

Being older and active: is research useless or useful?

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Older People's Day 2012



- * National theme
 - * Sharing skills and experience between different generations
- * Local theme
 - * Being older and active
 - * Influencing changes to health and social care
- * Plan to talk about these themes today
 - * Plenty of time for discussion

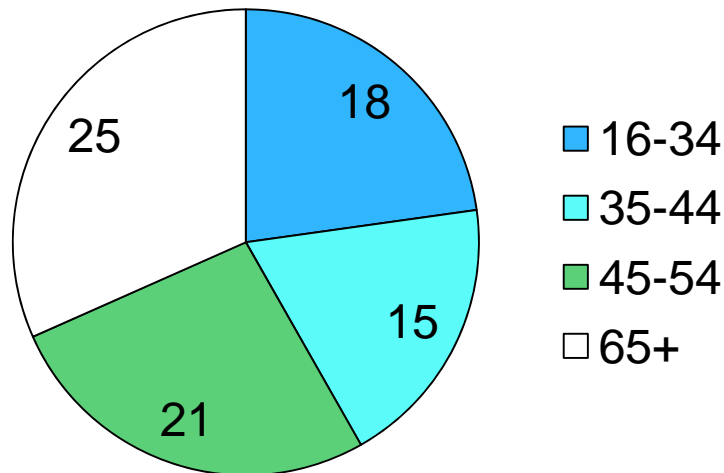
Context: fiscal austerity

- * Cuts to public expenditure
 - * Impact on local councils
- * Need to spend resources as effectively as possible



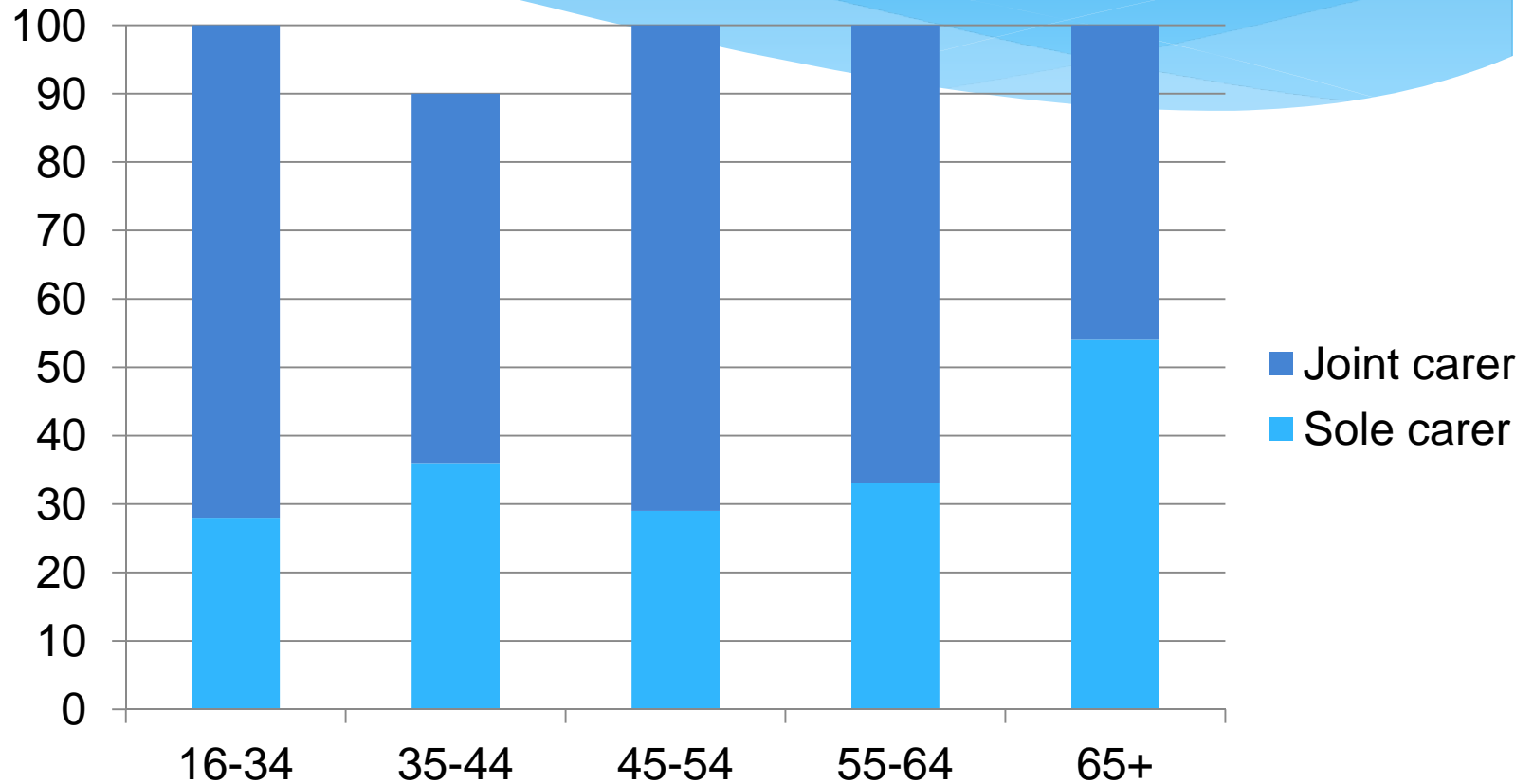
Being 'older and active'

