

COVID-19 June 2020 Update: Family Caregiving

COVID-19 continues to exert wide-ranging effects on everyday life, which, for many, includes caregiving and the physical, financial, and emotional challenges that can accompany it. In a survey that took place in May and early June 2020, which was a follow-up to a survey conducted in March, the MIT AgeLab explored the thoughts and feelings of caregivers for family members aged 60-plus as they navigate the COVID-19 crisis.

Caregiver characteristics

24.3% of participants in the June survey were caregivers for family members age 60 or older.





Impacts on technology experience among caregivers

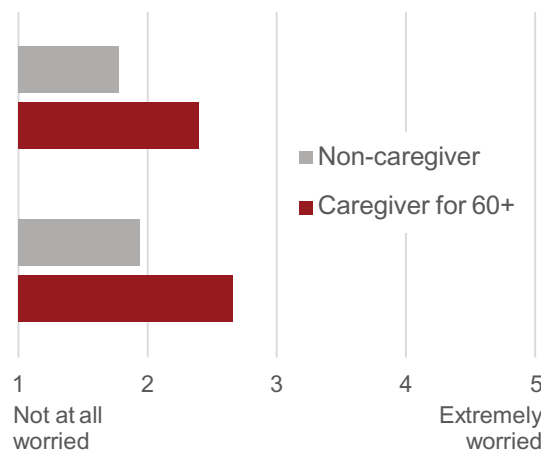
COVID-19 has changed how caregivers approach technologies that can be used to communicate with loved ones or on their behalf. Most caregivers surveyed said that COVID-19 has increased their interest in learning about new technologies (71%), their comfort with using new technologies (66%), and their overall level of trust in technology (67%). In the 30 days leading up to taking the June survey, caregivers reported using a wide range of channels to communicate with remote care recipients. Most often, they communicated by calling or texting from a mobile phone, followed by social media and video-chatting.



Worry about essential needs during the COVID-19 pandemic

 How worried are you about running out of food, or not being able to afford food for yourself or your family, in the next two weeks?

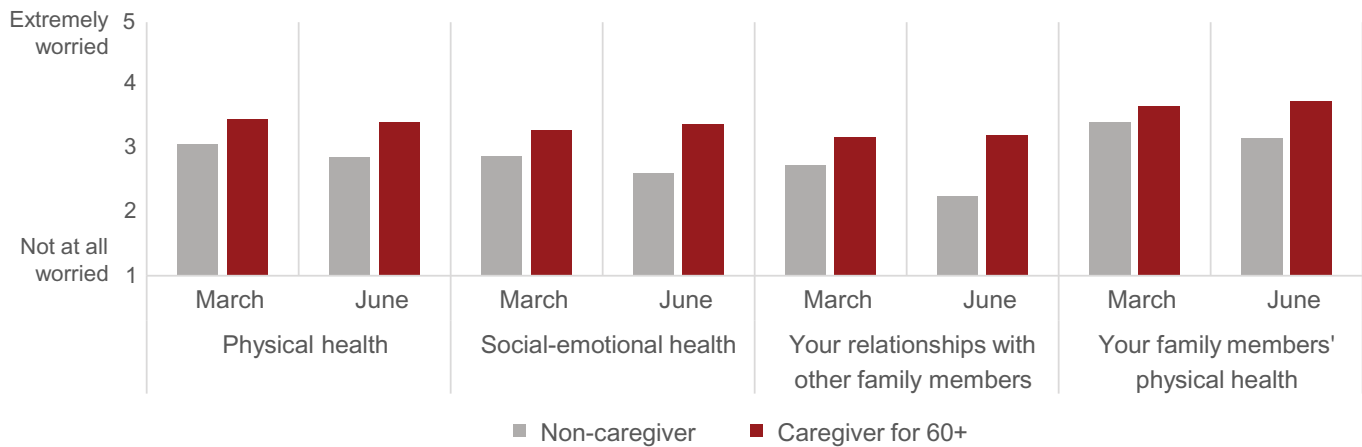
 How worried are you about being able to pay your rent or mortgage for the upcoming month?



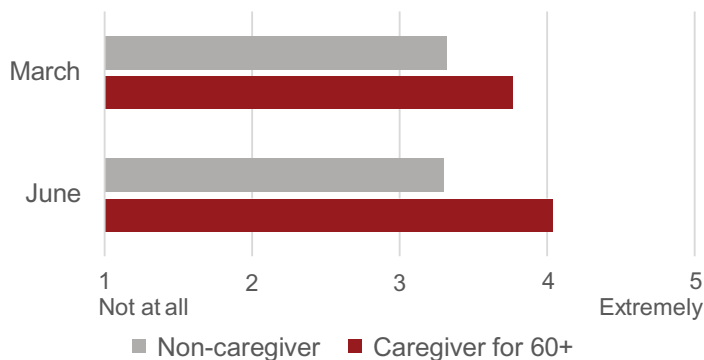
In the June survey, participants were asked about struggles to obtain food and pay their rent or mortgage. Caregivers were significantly more likely to worry about running out of food and paying for housing than non-caregivers.

Comparisons across time: Impacts of COVID-19 on caregivers' and care recipients' health & wellbeing

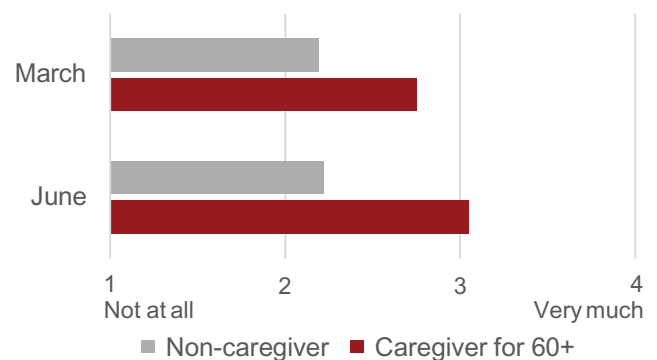
On average, caregivers were more worried than non-caregivers about the impact of COVID-19 on the health and wellbeing of themselves and their family members. Although worry levels regarding various aspects of life decreased significantly for non-caregivers between March and June, caregivers of individuals age 60 and older did not experience any significant decrease in worry levels across the same time period.



How much are you worried about the impact of COVID-19 on your family member(s) age 60 or over in general?



To what degree do you feel you can protect your family member(s) age 60 or older from contracting COVID-19?



In both March and June, caregivers were more worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their older family members than were non-caregivers. At the same time, caregivers were also more likely to feel that they could protect their older family members from contracting COVID-19 than non-caregivers. Caregivers' worries about their elder family members and their perceived ability to protect them increased significantly from March to June, while there was no significant change for non-caregivers.

These results represent a snapshot of perceptions in the time window in which data were collected: May 8-June 8, 2020. Sample collected from Qualtrics Panels. The number of cases for analysis ranges from 1013 to 1387. Less than 6% of the March sample (March 17-19, 2020) was re-interviewed in the second survey; the balance represents a new cross-sectional sample.

The MIT AgeLab continues to monitor how different generations' attitudes and perceptions shift over time.

What is known about COVID-19 changes daily. For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping yourself and your family safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov.