implying the effect of age on OPs' need for assistance.

More time is allotted by primary caregivers in assisting OPs with household tasks than with personal care and with moving around and going out. In a week, the average time spent doing household tasks is 22 hours. Between male and female OPs, primary caregivers spend more time assisting male OPs in household tasks than female OPs (23.5 hours vs 20.4 hours). The pattern is reversed, however, when it comes to assistance in doing personal care: on average, primary caregivers spent 18.5 hours assisting female OPs and only 15.5 hours with male OPs. Moreover, time spent assisting OPs move around the house is longer amongst female OPs than male OPs (12.4 hours vs 8.6 hrs).

When asked about the degree of difficulty in caring for the OP, almost 27% rated the task as 'easy' (Table 12.8). On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 easy and 10 difficult, the mean score overall was 3.9, implying that primary caregivers of OPs generally consider the task relatively easy. Only 4% rated the task difficult. There is little variation when the gender of the OP is considered. On the average, primary caregivers rated caring for male OPs 3.9, compared to 4.0 amongst those caring for female OPs. As expected, the mean level of difficulty is highest amongst OPs aged 80 and above.

The median number of months that the primary caregivers spent taking care of OPs is 46.4. Primary caregivers of OPs aged 80+ spent the longest time in providing care, 58.4 months.

An overwhelming majority of primary caregivers said they volunteered for the job (87%), whilst 10% became the primary caregiver because they were the only one available.

**Table 12.8. Difficulty in Caring for Older Persons  
by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Difficulty (1=easy, 10=difficult)	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Difficulty in caring for Older Person						
1	28.7	25.2	32.2	23.5	16.4	26.8
2	11.5	11.9	13.9	10.7	7.1	11.7
3	11.6	9.5	10.3	11.0	10.4	10.5
4	7.7	8.4	6.0	7.5	14.6	8.1
5	14.0	14.9	13.0	15.6	17.1	14.5
6	5.8	9.6	6.3	9.7	9.8	7.8
7	7.5	8.0	7.1	9.0	7.8	7.8
8	6.4	7.3	6.2	7.2	8.3	6.9
9	2.9	1.8	2.3	2.0	2.9	2.3
10	3.9	3.4	2.8	3.9	5.6	3.6
Mean level of difficulty in caring of Older Person	3.91	4.06	3.61	4.21	4.61	3.99
<i>N</i>	1,189	1,447	1,047	859	730	2,636
Median duration (in months) spent taking care of Older Person						
	48.24	44.96	36.93	44.73	58.37	46.39
<i>N</i>	518	668	424	375	387	1,186
Reason for being the primary caregiver						
I volunteered	90.4	83.3	88.6	85.6	82.2	86.6
Older Person requested me	0.6	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.9
Other family members requested me	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.5	2.3	0.7
I am the only one available	7.9	11.9	8.7	11.4	11.9	10.0
Others (Older Person took care of me as a child, lives with Older Person, etc.)	0.9	2.7	1.5	1.6	3.1	1.8
<i>N</i>	1,191	1,451	1,050	860	732	2,642

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

Primary caregivers were asked whether they agree to a series of statements describing their various situations as primary caregiver (Table 12.9). More than half of them agreed to the statement that they gain personal satisfaction in performing their care work. More than a quarter agreed that they have support from family, friends, neighbours, and paid help in performing their care tasks.

Eighteen percent agreed that they have problems with the OPs who are demanding, have difficulty in communicating, or behaving differently. Agreement to the statement was associated with the increasing age of the OPs. For example, 20% of primary caregivers of OPs aged 80 and above agreed that they have problems with the OP, a little higher than caregivers who are taking care of OPs aged 60–69 (17%) and 70–79 (19%).

