**RQ2.1) How do marital status and marital stability impact (formal and informal) care receiving in old age?**

“Firstly, we will **compare the probability of receiving different types of care** **among frail single or continuously married older people and those whose marital status has changed** (divorced, widowed, re-married, re-partnered) across SEP. Group comparisons will be carried out in a multi-level, multivariate regression analysis framework to account for country differences (i.e. cultural norms) and establish associations that are independent of place. “

The general rationale for this is:

Marital status plays a very important role in securing access to formal care (spouses act as advocates/facilitators for their spouses in need of care) and informal care (as spouses are the main informal caregivers). As patterns of marital status are changing in old-age, this will likely be an important factor shaping gender and socio-economic inequalities in care in the future.

Our approach:

* Cross-sectional – SHARE W7 and GSS
* Look at group differences between those who are married and those who are not – controlling for living arrangements (Note: in SHARE W7 and W3 retrospective life histories were included and we can get information on all past relationship – so we could in principle test the question we originally set out to look at focused on marital stability rather than just marital status)
* Methodological approach - alternatives:
  1. Use interactions of marital status with gender?
  2. Run group analyses (by gender) and report AME?
  3. Run multinominal logistical regression (formal care, informal care and mix), or run separate regressions for use of formal and informal care (in each, informal and formal care are included as explanatory variables)?
* Dependent variable(s): care giving/receiving in the last 12 months
* Question: Do we run pooled analysis with country dummies or country specific models (the latter would make it easier to integrate the analysis for Canada)?
* Question: How do we operationalize marital stability? In terms of years (e.g. stable marital arrangement if at least 10/20 years or using a continuous variable similar to tenure in employment studies)? In terms of ever changed (e.g. divorced is unstable because there was a change, as is re-married)?
* Question: we promised multi-level – are we still considering this approach? We had some doubts about this (no of countries/clusters likely too small).

“The second part will consist of a **dynamic analysis focusing on transitions between marriage or stable partnership to a relationship status that increases the probability of living alone** (divorced, separated, widowed).”

Our approach:

* Longitudinal/panel data – successive waves of SHARE (W1, 2, 4, 6 – regular panel waves; W3 &7 retrospective life histories)
* Focus on changes/transitions in marital status
* Methodological approach - alternatives:
  1. Set up unbalanced panel of all individuals who participated in at least in two SHARE waves – run random/fixed effects models to estimate the effect of marital status on caregiving/receiving. Problems: there will likely be little variation in marital status / country samples might be too small so we will have to pool data
  2. Pool data on all individuals who participated in at least two waves, generate variable on change in marital status between the two waves estimate some model that produces risk ratios – if we consider the change in marital status to be the risk exposure (check with Stefan on how this could be done). Problem: how do we treat individuals who have participated in more than two waves? This is more of a method for cohort studies
  3. Some sort of transition (Markov) model? – I am not familiar with these but maybe Stefan knows a bit more
* Question –same as before: How do we operationalize marital stability (see above)? Do we look only at stability or at changes towards higher likelihood of support (e.g. re-married from divorced) and lower likelihood of support (e.g. divorced from married)
* Potential issue: it is unclear to me that we can do any of this with the GSS so we might have to restrict ourselves to European countries for this part of the analysis