

Using Survey Data to Explore the Wellbeing of Unpaid Caregivers Over 50

A cross-sectional analysis of data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

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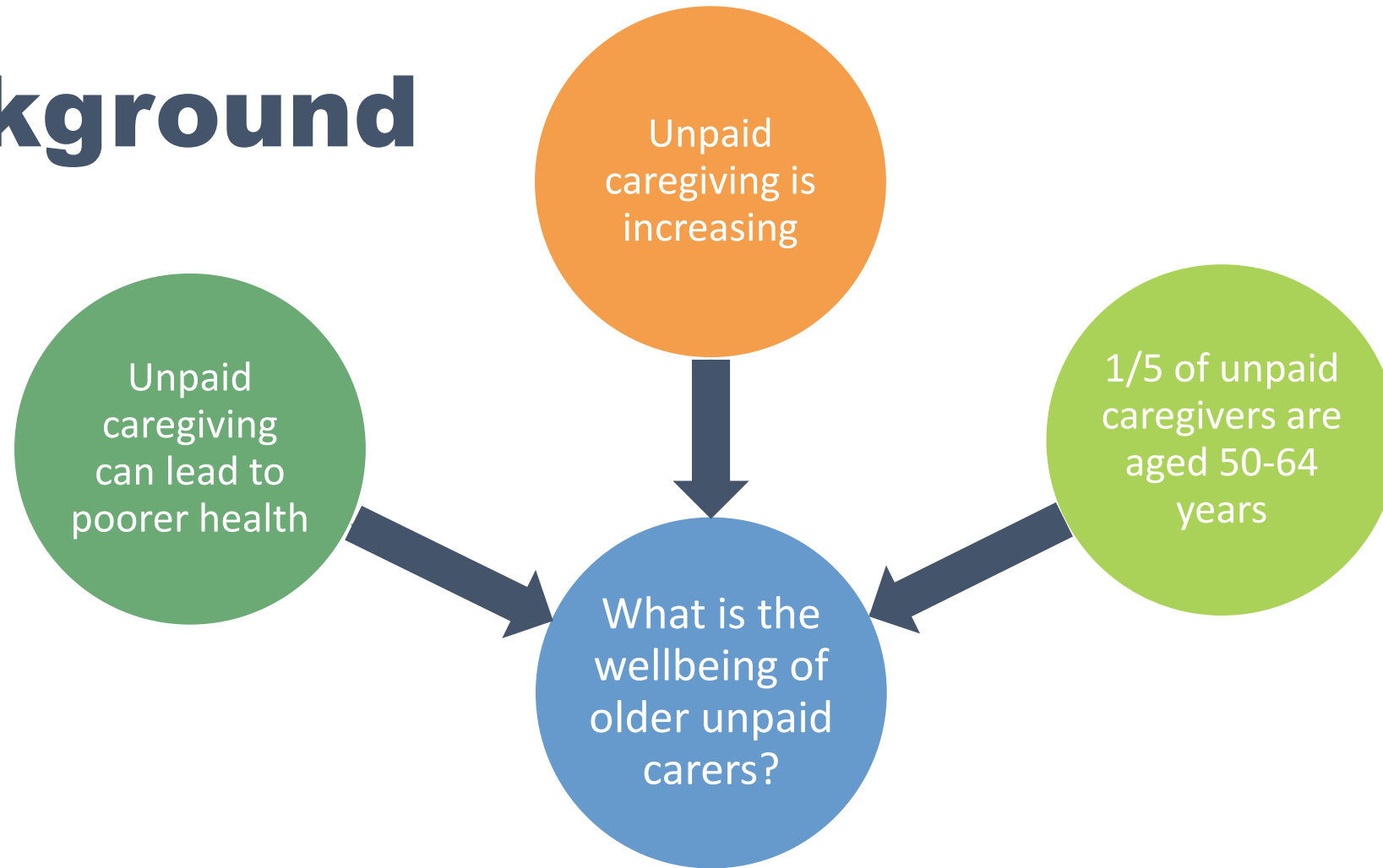


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Background



Background

Frailty

*The reduced reserve to
physiological insult
experienced by some older
people*

Reduced “bounce back”

To infection, falls, stressful life
events etc

Not all older people

Frailty Index

$$\frac{\text{Number of reported deficits}}{\text{Number of possible deficits}}$$

e.g. a 40 deficit Frailty Index is
used for study

Mary has high BP, angina,
diabetes and depression

= 4/40

Mary has a FI Score of 0.1

Dataset

- The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) is a cohort study which includes a sample of the over 50 population living in England
- We used the most recent Wave 9 (2019) nurse visit data (n=3,047)

Aim

To assess the **health and wellbeing** of **unpaid caregivers** over 50 in the ELSA study using a frailty index.

