

Two Children Are Most Popular

Many Millennials think three children is the ideal number, however.

Across generations a plurality of Americans thinks that two is the ideal number of children. Boomers, who are finished with their childbearing, are most enthusiastic about two—55 percent say two children is ideal and only 29 percent think three or more is best. In contrast, only 41 percent of Millennials think two is ideal and a larger 44 percent say three or more is best. Millennials are more likely than the oldest Americans—who gave birth to the Baby Boom generation—to think three or more children is ideal.

Regardless of their number, most children are subject to a good, hard spanking when they misbehave. Seventy-one percent of Americans believe children sometimes must be spanked, with little difference by generation.

The 52 percent majority of older Americans believes it is better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family. Only about one-third of the younger generations agree. A similar gap exists with regard to working mothers. Among Boomers and younger generations, about three out of four think a working mother can have just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. Only 62 percent of older Americans agree.

Support for the view that government should help people who are sick and in need is strongest among Millennials and declines with age. Twenty-one percent of older Americans—the only age group that is covered by government-provided health insurance—believe people should help themselves. Only 12 percent of Millennials agree.

■ The generation gap in attitudes between Boomers and their parents is greater than the gap between Boomers and their children.

Few among the younger generations think traditional sex roles are best

(percent of people aged 18 or older who think traditional sex roles are best, by generation, 2008)

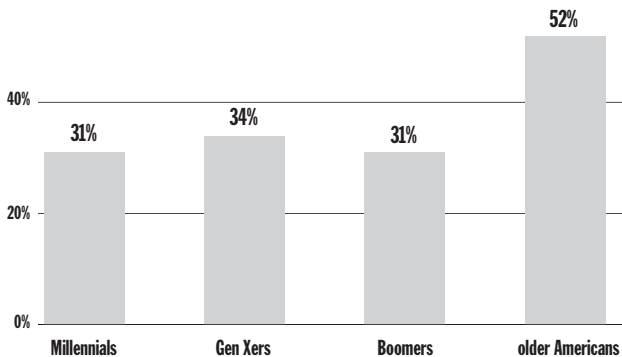


Table 1.19 Should Government Help the Sick, 2008

“Some people think that it is the responsibility of the government in Washington to see to it that people have help in paying for doctors and hospital bills; they are at point 1. Others think that these matters are not the responsibility of the federal government and that people should take care of these things themselves; they are at point 5. Where would you place yourself on this scale?”

(percent of people aged 18 or older responding by generation, 2008)

	1 government should help	2	3 agree with both	4	5 people should help themselves
Total people	34.9%	18.7%	30.0%	9.3%	7.1%
Millennial generation (aged 18 to 31)	39.0	23.1	25.9	5.2	6.8
Generation X (aged 32 to 43)	35.0	19.8	30.7	9.4	5.1
Baby Boom (aged 44 to 62)	35.2	18.5	28.0	11.4	7.0
Older Americans (aged 63 or older)	28.7	11.2	39.1	10.0	11.0

Source: Survey Documentation and Analysis, Computer-assisted Survey Methods Program, University of California, Berkeley, General Social Surveys, 1972-2008 Cumulative Data Files, Internet site <http://sda.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin32/hsda?harsda+gss08>; calculations by New Strategist

CHAPTER
3

Health

- The percentage of Americans reporting “excellent” or “very good” health declines from 54 percent in the 45-to-54 age group to 49 percent in the 55-to-64 age group as chronic conditions become common.
- Most Baby Boomers are overweight. The average Boomer man weighs nearly 200 pounds. The average Boomer woman weighs more than 170 pounds.
- Among all Americans, 15.3 percent do not have health insurance. The figure ranges from 12 to 15 percent among 45-to-64-year-olds.
- Thirty-three percent of Americans aged 45 to 64 have experienced joint pain lasting longer than three months, making it the most common health condition in the age group.
- Sixty-six percent of people aged 45 to 64 have taken at least one prescription drug in the past month, and 34 percent have taken three or more.
- Heart disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death in the United States. Among 45-to-64-year-olds, however, cancer is the number-one cause of death.

Most 45-to-54-Year-Olds Feel Excellent or Very Good

The proportion falls below 50 percent in the 55-to-64 age group, however.

