

CARE WORK AND THE ECONOMY

Advancing policy solutions with gender-aware macroeconomic models

CARE POLICY NARRATIVE FROM SOUTH KOREA | 21 – 01

DETERMINANTS OF PAID ELDER CARE SERVICE USE: FOCUSING ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY CAREGIVER AND THEIR HOUSEHOLD

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Research Objective

Households combine paid care services and unofficial family care for their eldercare needs since Long-term Care (LTC) is adopted in Korea. However, the question about under what circumstances households use care services still remains unanswered. We focus on in-home care service for elders and shed light on the current status of primary caregivers' service utilization. In particular, the goal of this paper is to identify the conditions for use of eldercare services. For this, we set the service utilization as a dependent variable, and we analyze the effect of the role of characteristics of primary caregivers, characteristics of recipients, care time, responsibility, and family relations between the caregiver and elderly on the dependent variable.

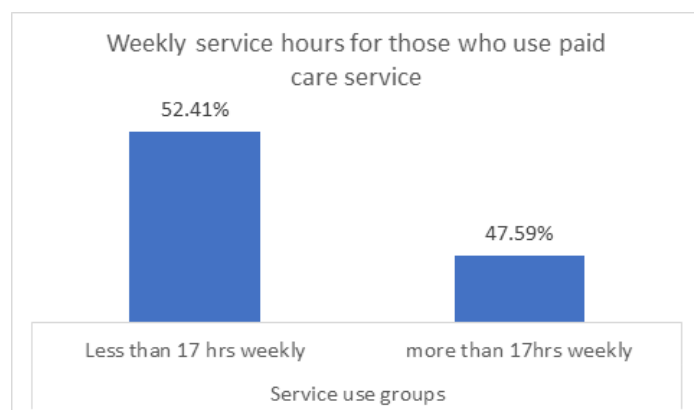
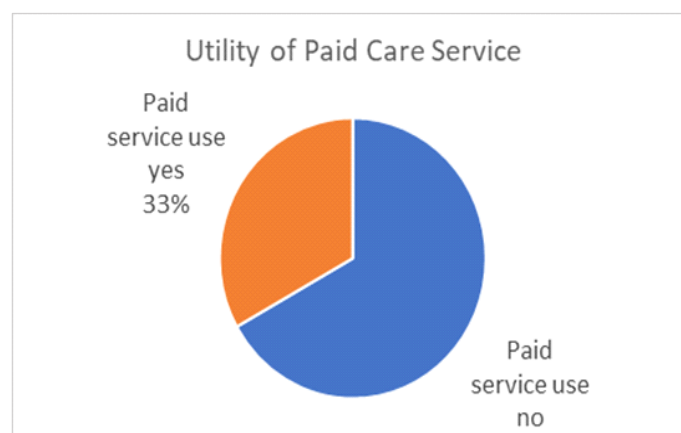
Data and Results

We analyzed the data on 500 primary caregivers from the Care Work Family Surveys (2018).

As described in the figures, 33% of the sample utilizes paid care services (including LTC). In the rest of the 66% of households, a family member gives care for elderly without using any paid services. On the other hand, the average paid service hours are 27 hours per week, and the median is 17 hours per week. In-home LTC service is available for 3-4 hours per day, and a day care center can be utilized up to 10 hours a day. Most respondents use the services hours to the limit, while some households utilize additional paid services such as nursing and housekeeping.

Logistic regression results with the paid service utilization

- The variables that have an impact on the paid service utilization are limited functions and physical conditions of the elderly, periods of care, and caregivers' preferred hours on care.
- Based on the families who use paid care services, the paid service hours are shorter when the primary caregiver is a daughter-in-law or a spouse, and the hours are longer when they receive financial aid from other family members.



[Figure 2] Group difference in hours of paid care service

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Discussion and Policy Implications

A general prediction on the hours of paid care service would be a negative relationship with the hours of family care. However, the regression result does not support any relations between the hours of family care and paid care services. Considering the current situation that paid care services are utilized when the elder's health condition is serious or physical functions are considerably limited, the paid care service seems to be a solution only when family care is inadequate, or it seems to take only a subsidiary role in the total needs of eldercare. This implies the need for expansion of official care systems as well as policies to support family care.

The result that paid service utilization depends on who the primary caregiver is, implies that gender norms still exist in the context of care. Yet, daughters utilize long hours of paid services, meaning that as primary caregivers, they indicate what is needed or what kind of measures are required. Perhaps daughters can be more flexible in the gender roles compared to spouses or daughters-in-law. This can be one avenue to solve gender problems in eldercare.