



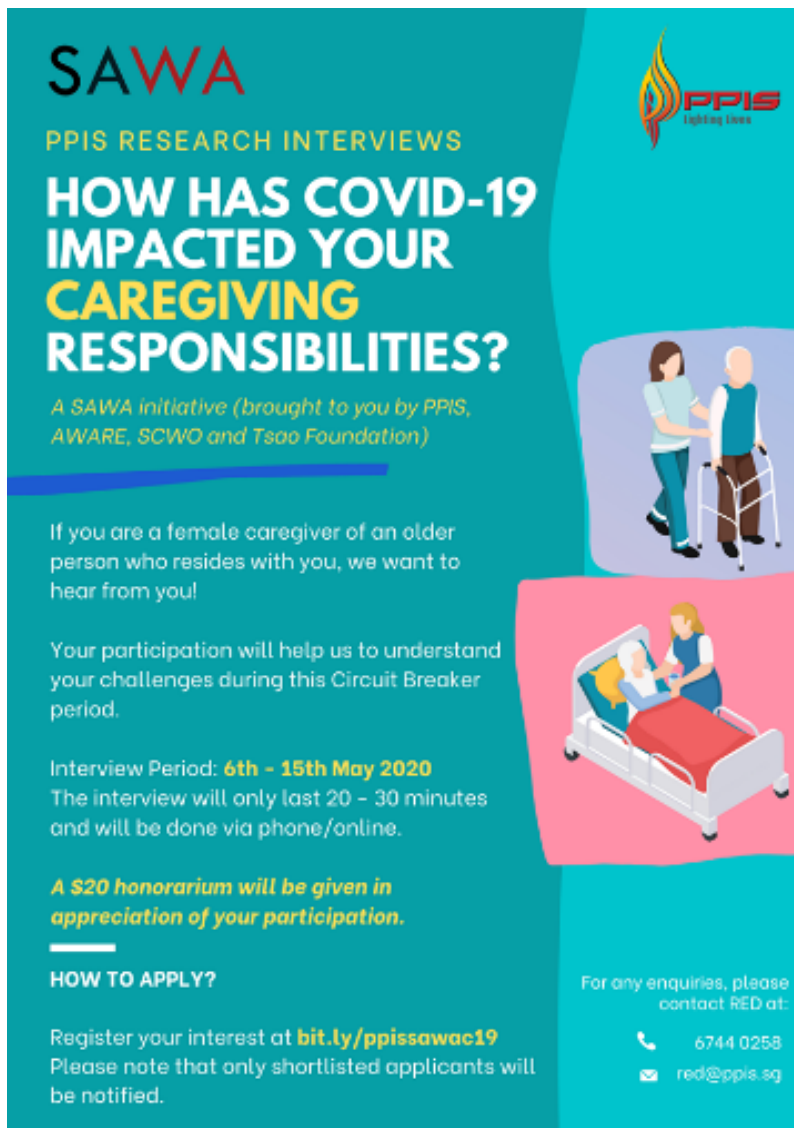
## **COVID-19's Impact on Female Family Caregivers of Older Persons**

24 June 2020

## Background

- Before COVID-19, there were many discussions about the psychological and financial pressures of family caregiving, such as their propensity for burnout and – in the case of women – their difficulty achieving retirement adequacy.
- With the pandemic, in the light of the Covid-19 situation and measures, we wanted to study on the challenges that female family caregivers of older persons may be facing.

# About the Survey



**SAWA**  
PPIS RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

**HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED YOUR CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES?**

*A SAWA initiative (brought to you by PPIS, AWARE, SCWO and Tsao Foundation)*

If you are a female caregiver of an older person who resides with you, we want to hear from you!

Your participation will help us to understand your challenges during this Circuit Breaker period.

Interview Period: **6th - 15th May 2020**  
The interview will only last 20 - 30 minutes and will be done via phone/online.




**A \$20 honorarium will be given in appreciation of your participation.**

**HOW TO APPLY?**

Register your interest at [bit.ly/ppissawac19](https://bit.ly/ppissawac19)  
Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be notified.

For any enquiries, please contact RED at:

☎ 6744 0258  
✉ [red@ppis.sg](mailto:red@ppis.sg)

A survey conducted by Singapore Alliance for Women in Ageing (AWARE, PPIS, SCWO and Tsao Foundation) with 42 caregivers.

