

ncds

**National Child
Development Study**



Making a difference

UPDATE 2023

Thank you!

We're so grateful to everyone who has taken part in the Life in Your Early 60s Survey so far.



We're delighted to have spoken to over 6,500 of you. We really appreciate the contributions you've made. The information you share with us is so important and helps us make discoveries that benefit society and future generations.

If you haven't completed the survey yet, there's still time.

Interviewers will continue to contact study members over the next few months. If you haven't heard from us, or couldn't take part before and would like to now, please get in touch.

To learn more about the survey, visit ncds.info

YOU ASKED US...

"Why do you ask for information about my family?"

Our parents, partners and children can impact our lives in many ways. They help us make choices, shape our beliefs, and provide us with support and opportunities. The information we collect about your family members helps us understand how your home environment relates to other important aspects of your life, such as your health, finances, and emotional wellbeing.

Our strict confidentiality protocols ensure we take as good care with the details you give us about your family as we do with the other information you share with us.

NEW DIRECTOR FOR NCDS

George Ploubidis, a Professor of Population Health and Statistics, has taken the reins as the new NCDS director.



George said: "I have been using NCDS throughout my career. The study is such an incredible resource for research and has led to so many important discoveries in my own field and others. I am in awe of the incredible contribution that NCDS members have made for more than six decades, and it is an honour and a privilege to lead the study into its next phase. To all our study members, thank you so much for everything you have done,

and I look forward to joining you as we embark on the next stage of our journey together."

George joined the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies, home to NCDS, in 2014 and has held several senior roles, including chief statistician and director of research. His research looks at the factors that influence our health and the differences that exist between different groups of people in society.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING AN NCDS MEMBER?

"I feel part of a 'special group.' While I do not know my other cohort members, I feel a connection with them. There was another cohort member at my secondary school and when we met again at a school reunion years later, we talked about the study."

To read more stories from our study members, visit ncds.info/member-stories

Believe in your dreams!

Researchers have found that having self-belief in childhood is a powerful driver for success.

When you were at school, we asked you if you wanted to go to university and what job you wanted to do when you grew up. We also asked your parents and teachers what they thought you would do when you finished school.

Researchers in Switzerland and Spain used these answers, and the information you've shared with us over the years, to compare what you hoped to do, with what you went on to achieve.

The researchers found you were more likely to get a degree if you had wanted to go to university when you were a teenager. Your parents' expectations also mattered, especially for girls, who were more likely to attend university if their parents wanted them to.

But for boys, rather than your parents, your teacher's expectations were more likely to predict what you would achieve.

The researchers also explored how achieving your dreams impacted your life satisfaction. If you didn't fulfil your childhood ambitions, you were less satisfied with your life during your early 30s.

But, by the time you were 50, the negative impact of not achieving your dreams disappeared. On the other hand, if you did better than you hoped for as a child, you were more satisfied with your life.

Caring for parents

Many people of your generation are caring for ageing parents. Although this is more common for those of you who are only children, not having siblings to share caring duties doesn't seem to impact your wellbeing.

Researchers at UCL used information from NCDS, and two other studies following people born in 1946 and 1970, to learn more about the care you provide to your parents and how these responsibilities affect you.

At age 55, 28% of you with siblings, and 33% of you without siblings, told us you provided care for your parents. Among those with brothers and sisters, 15% spent more than 20 hours per week helping your parents compared to 21% among those without siblings.

Daughters were more likely to help their parents than sons, with only daughters spending the most time on average caring for their parents.

Reassuringly, however, only children who cared for their parents did not seem to struggle more than those with siblings. Those of you caring for parents had similar mental health and wellbeing levels, whether or not you had brothers or sisters to share these duties with.



Menopause and work



Evidence from NCDS shows the importance of supporting women in the workplace as they go through menopause.

Researchers at UCL have used information provided by female study members throughout adulthood to understand how menopause impacts women's working lives.

Women who went through early menopause (before age 45) spent four months fewer in work during their early 50s compared to other women. At age 50, women who experienced eight or more menopausal symptoms in the past year spent two months fewer working in their early 50s than those who had experienced no symptoms at this age.

Not all menopausal symptoms had the same effects though. Psychological problems, like anxiety and depression, had a bigger impact on employment than physical symptoms, like

hot flushes and night sweats. However, if women had reported these physical symptoms as being particularly bad, this did reduce the time spent in employment.

The Department for Work and Pensions referred to these findings from NCDS in its statement setting out government plans to support women in the workplace during menopause.



This research backs up previous surveys and studies which have made it very clear there is a significant financial cost to women from menopause symptoms.

Caroline Nokes MP
(Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee)

Homeworking and wellbeing

With working from home here to stay for many of us in the post-pandemic world, new NCDS research suggests that this may not be bad for our mental and social wellbeing.



A team of researchers from the UK have used information from NCDS, and other studies following people of different age groups, to understand how working from home during the pandemic affected us.

Across generations, researchers found that working from home was not linked to low life satisfaction, feelings of isolation or poorer health during the first lockdown and when restrictions were eased in July 2020. But, during this period of eased restrictions, those of your

generation who were partially working from home were more likely to experience anxiety and depression.

When lockdown was reintroduced in November 2020, across all age groups, those without degrees who worked from home were also more likely to feel isolated. Your generation was also at a higher risk of feeling anxious and stressed if you were employed full time and partially working from home.

These findings suggest that, beyond the pandemic and with COVID-19 restrictions lifted, working from home on a more permanent basis may not have a negative impact on our wellbeing. However, there may be some differences across age groups, and more research would give a fuller picture.

Keep in touch

If you change your address, phone number or email address, please let us know so that we can contact you in the future.

You can contact us by:



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(free from a UK landline)



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LATEST DISCOVERIES

Check out the study website to keep up with the latest scientific discoveries you've made possible.

www.ncds.info