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Embracing Carers™ Global Study Shows Covid-19 Has Taken a Significant Toll on the Well-Being of Informal Carers

- **Global study results find Covid-19 has increased demands on informal carers, and severely worsened their mental, physical, and financial well-being.**
- **Embracing Carers™, a global initiative led by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is focused on recognizing and raising awareness of the crucial role of informal carers and develops solutions collaboratively with global carer organizations.**
- **The Carer Well-Being Index serves as a resource with insights and recommendations to help the public and private sector better support informal carers around the world.**

Darmstadt, Germany, March 6, 2021– Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today released the results of a global survey conducted through its Embracing Carers™ initiative exploring the impact of Covid-19 on informal or family carers. The index results show that the pandemic has impacted the physical, emotional, and financial health of carers worldwide, underlining the necessity for clear actions from the public and private sectors to alleviate the increased pressures placed on carers since the outbreak of Covid-19.

The Carer Well-Being Index was commissioned in partnership with global carer advocacy groups and surveyed a broad sample of over 9,000 carers across 12 countries in Asia, Europe, and the Americas, who are providing informal care for a loved one with a long-term illness, physical disability, or cognitive/mental condition.



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The study's findings demonstrate that Covid-19 has forced many people to assume caregiving responsibilities for the first time, with 20% of informal carers globally reporting themselves as first-time carers as a result of the pandemic. In addition, the results show that the pandemic has increased demands on carers more than ever before, with two out of five carers (39%) around the world reporting they are being relied on more than ever as a caregiver.

Globally, during the height of the pandemic in each country, the average time carers spent caregiving grew by 7.6 hours per week compared to before the pandemic hit; an increase of 46%. In addition, approximately a third of carers (32%) reported that they believe they will spend an average of 31 or more hours per week caregiving in the future due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. An increase in the average weekly time spent giving care at the height of the pandemic was seen in every country surveyed, from carers in Germany providing an additional 3.7 hours of care to China's carers who spent 15.4 more hours a week, compared to pre-pandemic times.

"Carers play a critical, underappreciated role within the global healthcare ecosystem, often at the sacrifice of their own health and well-being," said Heather Connor, Global Head of Communications for the Healthcare business sector of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. "Our aim is that the Carer Well-Being Index study will serve as a resource for government leaders, employers, community organizations and people around the world seeking to better understand the needs of carers, and provide recommendations on how to best address this unmet public health priority."

Key findings from the Global Carer Well-Being Index include:

- **Increased Emotional Burden:** Over half of carers (65%) report that providing emotional support is one of their top responsibilities as a carer, with 57% of those carers saying this responsibility has only increased since the outbreak started. 61% of carers reported that the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened their own mental and emotional health.

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- **Telehealth & Technology:** 51% of carers have seen an increase in managing technology*, when it comes to virtual medical appointments and/or keeping touch with loved ones. Additional needs for telehealth guidance were particularly pronounced in Asia.
- **Financial Impact:** Slightly more than half of carers (54%) agree the pandemic has worsened their financial health, and 71% are concerned that they will no longer be able to afford to provide proper care.

Almost all carers (96%) globally surveyed agree that it's important to have increased access to health care services to ensure they are able to provide proper care needed, pointing to the important role both the public and private sector can play in better supporting informal carers.

To download the Global Carer Well-Being Index report, please click [here](#). For research, resources and more information for carers, please visit embracingcarers.com.

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About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 58,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2019, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 16.2 billion in 66 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials. Since its founding 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company.

About Embracing Carers™

[Embracing Carers™](#) is a global initiative led by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, operating as Merck KGaA, Darmstadt Germany, EMD Millipore, and EMD Performance Materials in the United States and Canada. It is a collaboration with leading caregiver organizations around the world designed to increase awareness, discussion, and action about the often-overlooked needs of carers. Given that carers need support and often do not know where to turn for help, Embracing Carers™ was created to fill that void.

Carer Well-Being Index Methodology

In partnership with a third-party global leader in multinational market research, a survey was fielded via online and phone methodologies from September 3 – October 27, 2020 across 12 countries of

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which included the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia, Brazil, Taiwan, India and China. The study consisted of 9,044 unpaid carers (with about n=750 in each country surveyed). Unpaid carers were defined as those who are caring for someone with a long-term illness, physical disability, or cognitive/mental condition (including cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Dementia, Alzheimer's, Spinal cord injury, Muscular Dystrophy, cognitive/mental condition, Congestive Heart Failure, etc.). Outgoing sample collected was balanced to the Census of each respective country to then allow qualifying respondents to fall out naturally. Light weighting was applied in select countries to achieve better national representation. At the 95 percent confidence level, the total for the 12-country, global carer population has an estimated margin of error of +/- 1.03 percentage points and each individual country has an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points. The survey length was approximately 20-25 minutes. Unless noted, all data cited in this release is among the 12-country global average.

*Managing technology NET consists of the total respondents who chose 'managing the technology needed for telemedicine/telehealth/virtual medical appointments' and/or 'managing the technology needed for the person(s) to keep in touch with loved ones' as top responsibilities that have increased due to the pandemic.