The survey focused on the impact of Covid-19 on female family caregivers to an aged family member during the Circuit Breaker period, identifying their needs and challenges experienced.

# Criteria For Survey

## ELDERCARE DURING COVID-19: SURVEY

**If you are:**

- A female family caregiver to an older person in Singapore
- Living with your older care recipient
- Caring for a person with either:
  - a) dementia or another mental condition
  - b) trouble with at least one activity of daily living (ADL)
  - c) complications from diabetes, heart failure, liver failure and/or stroke

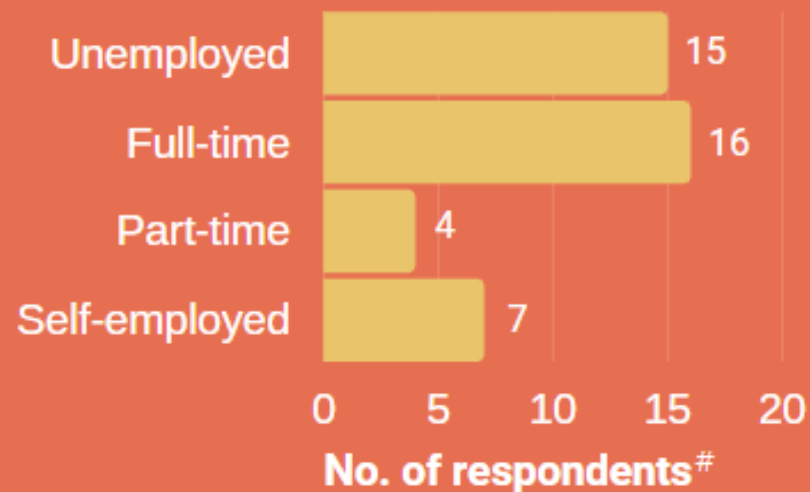
To take part, email [yokemun@aware.org.sg](mailto:yokemun@aware.org.sg). You will receive \$20 as a token of appreciation after completion.

## Survey Findings: Profile of Respondents (n=42)

### OUR RESPONDENTS



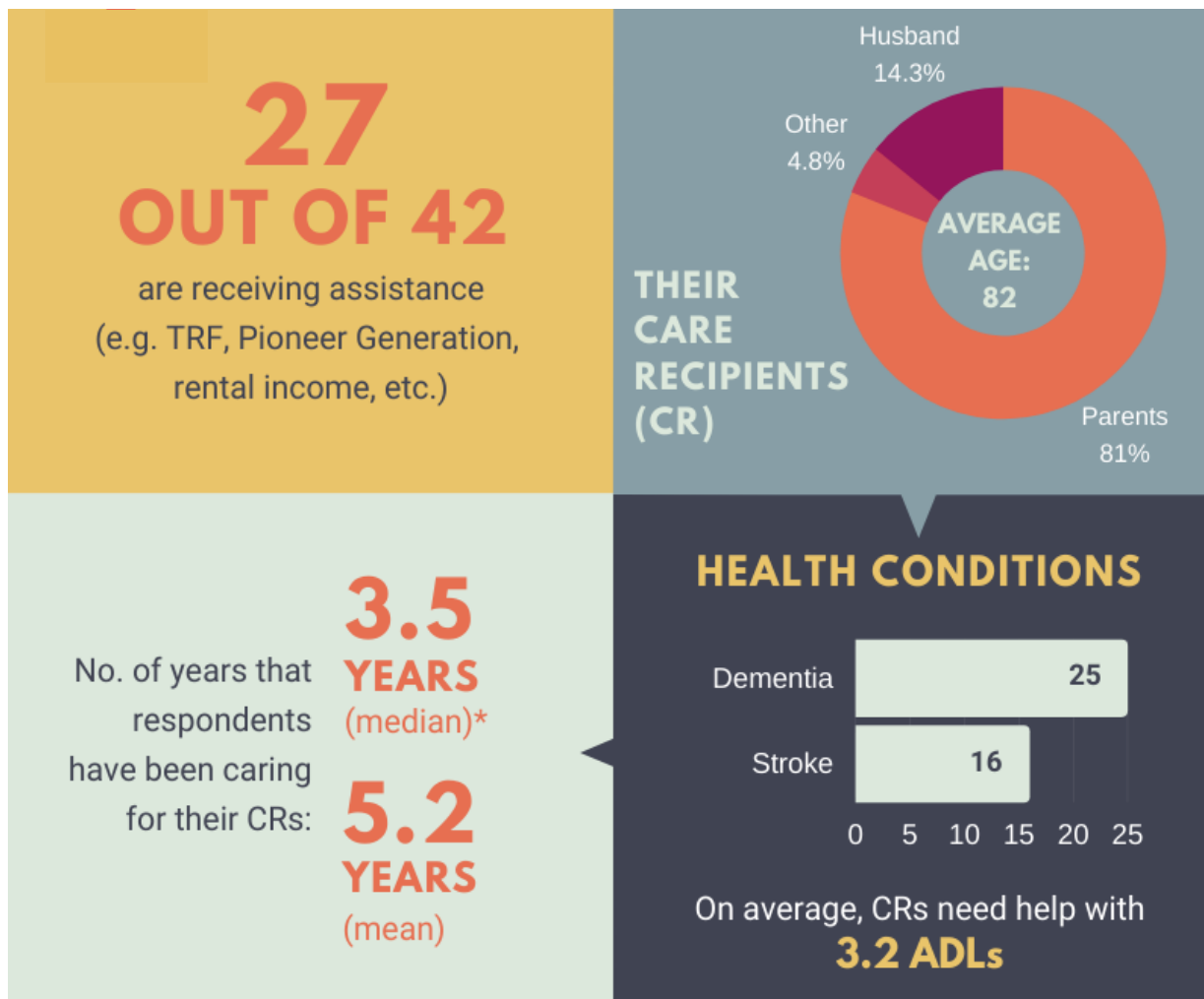
- Average age: 55.5
- Earns less than \$5,000



