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The household context of unpaid caring in Northern Ireland: an administrative data study of household burden, health, and labour market outcomes among the NI caring population.

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Objectives

Approximately one-in-eight residents of Northern Ireland (NI) have caring responsibilities. This study seeks to describe the household context of unpaid caring in NI, to develop a novel index of household burden, and to examine the association between carer status and a range of employment, education, and health outcomes.

Methods

Participants will include all NI Longitudinal Study (NILS) members aged between 8 and 100 years enumerated at the 2011 and/or 2021 Census. Administrative data linkage will include demographic, carer-related, household, health, and employment data from Census 2011 and 2021; and prescription data from the NI Enhanced Prescribing Database (EPD). Principal components analysis (PCA) will be used to develop a household burden index. Logistic regression analyses will be conducted to examine the association between carer status and employment, education, and health outcomes while adjusting for different demographic and property variables as well as scores on the household burden index.

Results

We are currently awaiting data to begin analyses on this approved project; however, analyses will be completed prior to the conference. Among the results we intend to present are: (1) the proportion of unpaid carers in NI in 2011 and 2021, and their demographic, property, and household-related characteristics; (2) changes in the proportion and characteristics of unpaid carers between both Census points, (3) household burden status in 2011 and 2021, and changes in household burden status between both Census points, and (4) odds ratios depicting the magnitude of association between carer status and employment, education, and health outcomes.

Conclusion

This study will provide insights into the context of unpaid caring within households in NI and the influence that levels of household burden have on the outcomes of carers. These findings will be used to inform health and social care policies aimed at supporting and improving the identification and wellbeing of unpaid carers in households across NI.

