

Informal Care for Older People by their Adult Children: Projections of Supply and Demand to 2041 in England

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Introduction

This research is concerned with informal or unpaid care provided by the adult children of older people. Over one in three disabled older people in England receives informal care from an adult child, yet the future supply of this form of care seems uncertain. The aim of the research is to compare the supply of informal care to its demand in future years.

Methods and Materials

The study produces projections of informal care for older people to 2041 in England. The analysis focuses on the supply of intense care provided for 20 or more hours a week and on demand for social care by disabled older people. Data sources include General Household Survey (GHS) data on both provision of informal care and receipt of care by people aged 65 and over.

Results

The chart below compares the future supply of and demand for informal care in England.

The supply side shows the numbers of people aged 30 to 74 projected to provide informal care to older parents for 20 or more hours a week, assuming constant probabilities of providing care. The demand side shows the numbers of disabled older people projected to receive informal care from adult children, assuming constant probabilities of receiving care. There are more care-receivers than care-providers in all years. This is primarily because not all disabled older people receiving informal care from children receive *intense* care.

Chart One suggests that demand for intense intergenerational care is growing faster than supply in England. Numbers supplying care are projected to grow by around 27 per cent between 2005 and 2041, whereas numbers 'demanding' care are projected to grow by around 90 per cent in the same period. Over time, the ratio of care-receivers to care-providers is projected to fall from around 0.6 in 2005 to 0.4 in 2041.

The second chart shows an emerging 'informal care gap'.

The chart compares numbers of people projected to provide intense intergenerational care assuming no change in the probability of providing care and numbers of people projected to provide this form of care *if supply were to rise with demand*. The latter projection assumes that the 2005 ratio of care-receivers to care-providers remains constant in future years.

Chart Two shows that, by 2041, there is projected to be a shortfall of around 250,000 intense carers or around 250,000 fewer disabled older people receiving intense informal care than if demand were to be met. The 'informal care-gap' is primarily driven by demographic changes, in particular rising 'old age dependency ratios'.

Chart One

Will the future supply of intense intergenerational care in England keep pace with demand for care by disabled older people?

Key sources: 2000/01 and 2001/02 GHS, Government Actuaries Department population and marital status projections, 2001 Census, PSSRU modelling

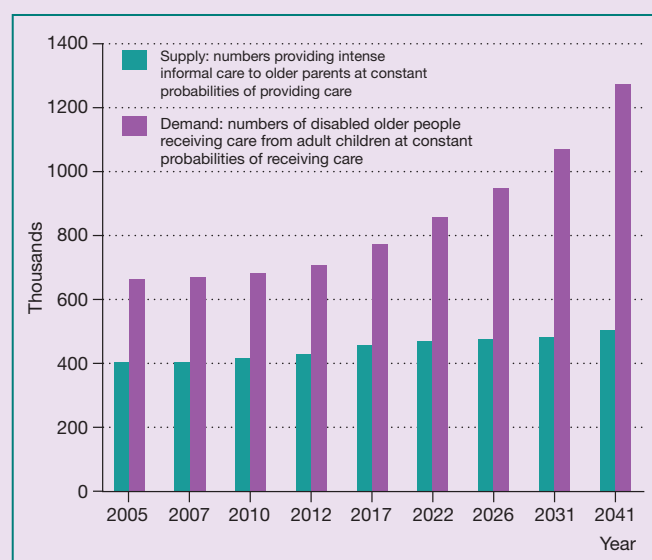
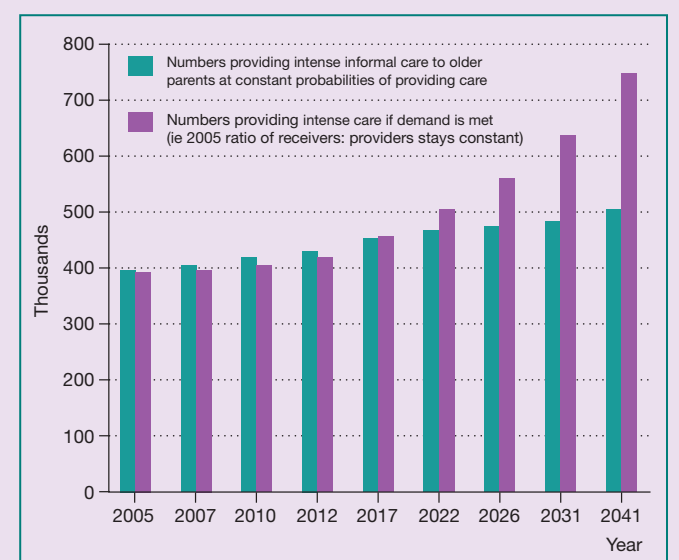


Chart Two

The 'informal care gap': difference between supply of intense intergenerational care and demand for care by disabled older people, England, 2005-2041

Key sources: 2000/01 and 2001/02 GHS, Government Actuaries Department population and marital status projections, 2001 Census, PSSRU modelling



Conclusions

To keep pace with demand, either more adult children will need to provide intense informal care or more formal services for disabled older people will need to be provided. This research raises questions about long-term care policies that rely heavily on informal care in future.

References

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The research is part of the MAP2030 project, a major study modelling ageing populations in future years, funded under the UK cross-council *New Dynamics of Ageing* Programme.

MAP2030
Modelling ageing populations to 2030

nda new dynamics of ageing
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PROGRAMME

PSSRU
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the London School of Economics
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