

Working Paper No.1

**MIDLIFE AND OLDER WOMEN IN JAMAICA: COPING  
WITH FAMILY LIFE AND WORK SITUATIONS**

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**MIDLIFE AND OLDER WOMEN IN JAMAICA: COPING  
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by

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A version of this paper was presented in the Women and Development Studies Seminar Series in November 1991. It was offered then as preliminary findings from a Research Project **Women from Mid-life: Coping in Jamaica**, (Rawlins, 1996). That project explored numerous issues relating to the life and work of mid-life and older women. This paper arises from that presentation but is limited to coping with family life and work.

My fascination with the lives of women over age 50 years heightened in 1987 when I was involved in research on lifecycle events (Rawlins, 1988) and widowhood in Jamaica (Rawlins, 1989). These two research initiatives led me to conclude that up to that point very little had been reported on the lives of older women in Jamaica.<sup>1</sup> The data I had gathered then, identified some of the problems women of this age group encounter, and provided clear evidence of the need for further research on the subject.

For the purposes of this paper, mid-life will be taken as referring to women aged 50-59 and older to mean those 60-74. Although elsewhere in the literature (Sennott-Miller, 1989), mid-life is taken to mean those 40-59, I chose not to include those 40-49 in this study as I wanted to concentrate on women who were no longer involved in childbearing. The available data suggests that Latin American and Caribbean women age 40-49 years continue to produce children. Sennott-Miller (1989),<sup>2</sup> with reference to Latin America and the Caribbean, notes that "it is clear that the experience of child birth has not ended for all women in the early part of mid-life ... in fact nearly one of every 10 women between 40-44 will give birth. Even in the latter half of their fifth decade, nearly 2% of women will give birth in rural communities (Sennott-Miller 1989:27).

The women examined in this paper were born between 1916 and 1940 and consequently have experienced many changes in the Jamaican society. They have experienced life in Jamaica when

it was a colonial society, and depending on their class position, their impressions and memories have been coloured accordingly. They have experienced Jamaica in the freshness of its early days of independence in 1962, and some no doubt would have become disillusioned in that independence brought no immediate improvement in the economy for them. Many of these women during the 1970's had to become even more resourceful than Jamaican women have been reputed to be. Shortages of basic food items such as flour, sugar, rice, and tinned foods became common-place by the late 1970's, and the black market in foreign exchange and scarce food items grew to ridiculous proportions. For example, infant formula became extremely expensive, and difficult to obtain and was often hoarded by shopkeepers and other local "would be" entrepreneurs, who would then hold consumers to ransom for this "precious" item. During this period it became illegal for local citizens to "hold" and exchange US dollars, and those who defied the law were liable to prosecution.

Many of the women who are in the age group 50-74 had stories about their efforts to maintain their families throughout that period. During those years, there was an exodus of large numbers of the population to destinations such as Miami, New York and Toronto. Some of the women in this age group migrated at that time, to return in the mid eighties.

The eighties were not, however, without their difficulties. By 1985, the economy was in the process of structural adjustment and life had become harder for many of these women. The government under the direction of the international lending agencies (Girvan et al, 1980) was forced to reduce employment in non-viable state run organisations in order to save money. The unemployment which resulted might have been advantageous to the government in achieving its over-all objectives, under its programme of structural adjustment, but for many women including some of the target group who were bread winners, this was a catastrophe. With the unemployment which ensued, some of these women and their extended families were unable to

meet their financial obligations, for example utility bills, school fees for grand-children and payments for mortgages.

This paper explores the life and work situation of women aged 50-74 years and how they coped on a daily basis given the changes in the economy. The data referred to below give some insight into these women's lives.

### **Demographic and Social Situation**

In 1991, when the research for this paper was done, these mid-life and older women were part of a group of more than 190,000 women of their age group in the society. This group continues to grow as a result of the increased life expectancy in the society. The life expectancy for women was then 72 years and for men it was 69 (Source: Census of Jamaica 1991).

Demographically, socially and economically, these women are an important force in the society. They are socially important because of their positive involvement with family, community and the economy; they participate in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) on behalf of grandchildren; they serve in the communities organising as leaders and as participants, they travel abroad as "informal commercial importers" (c.c.'s) and they operate as hagglers in the local market place. These women are to be found everywhere, actively participating in the life of the society. At their ages, they need not be concerned with pregnancy, and are old enough and sufficiently experienced to have confidence in their personal relationships.

Despite all that these women do, for example, render financial assistance to family members and extended family members; provide child-care services to grandchildren and children of community members, there is still a lack of recognition. One for example never hears folk

songs, or popular songs which echo the praises of these women. Consequently, one is led to believe that much of what they do for family is taken for granted.

This period from mid-life is the time when women are most likely to become widowed, given the greater life expectancy of women over men. In Jamaica, the average age of widowhood for women is 61 years; women are far more likely to be widowed and less likely to re-marry than are men (Ratlines, 1989). Phillips (1980, p.187) notes that it is women rather than men who face the major agony of seeing a life-long partner sicken and eventually die. It is the women, often with scant community support, who have to reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of their partner's death.

For some, widowhood might be a heart-rending experience, especially if the relationship with the spouse/partner had been satisfying. For others, widowhood might be the break they had been awaiting. This might be the case where the husband had been ill for a long period and the husband's illness had been extremely costly to the wife in terms of time and money or where the relationship had not been as satisfactory. In these cases, the demise of the husband might present the wife with some relief from what she might have come to think of as a desperate situation.

