

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

### National Health and Aging Trends Study Research Brief



The Roger C. Lipitz Center for Integrated Health Care is  
pleased to highlight the [National Health and Aging Trends Study  
Research Brief](#) in our Spring 2021 Lipitz Quarterly.

#### WHAT IS THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND AGING TRENDS STUDY?

The [National Health and Aging Trends Study](#) (NHATS) was launched in recognition of the shifting landscape of late-life and the need for data to support the scientific study of how daily life changes as we age. Funded by the National Institute on Aging, NHATS began conducting annual interviews with a nationally representative sample of Medicare beneficiaries ages 65 or older in 2011. Periodically caregivers to NHATS participants also are interviewed in the [National Study of Caregiving](#) (NSOC) to provide the perspective of family and friends who help older adults experiencing limitations in daily life. Intended as a platform for research to guide efforts to reduce disability, maximize functioning, and enhance quality of life, [NHATS and NSOC data are available online](#).



#### STUDY AIMS

NHATS gathers information from a nationally representative sample of Medicare beneficiaries ages 65 and older. Annual, in-person interviews collect detailed information on the disablement process and its consequences. NHATS has [two primary scientific aims](#) and is designed to answer a [variety of late-life disability-related questions](#):

**Study Aims**  
NHATS has two primary scientific aims:

**1** To promote scientific study of late-life disability trends and dynamics

**2** To advance our understanding of the social and economic impact of late-life functional changes for older people, their families, and society

#### CURRENT RESEARCH

Nearly 4,000 users from around the world have registered to access NHATS data to shed light on questions related to late-life disability and health. Findings from studies drawing on NHATS have been featured in high-impact peer-review journals, mainstream media outlets such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, at scientific meetings, and used to inform policy and practice. Explore studies using NHATS data in the [Current NHATS Research](#) and [Select NHATS Publications](#) sections of the Research Brief.

FAMILY AND UNPAID CAREGIVING

UNMET NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

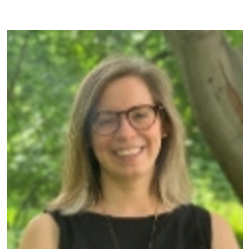
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND DEMENTIA

END OF LIFE CARE

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION

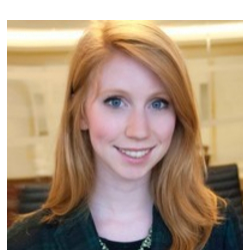
MEDICAL CARE & HEALTH CARE SPENDING

#### SELECT PUBLICATIONS USING NHATS DATA



Claire Ankuda

[A new cross-sectional study in JAMA Network Open](#) led by Claire Ankuda and co-authors Amy Kelley, R. Sean Morrison, Vicki Freedman, and Joan Teno found that for individuals who died while enrolled in Medicare, the family and friends of people who were enrolled in Medicare Advantage were more likely to report that care was not excellent and that they were not kept informed in the last month of life compared with family and friends of those enrolled in traditional Medicare.



Julia Burgdorf

[A new JAMA Network Open study](#) led by Julia Burgdorf and co-authors Chaneé Fabius, Catherine Riffin, and Jennifer Wolff found that caregivers were less likely to receive adequate transitional care training if they were Black; experienced financial difficulty; or cared for a Black, female, or Medicaid-enrolled older adult. These findings suggest changes to the hospital discharge process, such as using standardized caregiver assessments, may be necessary to advance equitable support of family caregivers.



Kenneth Lam

[A new study in JAMA Internal Medicine](#) led by Kenneth Lam and co-authors Ying Shi, John Boscardin, and Kenneth Covinsky suggests that in the United States, 42% of older adults with impairments that would make bathing or toileting difficult lack the relevant assistive equipment. The study highlighted a missed opportunity to help 5 million individuals live independently and safely.



Varshini Varadaraj

[A new study in American Journal of Ophthalmology](#) led by Varshini Varadaraj and co-authors Kayla Swiatek, Shang-En Chung, Joshua Ehrliche, Lama Assia, Jennifer Wolff, and Bonnielin Swenor found that caregivers of older adults who reported vision impairment spent 36% more hours providing care and reported that 61% more of their valued activities were affected per month, and had 46% greater odds of experiencing substantial emotional difficulty related to providing care.



Safiyyah Okoye

[A new study in the Journal of Aging and Health](#) led by Safiyyah Okoye and co-authors Laura Samuel, Chaneé Fabius, John Mulcahy, Lisa Reider, Sarah Szanton, Jennifer Wolff found that older adults with recurrent falls were more likely to have lower education, lower income, financial hardship, live in homes with disorder and disrepair and in neighborhoods without sidewalks, with high social deprivation, and in nonmetropolitan counties.

#### NEWS & UPDATES

##### 2021 Virtual Summer Workshop For Early Stage Investigators

[The 2021 Virtual HEADS Summer Workshop](#) will convene early-stage scientists who are designing studies relating to family and unpaid caregiving to persons with dementia that use the NHATS and/or NSOC data.

##### NHATS COVID-19 Files Recently Released

The [Sample Person \(SP\) Beta file](#) provides new data about older adults' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and consequences for care needs and wellbeing. The [COVID-19 Family Members and Friends \(FF\) Beta file](#) provides data about the experiences of family members and friends who helped NHATS participants during the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, [a qualitative file with transcribed responses](#) about how COVID-19 has affected NHATS participants' lives has been released.

##### NHATS and NSOC Video Tutorial Series

A new series of [video tutorials for NHATS and NSOC users](#) is available. Initial topics include introductions to NHATS and NSOC, survey design and weighting, using the Other Person (OP) file, and annual cognition measures.

##### Keep Up with NHATS and NSOC News and Updates on Social Media

We invite you and your colleagues to [follow the Lipitz Center on Twitter](#) to keep up with news and updates from the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) and the National Study of Caregiving (NSOC).

**Roger C. Lipitz Center for Integrated Health Care**  
The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
624 N. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21205 | 410-614-7910

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