Demographic change and the implications for families, work & care: a focus on mid-life

Jane Falkingham
ESRC Centre for Population Change
University of Southampton

Our insecure society: risks across the life course
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Demographic change and the implications for families, work & care: a focus on mid-life

Outline

• Recent demographic trends
  • Implications for the availability of kin

• Patterns of unpaid care across the life-course

• Combining work and care in mid-life

• A forward look
  • Demographic change and the future availability of kin to care
Recent demographic trends
Total births, England and Wales, 1955-2022

Source: ONS (2022) Summary of key birth statistics, 1838 - 2022
In 2011 life expectancy at birth is almost double what it was in 1841.
An ageing population

UK Age, sex pyramid 2014 (line) & 2034 (shaded)

- The size of population aged 90+ will triple, 2014-2034
- The 1960s baby boomers will have retired by 2034
- Post WW2 baby boomers in 2014
- 1960s baby boomers in 2014

Source: ONS (2022) Population Projections
The changing meaning of age
Changes in the age at which there is a 1% and 10% probability of dying, 1951-2031

Source: Author's own analysis, 2021 based on latest mortality projections:
Longer lives: rethinking the meaning of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age at which there is 1% chance of dying</th>
<th>Age at which there is 10% chance of dying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men 1951</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men 2011</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men 2021</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women 1951</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women 2011</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women 2021</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For men, 65 is the new 50; and 87 is the new 75!

Source: Author’s own analysis, 2021 based on latest mortality projections:
But big differences in life expectancy by region still remain

• In 2018-2020 lowest life expectancy at birth was in Glasgow city, 73.14 years for men and 78.28 years for women

• Highest life expectancy at birth for men was 87.74 in Westminster and for women was 87.86 years in Kensington & Chelsea

• Gap of 11.6 years for men and 9.58 years for women

• And, although life expectancy has generally been improving (except last 24 months) the gap has been widening
Changes in kinship: More years with multiple kin – longer family lives

Source: J. Barrass Butterick et al. (2024)
Using CG Kinship Model
Caught in the middle - the emergence of the “double sandwich” generation.

Mean expected number of surviving kin at age 50 by birth cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin type</th>
<th>Cohort (year of birth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchildren</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: J. Barrass Butterick et al. (2024) Using CG Kinship Model
Patterns of unpaid care across the life-course
Percentage of people providing unpaid care by age and sex, 2021, England

One in every five women aged 55-59 are providing care

Source: ONS Census of England & Wales 2021
Percentage of **females** providing unpaid care by age and hours of care provided per week, England, 2021

Source: ONS Census of England & Wales 2021
Percentage of **males** providing unpaid care by age and hours of care provided per week, England, 2021

Source: ONS Census of England & Wales 2021
Percentage providing unpaid care by relationship to recipient, age and sex, 2020, UK

Source: Understanding Society wave 12, 2020
Percentage of people providing unpaid care of 50 or more hours per week by age and sex, 2021, England

One in 13 men aged 85-89 are providing 50 or more hours of care a week

Source: ONS Census of England & Wales 2021
Combining work & care in mid-life
In mid-life people can hold multiple roles

- Partner
- Parent
- Grandparent
- Daughter/son
- Worker
- Carer
- Volunteer
The ‘squeezed middle’

Using data from NCDS at age 55 in Britain:

• 80% had at least one parent/parent-in-law alive

• 29% had at least one parent/parent-in-law and one grandchild alive, of whom:
  • 88% of men and 74% of women were in paid work
  • around half were providing care to both generations, and
  • one person in 20 was providing 10+ hours of care p/wk upwards and 10+ hours of care p/wk downwards
Many mid-lifers are “caught in the middle”

Percent of those aged 50-69 with at least one parent and grandchild alive

Source: SHARE wave 6, using calibrated cross-sectional weights.
In 1992, 47% of women aged 50-64 were in employment; by 2023 this had risen to 67%
Exploring the dynamics of social care and paid work in mid-life

• Our research examined the relationship between care and work using data collected from the same people at age 50 and 55

• We investigated the effect of caring for one’s parents/parents-in-law on the probability of changing status/hours in employment or stopping work altogether between age 50 and 55 and whether this varied by the type of support provided and the intensity of that support.
Exploring the dynamics of social care and paid work in mid-life

- Women providing personal care were 1.79 times more likely to stop working than those not providing care.
- Men who increased their caring hours were 1.65 times more likely to stop working and increasing the intensity of care almost doubled the risk of leaving employment among women.
- Facilitating women and men to combine paid work and parental care in mid-life will be increasingly important in the context of rising longevity.

- If you want to read more see GOMEZ-LEON M, EVANDROU M, FALKINGHAM J, VLACHANTONI A. The dynamics of social care and employment in mid-life. *Ageing and Society*. 2019;39(2):381-408. doi:10.1017/S01446866X17000964
Other factors may also influence work-life balance in mid-life

**Menopausal Transition and change in employment**

- 53.5% of employed women at age 50 reported at least one severe menopausal symptom.

- Women with severe symptoms had a significantly higher chance of exiting employment (1.43, 95% CI = 1.11–1.84) or reducing their working hours (1.23, 95% CI = 1.02–1.48) by age 55 than those with no symptoms at age 50.

- The strength of the associations varied according to the women’s HRT usage and their partner’s economic activity.

- Menopausal symptoms can pose obstacles to some middle-aged women in terms of remaining in employment or maintaining their number of working hours.

A forward look?
Total births, England and Wales, 1955-2022

Those born in 1964 are celebrating their 60th birth this year AND will be 80 in 2044

Source: ONS (2022) Summary of key birth statistics, 1838 - 2022
People aged 70 and over, by age, UK, 2024-2044

Source: ONS 2021-based Population Projections (principal variant)
Availability of kin in later life

Mean expected number of surviving kin at age 80 by birth cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin type</th>
<th>Cohort (year of birth)</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1946</th>
<th>1964</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchildren</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% childless</td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: J. Barrass Butterick et al. (2024) Using CG Kinship Model
Ageing without children

Source: J. Barrass Butterick et al. (2024)
Using CG Kinship Model
Connecting Generations

Find our more and contact us

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In collaboration with:

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