Methods

- Frailty was calculated using the ELSA-frailty index (Gale and Cooper, 2018)

Frailty Index

Difficulty with walking 100 yards
Difficulty sitting for about two hours
Difficulty getting up from a chair after sitting for long periods
Difficulty climbing several flights of stairs without resting
Difficulty climbing one flight of stairs without resting
Difficulty stooping, kneeling, or crouching
Difficulty reaching or extending arms above shoulder level
Difficulty pulling or pushing large objects like a living room chair
Difficulty lifting or carrying weights over 10 pounds, like a heavy bag
Difficulty picking up a 5p coin from a table
Difficulty dressing, including putting on shoes and socks
Difficulty walking across a room
Difficulty bathing or showering
Difficulty eating, such as cutting up your food
Difficulty getting in or out of bed
Difficulty using the toilet, including getting up or down
Difficulty using a map to figure out how to get around in a strange place
Difficulty preparing a hot meal
Difficulty shopping for groceries
Difficulty making telephone calls
Difficulty taking medications
Difficulty managing money, (e.g. paying bills and keeping track of expenses)
Difficulty doing work around the house or garden
Self-reported general health
High blood pressure or hypertension (self-reported)
Angina (self-reported)
Heart attack (including MI or coronary thrombosis) (self-reported)
Congestive heart failure (self-reported)
An abnormal heart rhythm (self-reported)
Diabetes or high blood sugar (self-reported)

A stroke (cerebral vascular disease) (self-reported)
Chronic lung disease such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema (self-reported)
Asthma (self-reported)
Arthritis (including osteoarthritis, or rheumatism) (self-reported)
Osteoporosis, sometimes called thin or brittle bones (self-reported)
Cancer or a malignant tumor (excluding minor skin cancers) (self-reported)
Parkinson's disease (self-reported)
Any emotional, nervous or psychiatric problems (self-reported)
Alzheimer's disease (self-reported)
Dementia, organic brain syndrome, senility or any other serious memory impairment (self-reported)
Self-reported eyesight (while using lenses, if appropriate)
Self-reported hearing (while using hearing aid if appropriate)
Whether respondent has fallen down at all /last year /last 2 years
Whether respondent has fractured hip ever /in last 2 years
Whether respondent has had joint replacement ever
Identify today's date: day of month
Identify today's date: month
Identify today's date: year
Identify the day of the week?
Immediate word recall (sample organized into quartiles)

Comorbidities

Methods

Frailty was calculated using the ELSA-frailty index (Gale and Cooper, 2018)