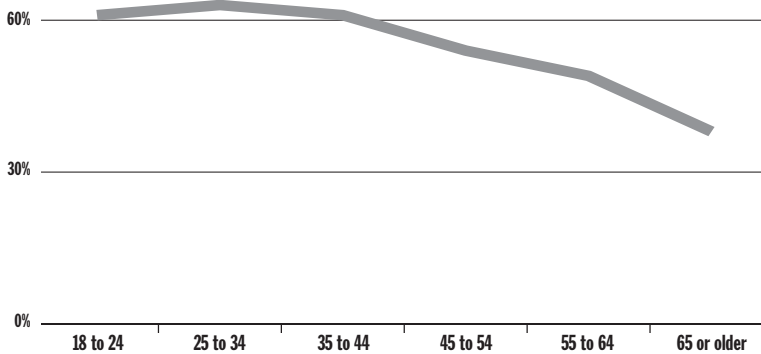
Overall, the 55 percent majority of Americans aged 18 or older say their health is “excellent” or “very good.” The figure peaks at 63 percent in the 25-to-34 age group, then declines with age. The percentage of Americans who report excellent or very good health falls substantially within the 45-to-64 age group, from 54 percent among 45-to-54-year-olds to just 49 percent among 55-to-64-year-olds. Behind the decline is the rise of chronic conditions as people age.

Fewer than half of people aged 65 or older report that their health is excellent or very good. Nevertheless, the proportion saying they are in poor health remains below 8 percent, regardless of age. Among people aged 65 or older, the proportion saying their health is excellent or very good (38 percent) surpasses the proportion saying their health is only “fair” or “poor” (25 percent).

■ Medical advances that allow people to manage chronic conditions should boost the proportions of people reporting excellent or very good health in the years ahead.

Nearly half of 55-to-64-year-olds say their health is excellent or very good

(percent of people aged 18 or older who say their health is excellent or very good, by age, 2008)



Among Boomers, Asians and Non-Hispanic Whites Have the Highest Incomes

Blacks and Hispanics have much lower household incomes.

The median income of households headed by Asians in the 45-to-64 age group easily topped \$70,000 in 2007, while that of non-Hispanic whites in the age group was about \$68,000. In contrast, the median household income of their black counterparts was less than \$36,000, and the Hispanic median was \$45,000.

About three of 10 Asian and non-Hispanic white householders in the 45-to-64 age group have a household income of \$100,000 or more. Among Asians, a lofty 36 percent have incomes that high. The figure is a smaller but still substantial 31 percent among non-Hispanic whites. In contrast, only 13 percent of black householders aged 45 to 64 have incomes of \$100,000 or more. The figure is 14 percent for Hispanics.

■ Black incomes are well below those of Asians and non-Hispanic whites because married couples—the most affluent household type—make up a much smaller share of black households. For Hispanics, incomes are lower because they are much less educated and, consequently, have little earning power.

Median household income varies by race and Hispanic origin

(median income of households headed b people aged 45 to 64, by race and Hispanic origin, 2007)

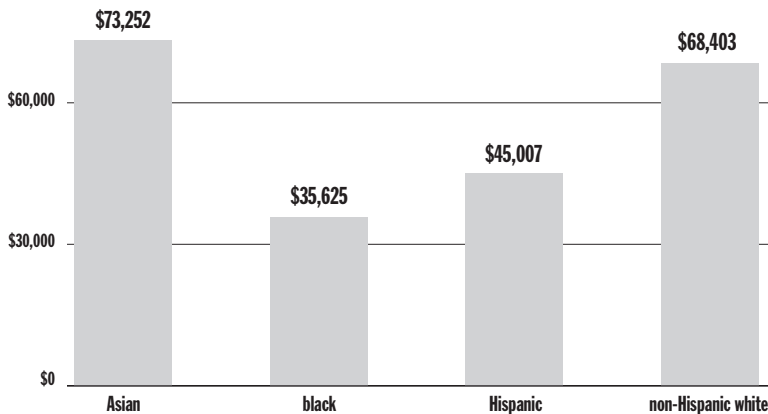


Table 5.3 Income of Households Headed by People Aged 45 to 64, 2007: Asian Households

(number and percent distribution of total Asian households and Asian households headed by people aged 45 to 64, by income, 2007; households in thousands as of 2008)

	total	aged 45 to 64				
		total	45 to 49	50 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64
Total Asian households	4,715	1647	509	475	385	278
Under \$10,000	311	85	10	26	16	33
\$10,000 to \$19,999	365	99	32	13	18	36
\$20,000 to \$29,999	388	114	40	31	30	13
\$30,000 to \$39,999	357	121	33	29	33	26
\$40,000 to \$49,999	372	146	32	48	38	28
\$50,000 to \$59,999	336	117	39	38	24	16
\$60,000 to \$69,999	327	103	41	31	21	10
\$70,000 to \$79,999	307	95	39	24	19	13
\$80,000 to \$89,999	243	96	29	25	27	15
\$90,000 to \$99,999	240	81	18	22	23	18
\$100,000 or more	1,468	593	197	189	139	68
Median income	\$65,876	\$73,252	\$77,813	\$78,926	\$76,539	\$50,656
Total Asian households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Under \$10,000	6.6	5.2	2.0	5.5	4.2	11.9
\$10,000 to \$19,999	7.7	6.0	6.3	2.7	4.7	12.9
\$20,000 to \$29,999	8.2	6.9	7.9	6.5	7.8	4.7
\$30,000 to \$39,999	7.6	7.3	6.5	6.1	8.6	9.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.9	8.9	6.3	10.1	9.9	10.1
\$50,000 to \$59,999	7.1	7.1	7.7	8.0	6.2	5.8
\$60,000 to \$69,999	6.9	6.3	8.1	6.5	5.5	3.6
\$70,000 to \$79,999	6.5	5.8	7.7	5.1	4.9	4.7
\$80,000 to \$89,999	5.2	5.8	5.7	5.3	7.0	5.4
\$90,000 to \$99,999	5.1	4.9	3.5	4.6	6.0	6.5
\$100,000 or more	31.1	36.0	38.7	39.8	36.1	24.5

