



Which unmet social care needs have the biggest impact on healthy ageing?

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Briefing Summary

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Key messages

- An unmet care need arises when people could benefit from help with their daily lives, but do not receive support.
- Having an unmet care need has previously been linked to poor health and greater healthcare utilisation.
- Evidence is needed to understand which care needs, when unmet, are likely to have the *biggest* impact on healthy ageing.
- Our analysis aimed to explore this using data from Wave 9 of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA).
- Our findings do not support a clear link between individual unmet needs and poor self-rated health.
- Whilst unmet need for support with each of managing money, managing medication, getting in and out of bed, bathing and showering, and shopping was linked to poor health, only one of these associations was statistically significant (managing money).
- Other unmet care needs were linked to a lower risk of poor health, but these associations were not statistically significant.
- This pattern of findings may be explained by the binary measure of disability available in ELSA, which we used in our analysis.
- Our analysis highlights the importance of data on the level of need for support to better understand the link between unmet care needs and healthy ageing.
- The absence of support for managing money, managing medication, getting in and out of bed, bathing and showering, and shopping may adversely impact on health. Further research, using more detailed data about the level of need for support, will help to understand the independent contributions of each to healthy ageing.

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