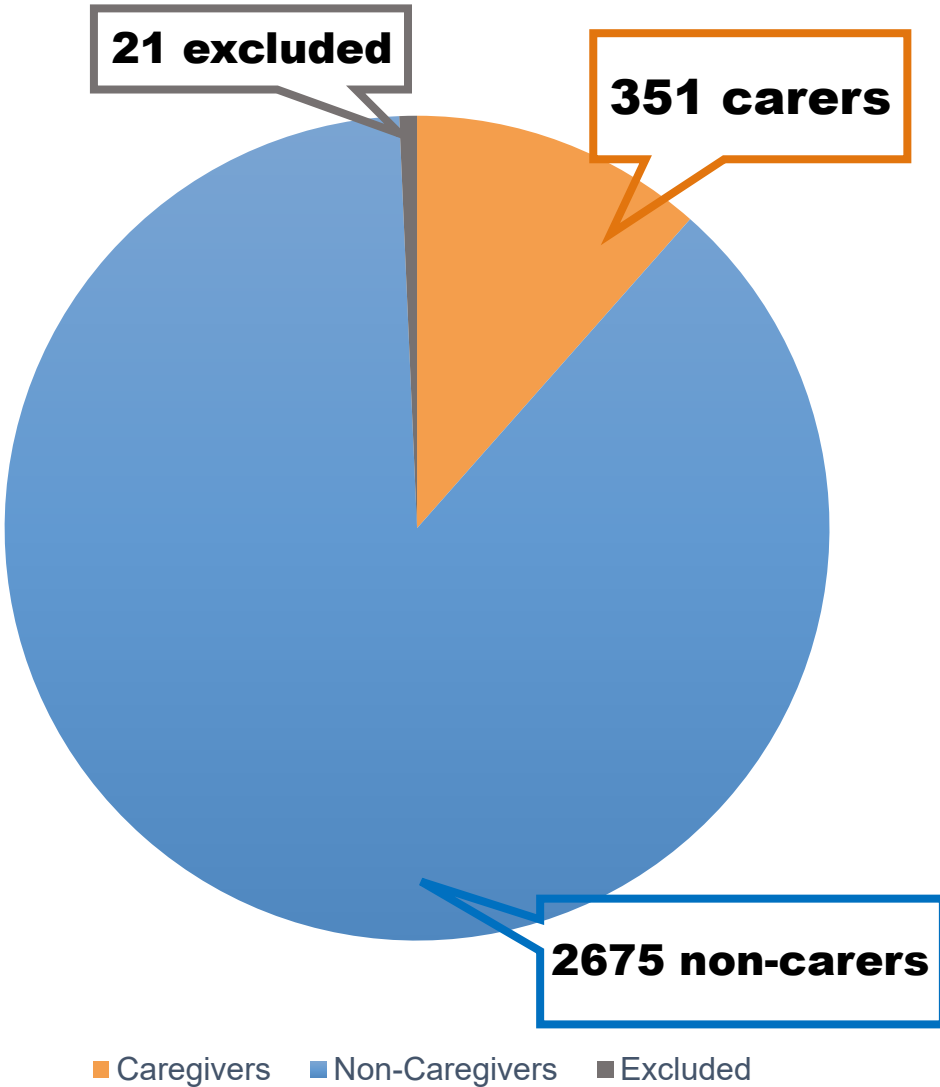
Unpaid caregivers were identified by:

Self reporting that they cared for someone in the past week

OR

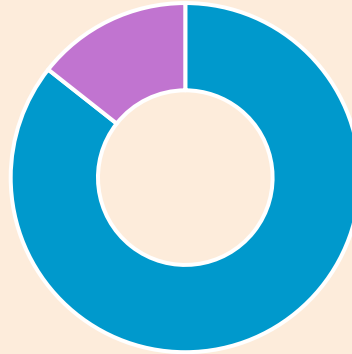
Reported that they receive Carers Allowance

