
Grandchildren as Caregivers for Their Custodial Grandmothers: Who Are They and How Are They Doing?

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Grandchildren As Caregivers

*1.4 million American children between the ages of 8 and 18
provide care for an older adult*

- **Caregiving and Adolescence**

- Navigating normative developmental tasks of adolescence while performing tasks that often surpass normative relationship boundaries.
- Experience results in changes in supervision and nurturance

- **Outcomes Associated Caregiving**

- Compromised Academic Performance
- Delayed Identity Development
- Social Problems
- Psychological Distress



Purpose

- Identify caregiving responsibilities of adolescents being raised by custodial grandmothers
 - What types of care are they providing?
 - Who is most likely to be providing care?
- Examine connections between caregiving responsibilities and grandchild behavior problems and school functioning
- Explore perceived rewards of caregiving for grandchildren

Sample

- **Participants:**
 - 81 Adolescent/Custodial Grandmother Dyads
 - **Grandchildren (GC)**
 - Ages 12 to 18 (M = 14.62; SD = 1.88)
 - 51% female
 - 57% Caucasian/32% African-American
 - **Grandmothers (GM)**
 - Age Range = 47 -75 (M = 60.74; SD =6.46)
 - 63% Caucasian/33% African-American
 - 33% Partnered (Married)
 - 69% Maternal GM
 - 64% reported earning less than \$25K (pre-tax) per year

Procedures

- **Recruitment:**
 - Southern United States
 - Programs on State Fact Sheets for GP Raising GC
- **Survey:**
 - In-Person ($n = 14$)
 - Telephone ($n = 67$)