**Table 12.9. Situation as a Primary Caregiver by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Situation as a Caregiver	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
% who agree or strongly agree with the following statements:						
I gain personal satisfaction from performing my care tasks	58.5	57.1	57.6	59.1	56.4	57.7
I have problems with Older Person (e.g., demanding, communication problems, behaves differently)	18.7	17.6	16.9	18.9	20.2	18.1
I have problems with my own mental health	11.7	8.6	9.3	11.0	10.8	10.0
I have problems with my own physical health	11.6	9.0	8.7	11.1	13.2	10.2
I have problems combining my daily activities	17.7	15.9	13.4	20.3	21.4	16.8
I have financial problems concerning my care tasks for Older Person	14.8	15.0	14.3	14.9	16.7	14.9
I have support from family/friends/neighbors/paid help in performing my care tasks for Older Person	24.7	26.5	25.4	23.5	29.3	25.7
<i>N</i>	1,194	1,451	1,051	860	734	2,645

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

### Potential Caregivers

The potential caregivers comprised 27% of all respondents in the caregiver survey as shown in Table 12.1. The mean age of potential caregivers is 48 years old (as shown in table 12.10). Potential caregivers of male OPs are older than those of female OPs (50.4 years vs 46.3 years). More than half of potential caregivers are males (56%). Six in ten female OPs have male potential caregivers, whilst more than half of male OPs mentioned a female potential caregiver. Like primary caregivers, majority of potential caregivers are currently married (77%) and with at least an elementary/high school education (72%). Three in four are currently working and less than 1% had training in caregiving.

**Table 12.10. Characteristics of Potential Caregivers  
by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Characteristics	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
<b>Age</b>						
Below 20	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.3
20-29	7.6	12.9	13.8	6.5	1.7	10.7
30-39	28.9	36.4	37.1	31.1	16.7	33.3
40-49	15.8	17.4	10.7	23.4	36.8	16.8
50-59	12.2	10.1	7.7	12.9	24.6	10.9
60-69	26.8	15.4	26.3	10.8	4.2	20.1
70-79	6.6	6.3	3.8	14.0	7.1	6.4
80+	1.8	1.3	0.2	1.3	8.9	1.5
Mean age	50.43	46.26	46.30	48.21	52.25	47.99
<i>N</i>	402	566	469	329	170	968
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	48.6	60.9	58.8	46.1	56.9	55.7
Female	51.4	39.1	41.2	53.9	43.1	44.3
<i>N</i>	399	556	460	325	170	955
<b>Marital status</b>						
Never married	9.6	18.8	18.2	9.0	8.7	15.0
Currently married	80.6	74.0	74.4	81.8	79.9	76.7
Living in	6.9	3.9	5.6	3.9	5.1	5.2
Separated/Divorced/Annulled	2.2	2.3	1.4	4.1	3.1	2.2
Widowed	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.2	3.2	0.9
<i>N</i>	404	569	470	331	172	973
<b>Education</b>						
No schooling/Preschool	10.9	7.7	6.7	13.6	13.2	9.0
Elementary/High school	71.0	72.6	73.1	69.8	69.6	71.9
Vocational Education	3.9	3.5	3.1	4.3	5.5	3.7
College+	14.3	16.3	17.2	12.3	11.7	15.4
<i>N</i>	404	569	470	331	172	973
% currently working	71.6	77.1	75.7	72.0	75.4	74.8
<i>N</i>	404	569	470	331	172	973
% with caregiver training	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.7
<i>N</i>	403	568	470	330	171	971

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

The expectation on the responsibility of old-age care is mainly assigned to family members (Table 12.11). Offspring dominates the potential caregivers (56%) whilst the spouse of the OPs comprise 30%. Interestingly, the higher percentage of potential caregivers are spouses of male OPs (41% vs 21% amongst female OPs). Proximity to OPs is necessary in caregiving tasks especially in old age. Amongst potential caregivers, majority live with the OPs (78%) whilst 12% live next door and another 4% live in the same commune.