Results Demographics



Carers

Age: 64.5 ± 10.2 years



■ Married or cohabit ■ Lives alone

Sex

39% 61%



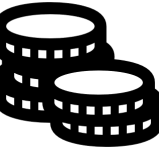
91.7%
White

Household Wealth

Median £20,200

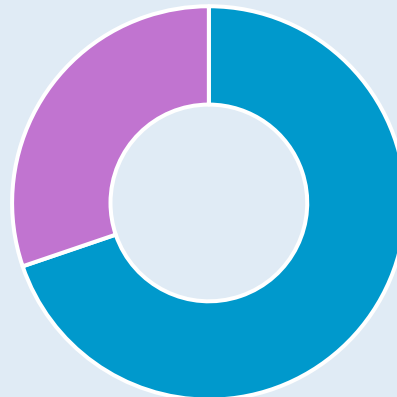
IQR £1,600-£85,210

In paid work 35.9%



Non-carers

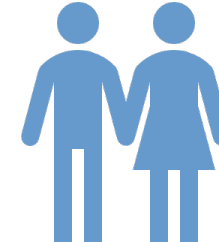
Age: 66.7 ± 10.5 years



■ Married or cohabit ■ Lives alone

Sex

43% 57%



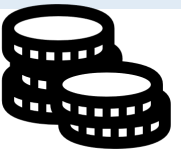
94.6%
White

Household Wealth

Median £32,500

IQR £3,200-£11,600

In paid work 36.6%

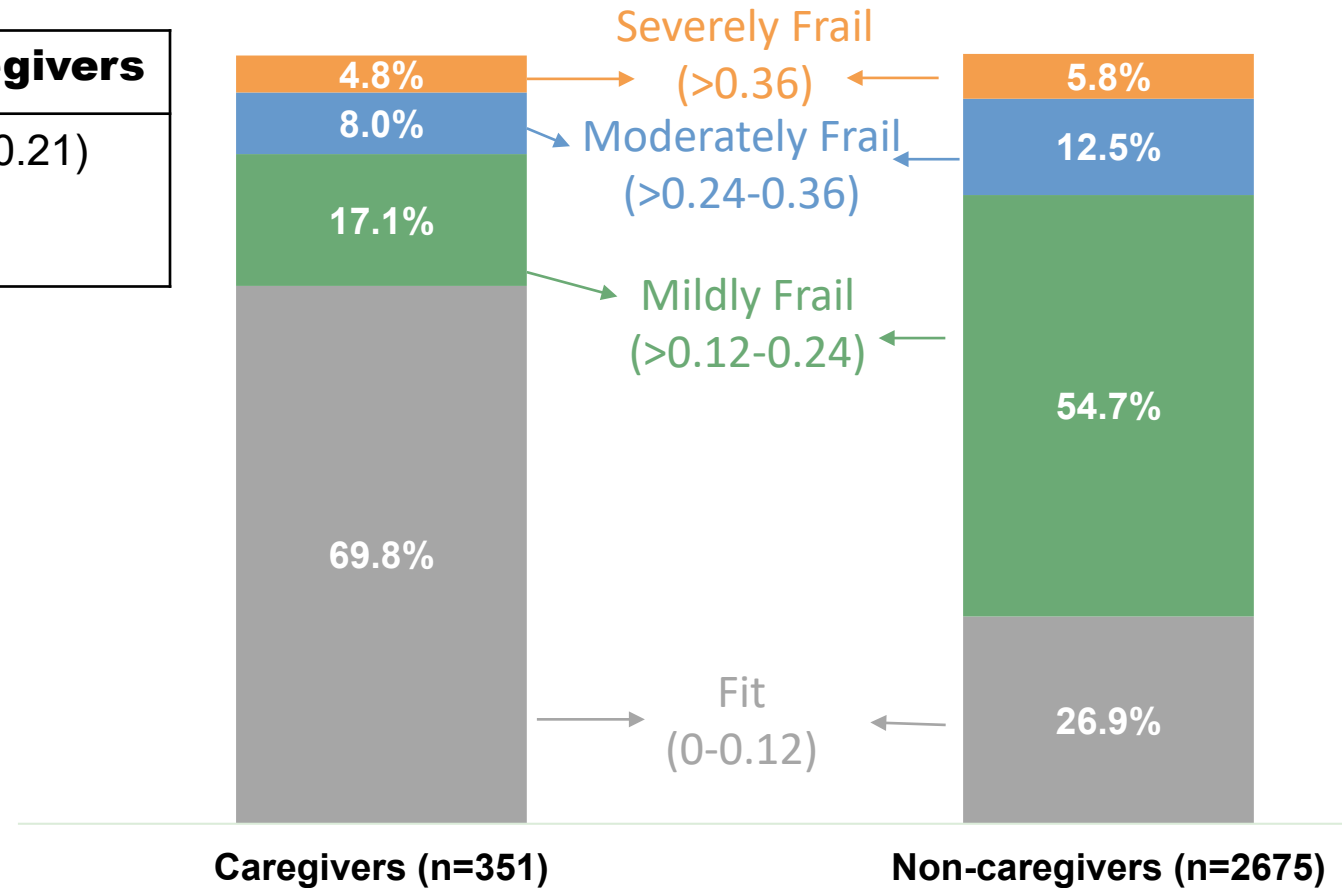


Results

Frailty: Caregivers vs non-caregivers

	Caregivers	Non-Caregivers
Average ELSA-FI score, median (IQR)	0.07 (0.04-0.14)	0.15 (0.12-0.21)

- Caregivers were on average less frail and more likely to be non-frail.
- There was a similar proportion of severely frail participants in each group.