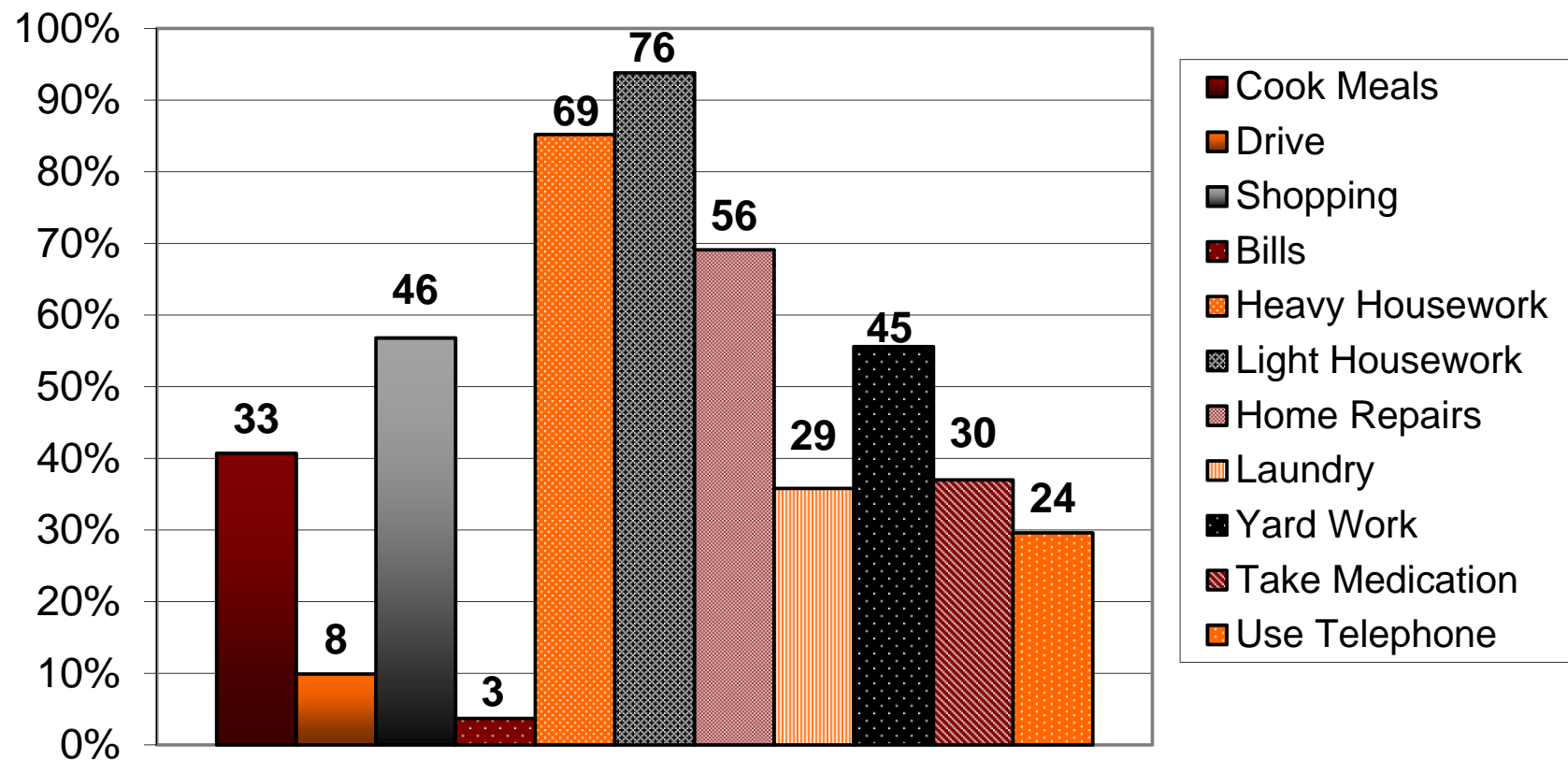


Measures

- GC and GM Demographics: Age, Race, Gender, Marital Status, Household Income
- Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)
- Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- GC Behavior Problems
 - Youth Self-Report (GC)
 - Child Behavior Checklist (GM)
- School Problems
- GC Perceptions of Caregiving

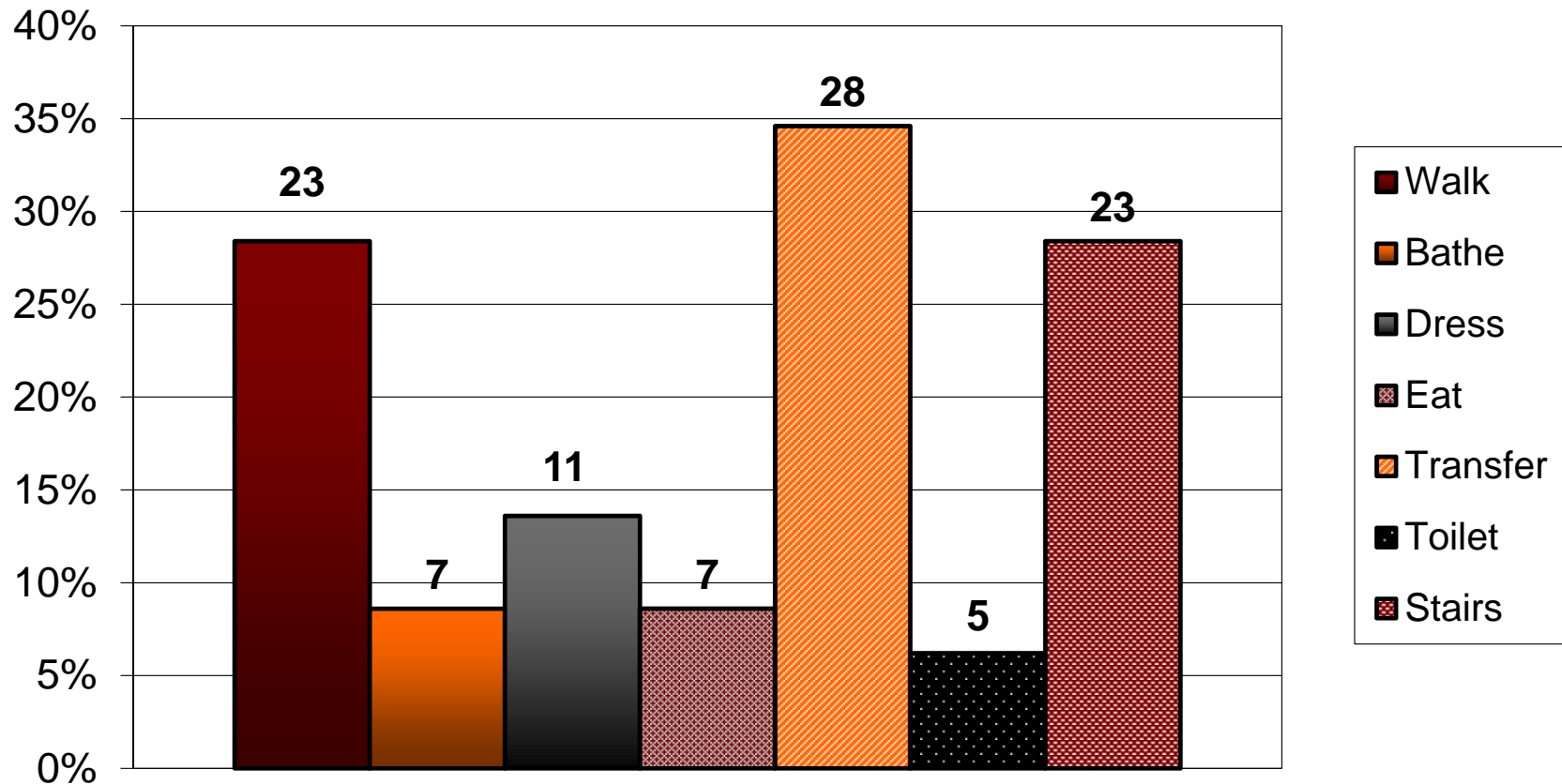


Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)



N = 81

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)



N = 81

Who Is Providing Care?