**Table 12.11. Relationship of Potential Caregiver to the Older Person by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Indicators	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Relationship to Older Person						
Wife/Husband	40.8	20.8	33.4	25.5	13.0	29.1
Son/Daughter	52.5	59.1	55.2	55.9	63.0	56.3
Son-in-law/ Daughter-in-law	4.0	12.7	6.6	11.5	17.7	9.1
Grandson	1.7	2.4	1.0	4.4	4.1	2.1
Parents	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.7	0.0	0.9
Parents-in-law	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Siblings	0.1	1.7	1.2	0.5	1.3	1.0
Other relative	0.0	1.4	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.8
Adopted child	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.4
Not related	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
<i>N</i>	404	569	470	331	172	973
Living arrangement with Older Person						
Lives with Older Person	81.3	74.9	80.0	73.6	71.9	77.6
Lives next door	13.4	10.1	9.5	11.3	22.4	11.5
Lives in same commune	1.8	5.9	2.6	8.7	4.6	4.2
Lives in same city/municipality	2.0	2.4	2.6	2.3	0.2	2.2
Lives in same province	0.0	4.6	3.9	0.6	0.0	2.7
Lives in a different province	1.5	2.0	1.4	3.5	0.9	1.8
<i>N</i>	404	567	469	331	171	971

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

As shown in Table 12.12, majority of potential caregivers rated their health as 'average' (64%). When the age of the OP is considered, more potential caregivers identified by OPs in the younger age group (60–69) have 'very healthy' self-assessed health status compared to caregivers of the older age group. In the same manner, a slightly higher percentage of potential caregivers of OPs aged 80 and above have 'average' health. Only 6% of potential caregivers assessed their health status as 'somewhat unhealthy', and this is higher amongst those identified by male OPs (9% vs 5%).

**Table 12.12. Self-Assessed Health of Potential Caregivers of Older Persons and their Willingness to Assume the Caregiver Responsibility by Sex and Age of Older Persons**

Self-Assessed Health Status	SEX		AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	Male	Female	60-69	70-79	80+	
Current health status						
Very healthy	23.7	20.3	25.0	17.2	12.7	21.7
Healthier than average	4.2	8.5	6.1	7.4	8.7	6.7
Of average health	62.1	66.2	62.3	67.5	70.9	64.5
Somewhat unhealthy	8.9	4.6	6.0	7.9	5.5	6.4
Very unhealthy	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.0	1.5	0.6
Not sure	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>N</i>	404	568	469	331	172	972
% willing to assume responsibility as caregiver						
	97.4	96.8	97.6	97.7	92.4	97.0
<i>N</i>	404	567	469	331	171	971

Source: Calculated by PHAD using original LSAHV data.

Overwhelmingly, potential caregivers reported that they are willing to assume the responsibility as caregiver of OPs.

## Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Whilst informal family caregiving of OPs is the norm in Viet Nam, there is no baseline study yet to understand the characteristics and situations of family caregivers. In light of changing family structure and dynamics brought about by modernisation, the results of the study provided evidence on the persistent and prevalent norm of strong family support in old age. Children, particularly co-resident children, are the dominant primary and potential care providers, an indication that the concept of filial piety remains pervasive.

A striking finding though is the high report of primary caregiving (73%), although an important caveat to this result is that the concept of primary caregiving was not defined in the survey. Nonetheless, the result can indicate how older Vietnamese perceive primary caregiving, that is, as mostly associated with assistance in the performance of daily tasks. Thus, the spouses are predominantly identified as the primary caregivers of OPs, followed by their children. Proximity to OPs is also an important factor in the provision of caregiving, either primary or potential. An overwhelming majority of both types of caregivers live with the OPs or at least they live next door or in the same commune. These results support the assumption that,



for most OPs, primary caregiving is embedded in family relationships. Moreover, most of the assistance provided by primary caregivers involves household tasks.

Even caregivers' assessment of the level of difficulty in the performance of their primary caregiving duties indicates that most do not consider the role as tasks or burden but as part of their duties either as spouse or as children. To what extent this assessment will change with physical and health impairment is an aspect that should be explored in further studies.

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