Results

Stratified frailty index

Comorbidities

Difficulty with walking 100 yards
Difficulty sitting for about two hours
Difficulty getting up from a chair after sitting for long periods
Difficulty climbing several flights of stairs without resting
Difficulty climbing one flight of stairs without resting
Difficulty stooping, kneeling, or crouching
Difficulty reaching or extending arms above shoulder level
Difficulty pulling or pushing large objects like a living room chair
Difficulty lifting or carrying weights over 10 pounds, like a heavy bag

Mobility

Difficulty picking up a 5p coin from a table
Difficulty dressing, including putting on shoes and socks
Difficulty walking across a room
Difficulty bathing or showering
Difficulty eating, such as cutting up your food
Difficulty getting in or out of bed
Difficulty using the toilet, including getting up or down

Instrumental activities of daily living

Difficulty using a map to figure out how to get around in a strange place
Difficulty preparing a hot meal
Difficulty shopping for groceries
Difficulty making telephone calls
Difficulty taking medications
Difficulty managing money, (e.g. paying bills and keeping track of expenses)
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Activities of daily living

Self-reported general health

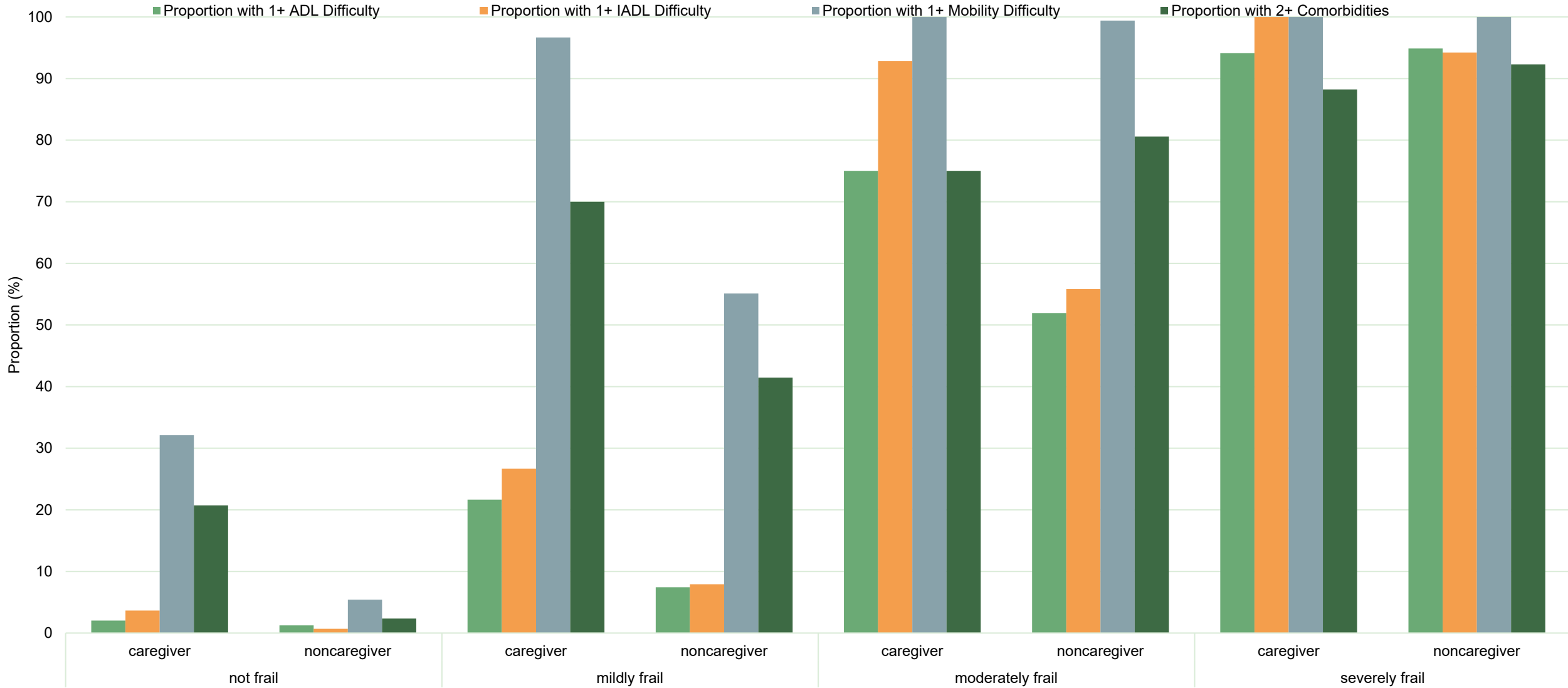
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Results

