

When Gender Trumps Everything: The Division of Parent Care among Siblings

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Recent studies of the gender division of elder care between spouses report a rather surprising finding that it is largely explained not by gender but by kin relations. Arguing that most gender division of elder care takes place among brothers and sisters rather than husbands and wives, this article shifts the focus from married couples to sibling networks and examines how adult children share caring responsibilities for their parents. Using the Health and Retirement Survey, the author reports direct, indirect, and structural effects of gender on parent caregiving. First, daughters provide more care to their elder parents than sons, net of other factors. Second, daughter's caregiving appear to be more elastic than sons' with respect to constraints and resources associated with parent caregiving. Finally, not only the focal child's gender, but also his or her siblings' genders appear to be important in explaining parent caregiving.

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