Carers' age

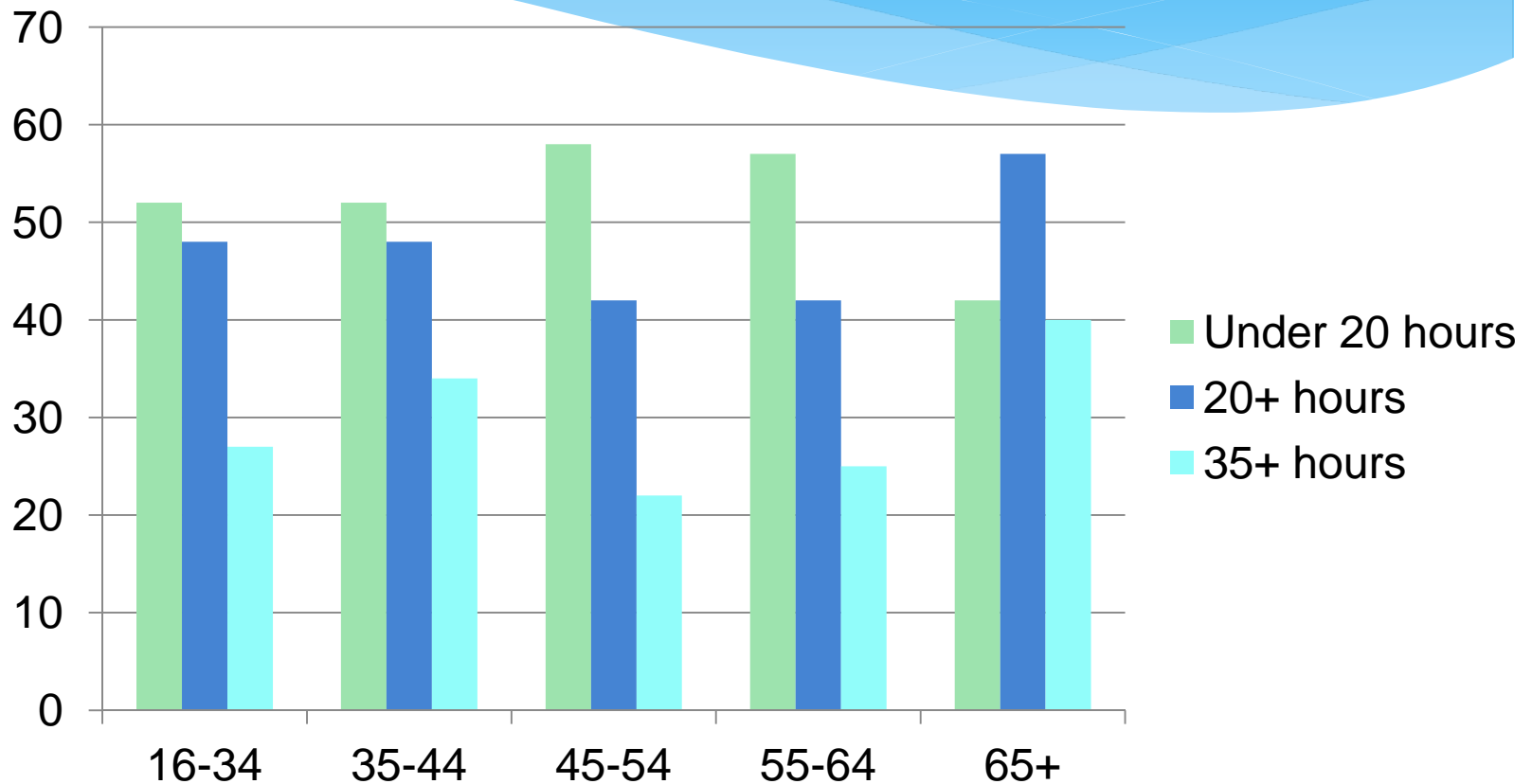


- * Survey showed single largest group are those aged 65 and over (NHS IC, 2010)
- * Representative sample of population
- * Many of these likely to be 75 and over (Milne & Hatzidimitriadou, 2002)

More likely to be sole carers (NHS IC survey)



Spend more time caring (NHS IC survey)



Social care practice with carers

- * Research project funded by NIHR School for Social Care Research
- * Familiar with role of older carers in supporting spouses
- * Role of older carers supporting adult children with a learning disability or mental health problem
- * Under-researched issue of grandparent carers
 - * Parents with substance misuse/mental health issues

Breaks for carers

8

- * I think these pamper days are a waste of time... You don't get people that are trapped in their houses, the 91 year old looking after the 89 year old. They don't come out for a pamper day. And your pampering lasts how long? And you remember it for how long? What difference does it make to your life in the grand scheme of things at the end of the day? It makes the people who put it on feel good, and it makes the funders feel great (WORKER18)

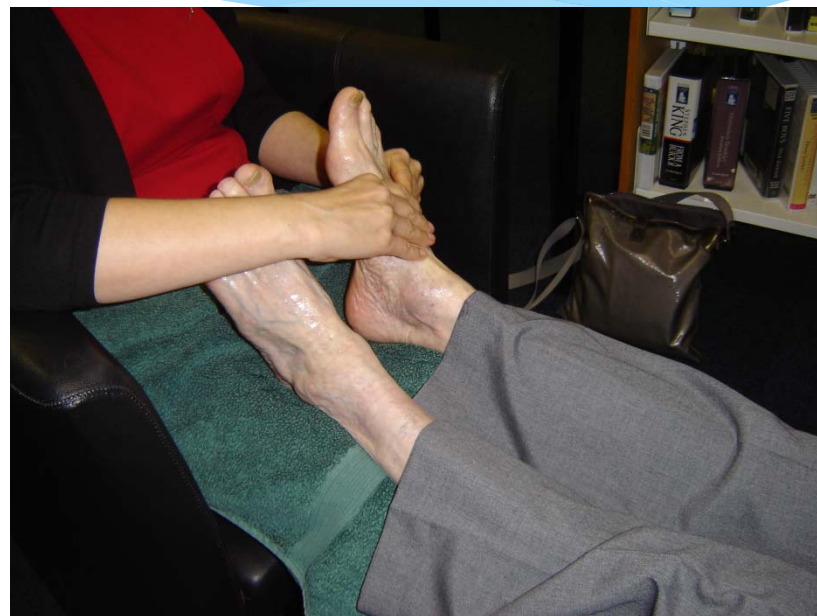


Photo by Mark & Jenny

Still need for 'traditional' services

- * We might do something ... like wash up for them, or something, because you're sitting there doing nothing. And because you're looking after somebody who can't talk to you or anything, and goes to sleep a lot. You might do something extra but that isn't your job. Your job is to make sure [carer is] alright (WORKER38)

Mind the information gap!

- * One of the big things that carers are saying is that there is an awful lot of information out there, but they can't seem to access it. A lot of them, I think the main things we have seemed to have identified, that it's the stress levels and I think it's the mental wellbeing that seems to get knocked. I think if that, where I found personally, if that can actually be rectified in some way and that gets sort of identified on the early stages then I think then the carer will have many more coping strategies and be able to deal with especially long term care and that 24 hour care. It's their mental wellbeing that gets affected quite seriously (VOL15)

‘At the click of a mouse’

- * BCD Associates (2011) showed how hard it was for older people to find out about care homes from council websites
- * Looked at information for carers – especially carers’ registers - similarly variable
 - * Barnet council website much better than many!