# Data reflects respondents' employment status pre-Covid-19

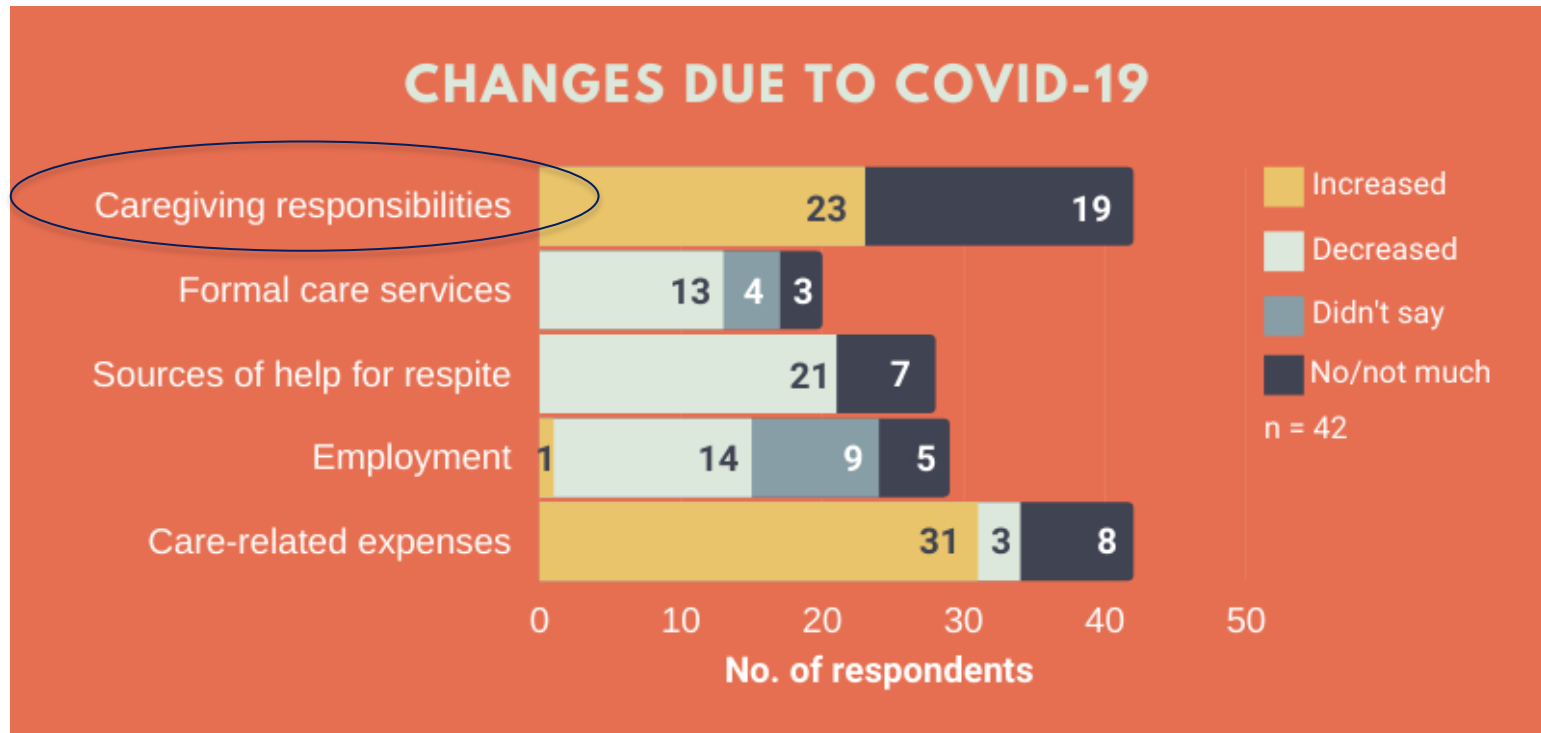
# Survey Findings:

## Profile of Care Recipients (n=42)



\* Median included due to large variance in data.

# Caregiving Responsibilities & Sources of Help for Respite **SAWA**



**WHY AN INCREASE IN CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES?**

### FORMAL CARE SERVICES

have **closed during Circuit Breaker** and some withdrew their CR to avoid exposure to COVID-19.

### SOURCES OF HELP FOR RESPITE

such as extended family and neighbours are **inaccessible** with COVID-19 measures in place.

## Working Female Family Caregivers

“ Before COVID-19, **Nad**,<sup>+</sup> 43, says she was often able to work from home but now that her father is at home all the time (because he was **withdrawn from the daycare centre**), it has been challenging to put up with his difficult behaviour and counsel her clients at the same time. ”

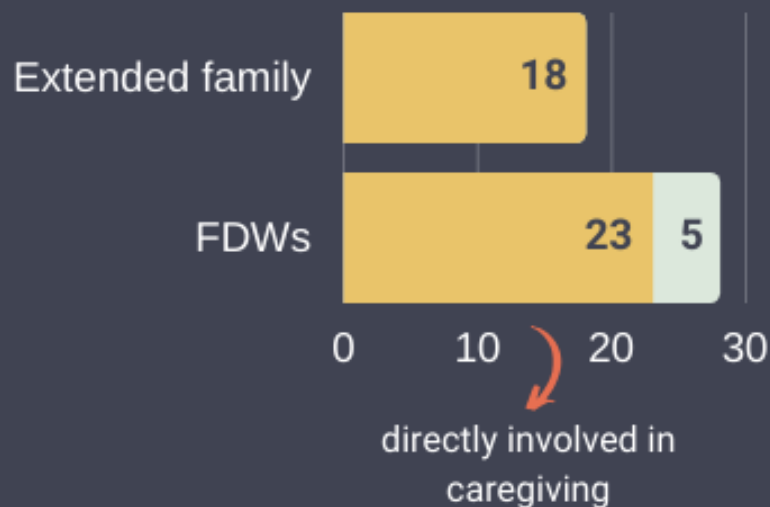
**13**  
**OUT OF 23**  
who experienced an increase in caregiving responsibilities are still working.

*+ Names have been changed to protect confidentiality*



## Female Family Caregivers with FDW

### OTHERS INVOLVED IN CAREGIVING



**ALTHOUGH MANY HAVE AN FDW,**  
"both my FDW and I are reaching physical and mental exhaustion, especially since the daycare is closed during this period."

