

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN RAISING GRANDCHILDREN AND GRANDPARENT CAREGIVER MARRIAGES

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have examined how raising grandchildren influences the marital relationship of grandparent caregivers even though raising grandchildren may strain marital relationships. This study used nationally representative data from MIDUS to contrast perceptions of spousal relations for grandparents who had recently provided care for grandchildren along with their own young children (n=21), with those of grandparents who had recently cared for grandchildren only (n=91). Unweighted and weighted ANOVA results revealed an interaction between sex and generation with grandmother caregivers raising two generations reporting poorer spousal relations than grandfather caregivers raising two generations. An unweighted interaction effect was also found, where grandmother caregivers raising two generations reported lower scores on the marital relations measure than those raising one generation. Grandmother caregivers with recent experience raising two generations appear to have a more negative experience, as indicated by lower levels of marital affective solidarity. These results parallel other studies that suggest that grandparent caregivers show poorer outcomes when they possess multiple caregiving roles that can produce a pile-up of stress and role strain.