Stratified frailty index

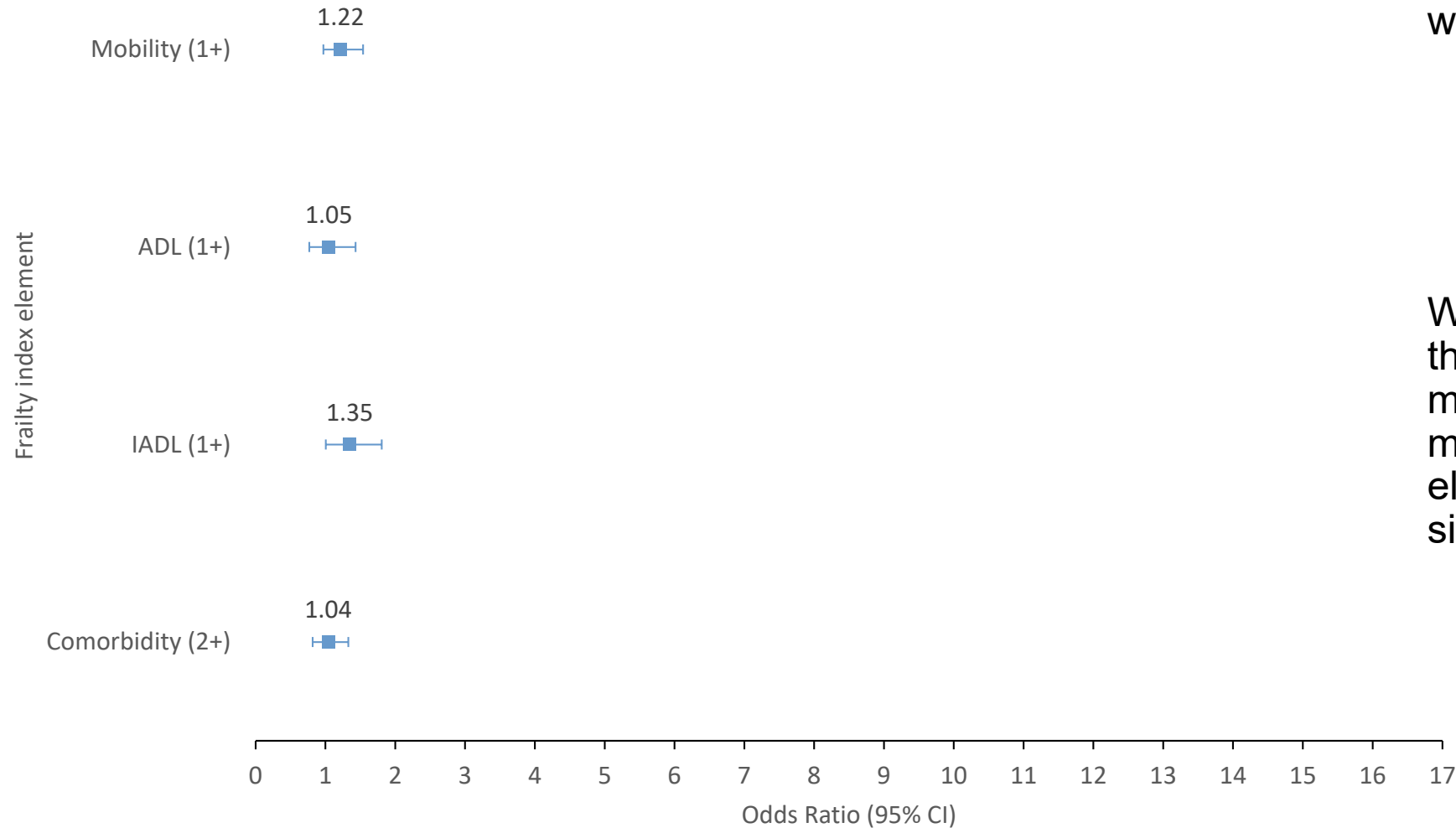


Results

Binary logistic regression models for frailty index domains:

OR (95%CI) for the odds of reporting on each domain for carers compared with non-carers

- Adjusted for age, sex and ethnicity



When frailty group is adjusted for, the odds of a carer scoring (1 or more for mobility, ADL or IADL, 2 or more for comorbidities) on any of the elements in the ELSA-FI was significantly increased

Conclusions

Unpaid caregivers were **younger** and **less frail** than non-caregivers
(as expected)

BUT

When we compared caregivers and non-caregivers of **equivalent frailty-** caregivers reported **more difficulties** with **daily functioning**

This **couldn't** be accounted for by **age, sex or ethnicity** differences.

AND

There were a **similar** proportion of **severely frail individuals** in the caregiver and non-caregiver groups