

Artículo de revista:

Calderon-Jaramillo, Mariana; Zueras, Pilar (2023). Unmet care needs among older people in Europe Men and those living in Mediterranean countries are the most likely to lack support. *Pop Digest*.

<https://population-europe.eu/research/popdigests/unmet-care-needs-among-older-people-europe>



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Pop Digest

Unmet care needs among older people in Europe

In their study, Calderón-Jaramillo and Zueras measured unmet care needs in twelve European countries using data from the SHARE survey for older people aged 65+.



Source: Matthias Zomer / Pexels

Ageing societies are both a challenge and an opportunity for social care systems. Even though care is a basic need of humankind, public debate on care usually presents it as a ‘burden’ faced at the expense of national resources. However, care provision is an essential dimension of societies, shaped by public policies and social perceptions about support, and also needed to guarantee people’s rights and well-being.

While much of the evidence to date has focused on child and infant care needs, more recently a growing number of studies have highlighted the emergence of social care needs as a result of population ageing, and the consequences of this demographic process for informal care providers, families, households and public institutions. Therefore, measuring unmet care needs is part of an ongoing effort to understand better how societies are currently responding and may deal with these needs in the future.

In their study, Mariana Calderón-Jaramillo and Pilar Zueras (Centre for Demographic Studies, Barcelona) measured unmet care needs among older people aged 65+ from an absolute approach, identifying them as the result of individuals experiencing at least one limitation for moving or performing

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), and reporting not receiving any help in coping with them. Using data from the 7th wave of the Survey of Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), the authors found that more than half of the sample analysed (53.03% - n=7,136) had unmet social care needs, and that this **prevalence was higher for men, for the younger age group (65-74 years old) and for those living in Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece and Italy).**

By its comparative approach, this study emphasised regional differences in social care provision and the role of welfare-state policies in meeting care needs. Results suggest that unmet care needs are related to social awareness of specific care needs, and that the **most vulnerable individuals (with poor health, chronic disease, older age group (85+), and women) are at lower risk of experiencing unmet care needs**, as social care systems tend to prioritise the most pressing issues.

In addition, the study suggests that **family-centred social care systems may face more challenges** in meeting the needs of individuals due to their dependence on the availability of informal care, which is affected by low fertility rates and the increase in the proportion of dependent older people without children, as well as the willingness and ability of family members to provide care. However, ageing processes bring with them the potential for reinventing social care provision. Rather than being a ‘burden’, care acts as the foundation of society itself: we are all responsible for care provision, and at the same time, as citizens, we share the right to be cared for.

Additional Information

Writers

Mariana Calderón-Jaramillo and Pilar Zueras

Authors of Original Article

[Calderón-Jaramillo](#) | [Zueras](#)

Source

Calderón-Jaramillo, M. & Zueras, P. (2023). [Cared and uncared populations: understanding unmet care needs of older adults \(65+\). across different social care systems in Europe](#). *European Journal of Ageing* 20 (11), online first.

Population Europe

Wissenschaftsforum
Markgrafenstraße 37
10117 Berlin

