

CAREGIVING IMPACTS ON UNPAID INFORMAL CARERS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING – A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

COSTS OF CAREGIVING ARE RISING

I. Peña-Longobardo LM, Oliva-Moreno J. The economic value of non-professional care: a Europe-wide analysis. *Int J Health Policy Manag.* 2021. doi:10.34172/ijhpm.2021.149.

Unpaid informal caregivers provide most long-term care delivered in Europe, equivalent to 3.6% of gross domestic product.¹

= 3.6%
of GDP

GENDER MATTERS

Most unpaid informal carers are women. The gender imbalance is greatest at ages 50–64 years, when caregiving prevalence is highest.²



2. Own calculations based on weighted results from Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, wave 8.

3. The 2021 ageing report. Economic & budgetary projections for the EU Member States (2019–2070). Brussels: European Commission (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/ip148_en.pdf, accessed 1 June 2022).

Unpaid informal care subsidizes health and long term care systems. If an additional 10% of older people currently receiving informal support were to be provided with formal care, public expenditure on long-term care in European Union countries would need to double.³



Women are **overrepresented** among unpaid informal caregivers, as is the case in the formal health and long-term-care workforce.



Male caregivers mostly provide care for spouses and carry out household management tasks.

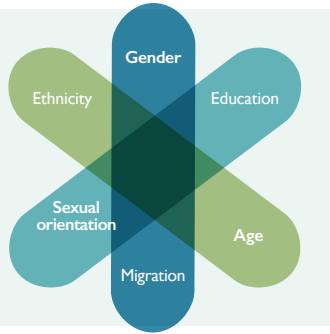
Female caregivers deliver more personal care, and frequent and high-intensity care.



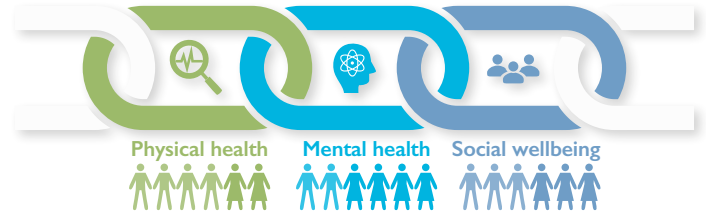
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH CONCERNS

Unpaid informal caregiving, especially over time or at higher intensity, can have detrimental effects on carers' health and well-being.

Gender discrimination can interact with other forms of prejudice to worsen the health effects of informal caregiving and dissuade unpaid informal caregivers from seeking and receiving help and support.



Male caregivers are more likely to experience detrimental effects on physical health, while women more likely to report negative mental health outcomes.



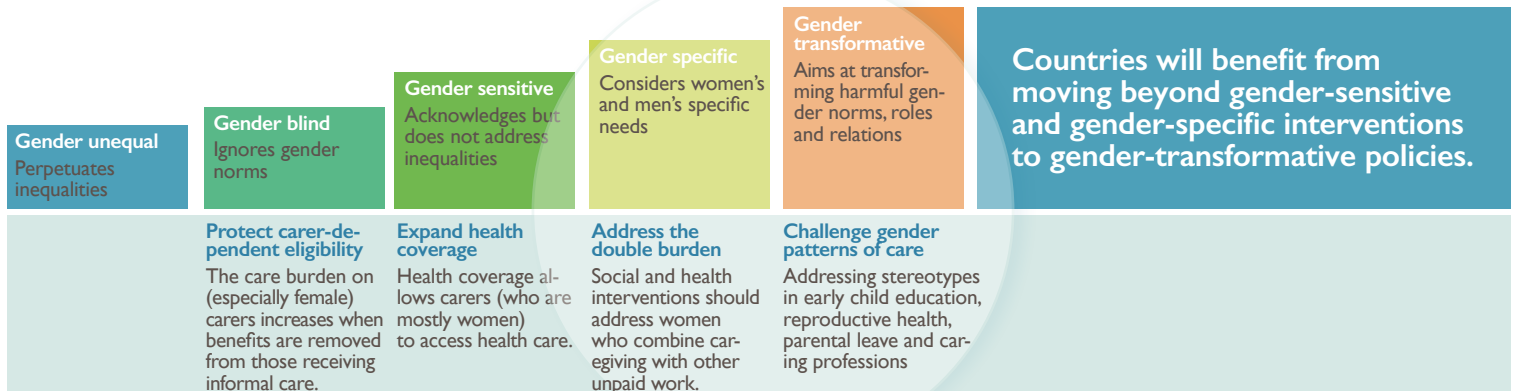
The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected unpaid informal caregivers' health, especially in women, and the gender gap in providing care widened.^{4,5}

4. Gender equality and the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vilnius: European Institute for Gender Inequality; 2021 (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-and-socio-economic-impact-covid-19-pandemic>, accessed 1 June 2022).
5. Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on informal carers across Europe. Final report. Brussels: Eurocarers; 2021 (<https://eurocarers.org/publications/impact-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-on-informal-carers-across-europe/>, accessed 1 June 2022).

HOW CAN UNPAID INFORMAL CARERS' WELL-BEING BE IMPROVED?

RECOGNIZE, AND REDUCE. REDISTRIBUTE AND REWARD UNPAID INFORMAL CARE.

- Count carers and understand their needs**
- Provide respite care**
- Provide training**
- Offer counselling**
- Provide information about available services**
- Ensure case management and service coordination**
- Provide regular health check ups**
- Provide financial support**



Source: WHO GRASS tool (Gender mainstreaming for health managers: a practical approach, WHO, 2011)

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