Note: Asians include those who identify themselves as being of the race alone and those who identify themselves as being of the race in combination with other races.

Source: Bureau of the Census, 2008 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Internet site http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/macro/032008/hhinc/new02_001.htm; calculations by New Strategist

More than Sixty Percent of Boomer Couples Are Dual Earners

In only one-fifth of couples is the husband alone in the labor force.

Dual incomes are by far the norm among married couples. Both husband and wife are in the labor force in 55 percent of all married couples. In another 22 percent, the husband is the only worker. Not far behind are the 16 percent of couples in which neither spouse is in the labor force. The wife is the sole worker in 7 percent of couples.

Seventy percent of couples aged 45 to 54 are dual earners, while the husband is the only spouse in the labor force in another 21 percent. The dual-earner lifestyle accounts for a much smaller 49 percent of couples aged 55 to 64. The wife is the only one employed in a substantial 13 percent of couples in this age group. In these homes, typically, the older husband is retired while the younger wife is still at work. For 67 percent of couples aged 65 or older, neither husband nor wife is working.

■ Only 11 percent of couples aged 65 or older have dual incomes. Expect this share to rise as aging Boomers postpone retirement.

Dual earners are the norm among Boomers aged 45 to 54

(percent of married couples in which both husband and wife are in the labor force, by age, 2008)

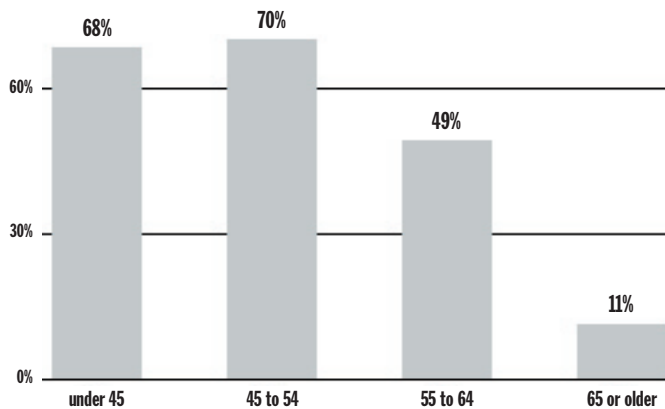


Table 6.5 Labor Force Status of Married-Couple Family Groups by Age, 2008

(number and percent distribution of married-couple family groups by age of reference person and labor force status of husband and wife, 2008; numbers in thousands)

	total	husband and wife in labor force	husband only in labor force	wife only in labor force	neither husband nor wife in labor force
Total married-couple family groups	60,129	32,988	13,141	4,118	9,882
Under age 45	24,074	16,290	6,539	774	469
Aged 45 to 64	25,609	15,535	5,426	2,242	2,406
Aged 45 to 54	14,210	9,922	3,000	796	491
Aged 55 to 64	11,399	5,613	2,426	1,446	1,915
Aged 65 or older	10,446	1,163	1,176	1,102	7,007
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY LABOR FORCE STATUS					
Total married-couple family groups	100.0%	54.9%	21.9%	6.8%	16.4%
Under age 45	100.0	67.7	27.2	3.2	1.9
Aged 45 to 64	100.0	60.7	21.2	8.8	9.4
Aged 45 to 54	100.0	69.8	21.1	5.6	3.5
Aged 55 to 64	100.0	49.2	21.3	12.7	16.8
Aged 65 or older	100.0	11.1	11.3	10.5	67.1
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE					
Total married-couple family groups	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Under age 45	40.0	49.4	49.8	18.8	4.7
Aged 45 to 64	42.6	47.1	41.3	54.4	24.3
Aged 45 to 54	23.6	30.1	22.8	19.3	5.0
Aged 55 to 64	19.0	17.0	18.5	35.1	19.4
Aged 65 or older	17.4	3.5	8.9	26.8	70.9

Source: Bureau of the Census, *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2008*, Internet site <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html>; calculations by New Strategist