

Abstract

This study examines the impact of spousal caregiving for parents on men's uptake of caregiving leave, using microdata from the Survey on Family Care and Employment conducted by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training in 2019. Traditional gender roles suggest that when a spouse assumes caregiving responsibilities, men are more likely to prioritize their careers and reduce their caregiving time, thereby lowering their probability of taking caregiving leave. Based on this premise, this study hypothesizes that an increase in a spouse's caregiving time negatively affects men's likelihood of taking caregiving leave.

To test this hypothesis, two analytical approaches were employed. First, given the potential endogeneity between husbands' caregiving leave decisions and wives' caregiving participation, we assumed that caregiving activities within couples are endogenous. To address this endogeneity, we used an instrumental variable (IV) approach, treating the wife's caregiving burden as an instrument, to analyze the effect of spousal caregiving on the husband's decision to take caregiving leave. The results indicate that the spouse's employment status is a significant factor influencing the division of caregiving responsibilities within the household. While the number of employees at the husband's workplace at the onset of caregiving showed statistical significance, its direct impact on caregiving leave uptake was not clearly identified.

However, defining an instrumental variable that influences the wife's caregiving activities without directly affecting the husband's caregiving leave proved challenging. Therefore, in addition to the IV approach, we conducted a two-stage regression analysis. In the first stage, we examined the determinants of the wife's caregiving burden from four perspectives: individual factors, household-related factors, workplace-related factors, and the use of caregiving support systems. The results highlight clear gender differences in caregiving participation, influenced by factors such as the proportion of personal income within total household income and age group. Additionally, co-residence status at the onset of caregiving and commuting time to the care recipient's residence were found to be key determinants for both men and women. Moreover, although female workers were more likely than their male counterparts to seek caregiving support from their workplaces, institutional barriers to accessing such support remain significant.

In the second stage, we quantitatively analyzed the impact of spousal caregiving participation on men's uptake of caregiving leave using a Probit model and a multinomial logit model. The findings reveal a complex interplay between caregiving leave and short-term caregiving leave, demonstrating both substitution and complementary effects. Traditionally, short-term caregiving leave has been considered an alternative when taking extended caregiving leave is difficult; however, this study suggests a need to reevaluate this perception.

Based on these findings, two key policy implications emerge for promoting men's uptake of caregiving leave: revising workplace support systems and reconsidering the division of household responsibilities. These efforts can mitigate rigid gender role expectations, enhance gender equity in caregiving participation, and create an environment where men can engage in caregiving without hesitation.

The structure of this study is as follows. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the challenges arising from an aging society, clarifies the role of caregivers, and examines the current state of caregiving support systems, thereby outlining the research objectives. Chapter 2 reviews relevant prior studies and identifies the research gap addressed in this study. Chapter 3 details the dataset and research methodology. Chapter 4 presents preliminary analyses and regression results, verifying the research hypotheses. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the policy implications of the findings, acknowledges the study's limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

This version maintains the precision and academic tone required for publication while ensuring clarity and readability. Let me know if you'd like any modifications!