- **IADLs**
 - No significant demographic differences
- **ADLs**
 - Younger GC (aged 12-14) providing more ADL care than older GC (aged 15-18)
 - $M_{YGC} = 1.64$; $M_{OGC} = .95$
 - White GC providing more ADL care than Non-White GC
 - $M_{WGC} = 1.61$; $M_{NWGC} = .86$

Caregiving & Behavior Problems

- **GC Report (YSR – Clinical/Borderline vs. Normal):**
 - No IADL or ADL differences for total, internalizing, or externalizing behavior problems
- **GM Report (CBCL – Clinical/Borderline vs. Normal):**
 - No IADL differences for total, internalizing, or externalizing behavior problems
 - Trends of more ADL care being associated with greater...
 - Total Problems [$M_{TC/B} = 1.80$; $M_{TN} = 1.05$]
 - Internalizing Problems [$M_{IC/B} = 1.90$; $M_{IN} = 1.07$]
 - Externalizing Problems [$M_{EC/B} = 1.83$; $M_{EN} = 1.07$]

Perceptions & Behavior Problems

- **GC and GM Report of Externalizing Problems:**
 - GC with clinical/borderline problems, greater sense of missing out on social and extracurricular activities
 - GC: $M_{EC/B} = 2.39$; $M_{EN} = 1.86$
 - GM: $M_{EC/B} = 2.35$; $M_{EN} = 1.83$
 - GC with normal problems, stronger feelings of being a “good” grandchild
 - GC: $M_{EC/B} = 3.06$; $M_{EN} = 3.40$
 - GM: $M_{TC/B} = 3.52$; $M_{TN} = 3.24$
- **GM Report of Total Problems:**
 - GC with clinical/borderline problems:
 - greater sense of spending more time caring/helping than friends
[$M_{TC/B} = 2.52$; $M_{TN} = 2.07$]
 - stronger feelings of being a “good” grandchild [$M_{TC/B} = 3.52$; $M_{TN} = 3.23$]

Caregiving & School Problems

- More IADL caregiving was associated with *fewer* school problems
- More ADL caregiving was associated with *more* school problems
- Harder to go to school:
 - Early (12 -14) Adolescents: [$M_E = 1.64$; $M_L = 1.27$]
 - Male Grandchildren: [$M_M = 1.59$; $M_F = 1.33$]
- Difficult to Finish Homework:
 - Early (12-14) Adolescents: [$M_E = 1.67$; $M_L = 1.35$]
 - Male Grandchildren: [$M_M = 1.67$; $M_F = 1.33$]

Rewards of Caregiving

- **Enjoy Caring for Grandmother (86%; $n = 70$):**
 - Female Grandchildren
 - Not related to amount of IADL or ADL assistance provided
- **Responsibility to Care for Grandmother (77%; $n = 62$):**
 - GC with older grandmothers
 - Not related to amount of IADL or ADL assistance provided
- **Feel Like a “Good” Grandchild (94%; $n = 76$):**
 - Not related to amount of ADL assistance
 - Positive relationship to IADL care
 - No demographic variations

Conclusions

- GC are very involved in IADL activities
- A portion of GC are involved in ADL activities such as walking, transferring, and using stairs.
 - Some are involved in more intensive ADL activities
 - May lead to negative personal outcomes for GC
- GC find rewards and personal satisfaction in providing care and assistance
- Caregiving may be burdensome and a source of satisfaction

Implications & Future Directions

- **Practice Implications**

- Regular assessment of caregiving responsibilities and impact
- Attend, in particular, to ADL caregiving responsibilities
- Offer instrumental and emotional support services

- **Future Directions**

- More in-depth investigations of custodial grandchildren as caregivers:
 - Who is caregiving?
 - What degree of caregiving burden are they experiencing?
 - What is the relationship between caregiving and indicators of well-being?
- Consider role of family structure in caregiving experience and outcomes.
- Triangulate data from multiple sources
- Examine long-term impact of caregiving on grandchild outcomes

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Thank You! Questions?

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