

## Determinants of Seeking Financial Advice among Older Adults

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### Abstract

This study presents the first longitudinal results showing factors associated with beginning and discontinuing the use of a financial advisor among older adults. Using the 1993 and 1995 waves of the Asset and Health Dynamics among the Oldest Old (AHEAD), we analyze the impact that influential life events, changes in willingness to seek help, and change in financial situation have on the likelihood of older individuals changing their use of professional financial advice. We find getting a financial advisor is significantly associated with becoming a widow or widower. We also find positive associations with asking family members for assistance with financial decisions and seeking a doctor's help for emotional problems. These results may suggest a general shift in help seeking increases the likelihood of seeking professional financial advice, or it may be evidence of obtaining professional referrals from family members or medical or mental health professionals. Increases in income and net worth are also positively related getting a financial advisor. Dropping a financial advisor is negatively associated with becoming a new widow(er), getting married, and experiencing an increase in net worth. No longer involving family members in financial decisions is strongly related to dropping a financial advisor.

**Keywords:** financial advice, household finance, financial advisor, financial help seeking, widowhood

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