**RILEY<sup>+</sup>, 52**

*+ Names have been changed to protect confidentiality*

# Employment Changes & Out-Of-Pocket Expenses

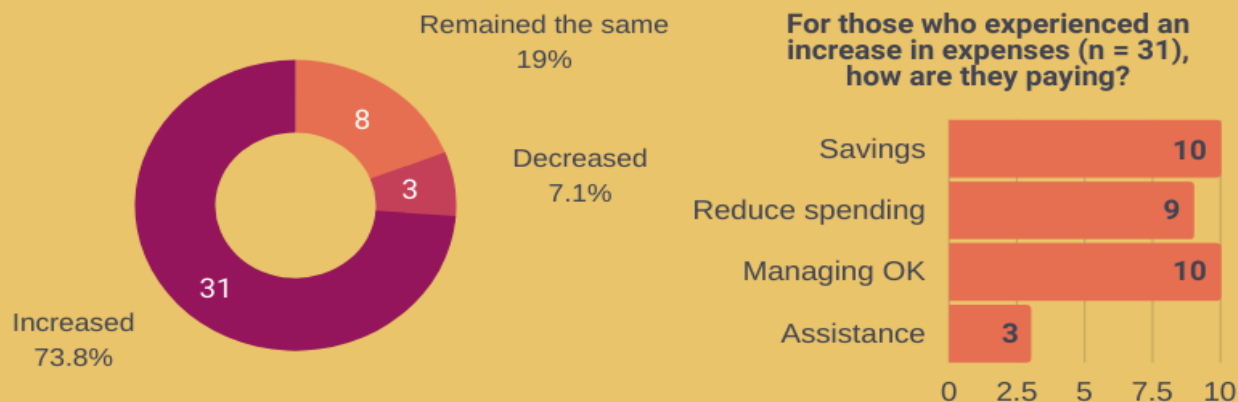
## EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

(n = 24)

**14**  
**OUT OF 24**  
saw fewer hours/clients  
and their job being  
put on hold



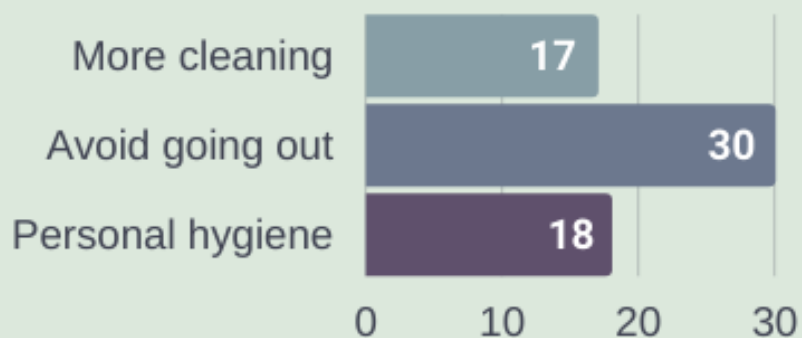
## OUT-OF-POCKET CARE-RELATED EXPENSES



## Positive Experiences

### PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

to protect loved ones from COVID-19



**12  
OUT OF 26**

who had positive experiences during this time were glad to spend more time with their CR.

# Thoughts and Questions

## Formal Services

In an ageing population with increasing cognitive impairment amongst the elderly, we may need to redefine what constitutes as 'essential' and what doesn't.

All of this should be considered against the fact that mortality rate is the highest amongst the elderly during an outbreak/pandemic.

Should essential care be redefined and include eldercare services?

## Sources of Help for Caregivers

It takes a village to raise a child, and the same adage/sayings applies to caring for an older person.

Caregivers need their well-deserved respite from routine care, and as such sources of help and support should be made available to them in these trying times.

In the face of a pandemic and movement restrictions, what are the sources of help that are available to caregivers?

# Thoughts and Questions

## Advisories Related to Caregiving of the Elderly

There is a clear need to review advisories and measures related to elderly care to adapt to changing contexts, so that caregivers are fully supported and allowed some respite in times of crisis.

## Financial Care and Support Schemes for Caregivers

There is a marked increase in care-related expenses but a decrease in income in the current pandemic amongst some caregivers.

Can the current care and support schemes be extended to family caregivers for older people and to single female caregivers?

## In Summary

Based on the findings of the survey made by SAWA or the Singapore Alliance for Women in Ageing, it affirms to us that:

If we continue to think that family caregiving is not an 'essential' work, those who perform it will remain unsupported and uncompensated.

The pandemic has indeed shed some light on the 'pain points' of caregiving, highlighting what many of us have been advocating all along to show that our caregivers deserve better, especially now.

# Thank you!

## Singapore Alliance for Women in Ageing