Access and experiences

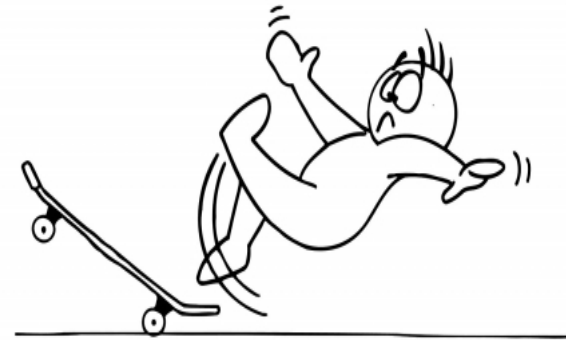
- * Review for Age UK looking at five services (falls prevention, day services, befriending, home from hospital, handyperson)
 - * Falls prevention – recurrent falls associated with admission to hospitals and care homes
 - * Potential savings for NHS demonstrated
 - * Theoretically savings for social care but no research in this area

Falls prevention (1)

- * Cochrane Review – an independent review by a team of researchers designed to summarise the best currently available research evidence – concluded that risk of falls and number of falls could be reduced by:
 - * Group exercises targeting at least two of the following four areas: strength, balance, flexibility, or endurance
 - * T'ai Chi as a group
 - * Individually prescribed exercise carried out at home

Falling (2)

- * But....
 - * Rates of uptake and 'adherence' need improving
 - * Not enough research based on views of older people (but improving)
 - * Valued social aspects
 - * Not enough attention paid to differential uptake/experiences



Handyperson schemes (1)

- * Potential to allow older people to live independently
 - * For instance, helping with tasks people can no longer manage themselves, such as minor household repairs
 - * Contributing to reducing risk of falls
- * Universally praised but not universally available
 - * Consistently praised by people using them
 - * Availability varies throughout country (Croucher et al, 2012)

Handyperson schemes (2)

- * Various attempts to improve co-ordination
 - * e.g. Central government funding, Partnership for Older People Projects (POPPs)
 - * *'fall between the interests of different government departments, straddling housing, health and social care interests but no-one's core responsibility'* (Baroness Barker)



Impact of free bus travel

- * Impact of free bus pass in England
 - * Introduced in 2006
 - * Associated with ‘active travel’ and increase in walking
 - * Concluded it was associated with public health benefits (Coronini-Cronberg et al, 2012)



Do we need more integration?

- * NHS confederation report September 2012 'Papering over the cracks'
- * Concerns about current funding gap for long term care
- * Rise in demand
- * Unchanged expectations
 - * General public does not understand system and how it is funded



Government plans

- * Care and Support White Paper (July 2012)
 - * *We all want to live a full and active life, to live independently and to play an active part in our local communities. Supporting people to live this way is a central ambition of the Coalition Government. It is also the purpose of this White Paper*



White Paper emphasises... (1)

- * Choice through personal budgets and direct payments
 - * Generally improve people's quality of life (Glendinning et al, 2008)
 - * Effects less positive for older people
 - * Money mainly spent on personal care
 - * Wanted more help with arranging and managing them (Moran et al, 2012)

White Paper emphasises... (2)

- * Promoting independence and well being to avoid people needing support at times of crisis
 - * Funding to support integration
 - * More consistency in terms of eligibility criteria
 - * Use of Social Impact Bonds
 - * Outcomes-based contract in which public sector commissioners commit to pay for significant improvement in social outcomes (such as a reduction in the number of people being admitted to hospital) for a defined population

Is this possible?

- * King's Fund suggests that there is a 'financial vacuum' in these plans
- * Cost effectiveness research tends to be based on specific programmes for people in specific situations
- * More literature from outside the UK – raises issues of relevance and replicability
- * Balancing short and long term funding pressures

Discussion (1)

- * Longstanding difficulties in mainstreaming research findings
 - * Researchers say findings have been ignored
 - * Funders say researchers have been asking the wrong, or irrelevant, questions



Discussion (2)

- * Debates about care and support need to acknowledge older people's role in providing as well as receiving care
- * Changes will not be effective unless older people involved in decision making
- * Changes need to take account of increasing diversity among older people

Disclaimer

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Over to you!

- * Thank you for listening!
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