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The Sandwich Generation: Dependency, Proximity, and Task Assistance Needs of Parents

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the extent of “sandwiched” families and the impact of dependency and proximity to task assistance provided to parent(s). Data were collected in Idaho, Oregon, Utah, and Michigan from a random sample of 40–65-year-old respondents. Fifteen percent are sandwiched between needs of aging parents and financially dependent children. Respondents are much more likely to be providing assistance to mothers than fathers. Parents are most likely to live near, but not necessarily with, the respondent. Spouses and partners' parents, however, are likely to live farther away. Task assistance provided most often to aging parent(s) includes help with transportation and shopping; financial assistance was reported least often. Income of respondent and dependency and proximity of parents are significantly related to providing assistance to parents. This study offers a unique glimpse at the relationships between personal characteristics, dependency, proximity, and task assistance issues as they pertain to the sandwich generation.

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