Conversely, it might be argued that for some women, a satisfying relationship under the patriarchal system might have been one in which the husband "shielded" the wife from the realities of the world, for example, the payment and significance of insurance and involvement in other financial matters. Upon widowhood, she then finds that she has problems coping with her sudden responsibilities.

The literature on the financial situation of widows shows that the death of a spouse leads to a serious decline in economic well-being for the surviving member (Schlesinger, 1980;

Burkhauser, Holden, and Myers, 1986; Hyman, 1983; Morgan, 1981; Zick and Smith, 1986. Regional research for Jamaica and Puerto Rico respectively (Rawlins, 1989; Sanchez, 1989) also suggests that death of a male partner leads to economic difficulties for the female survivor.

Migration is a common experience for the people of Jamaica. The country has a long history of movements of people, outward to the U.S.A., Canada and Britain. As a result of the constant migration in the late seventies, some widowed women had no close relatives left in the island.

Throughout the life cycle, the majority of Jamaican women are faced with a double burden: they work outside the home and within the home. As they grow older, some might look forward to a lessening of their responsibilities, but many find themselves trapped in the physical support of ageing relatives and continued employment in paid labour or self employment. Women involved in the care of elderly relatives suffer a great deal in their social life, and economically, as they are sometimes forced to relinquish more lucrative jobs and take on others more conducive to the caring lifestyle. Because some of these women need to devote so much of their time and energy to these activities, the isolation which some suffer is burdensome. Some authors (e.g. Oakley, 1974; Hughes et al, 1980) note that this isolation parallels the situation faced by women, at the other end of the life cycle, in the early years of family building.

My justification for studying this group of women was that they had been neglected by academic researchers. Sennott-Miller (1989) comments "...little is known about women at mid-life and older in the Caribbean," although these women contribute a great deal to the maintenance of order and continuity in Jamaica's economy and society. They function as "stalwarts" to their family and communities, in the sense of the social and emotional needs and are important to the economy because of their wide-ranging involvement in the labour market.

## **Methodology**

How does one research the manner in which mid-life and older women cope? First, one needs to decide what is "coping", and the parameters along which the issue of coping will be measured. In my earliest conceptualization of this research, I had a vision of "coping" which leaned very heavily on the usual definition of the word viz. "dealing effectively; contending; managing successfully"<sup>3</sup> I realized as soon as I started the fieldwork, that this definition was very limiting, because many women described themselves as "coping" although not managing successfully and dealing effectively. It was therefore necessary to broaden that definition in order to capture fully how women saw themselves as coping in relation to the situations they faced daily in the economy, family life, social life, sexuality and health. "Coping" came to represent the plans/strategies which these women employed in order to deal with the vicissitude of daily life and the challenges which they faced for themselves and those in their care or support along the parameters described above.

In order to understand how women in this age group coped, I needed to know, how resourceful they were, who were the persons to whom they could turn for help, how they came by the resources which were available to them and what was the relationship which they experienced with their family, neighbours and some of the other persons in their community.

## **Data Sources**

Data for this research project were obtained by way of a survey, by case studies and by participant observation. Discussions were also held with specific persons in the communities studied. Additionally, interviews and discussions were conducted with other persons in Kingston, who were associated in one way or another with mid-life and older women. The main sources of data however were the survey and the case studies.

The study sample is of two hundred women, half from a lower socio-economic community and the others from a middle income community. The women studied were randomly selected from a list of five hundred (500) women of the appropriate age group. A procedure called "listing" was employed. In both communities, a number of streets, 5 in community one and 8 in community two, were randomly selected. A house by house preliminary survey was done, in which people were asked if any female 50-74 years resided there. By this procedure, a list was produced of all the addresses at which women of the target age-group resided. The two hundred (200) women included in the study were then chosen (every other woman) from the list. This selection produced 240 women. These women were then interviewed using a very detailed questionnaire which included structured as well as open-ended questions. A total of 118 main questions were asked. There were very few refusals after the initial period when some middle class women appeared sceptical about the research. Some who were doubtful at that time were later interviewed towards the end of the survey period, by which time the entire community had heard of the project. In addition to the survey, twenty-five (25) of these same women were chosen for further in-depth interviews from which case studies were written.

## **Results**

Before discussing the findings about family life and how these women were coping, a profile of the women of the two groups will be presented. The women of the working class community will be referred to as Group A and the women of the middle class community will be referred to as Group B.

### **Profiling the Women of the Two Communities : Household Headship and Marital Status**

Of the total group 43% of the working class women and 45% of the middle class women were heads of household. Next in frequency to heads of household, 88 women (i.e. 44%) of the group

of 200 women were the spouses of the heads of household. The differences noted in relation to head of household status for these two groups were statistically significant.

Forty eight percent of the women of Group A (the working class women) as well as 92% of the women of Group B (the middle class) had been married. Many of these women, 25% and 59% respectively of the two groups, still described themselves as currently married. Twelve (12) of Group A and one (1) of Group B were in common-law relationships. Three percent (3%) and seven (7%) described themselves as divorced and five percent (5) of working class women said that they were in visiting relationships.

### **Family Life**

#### **Children**

All but two of these women have children and the mean number of children alive were 5.2 and 3.4 respectively for Group A and Group B. The women who had no children of their own adopted, fostered or "raised" children over many years. Child rearing was an important feature in which 37% and 41% of Group A and Group B respectively, participated actively. Whereas among the working class, the adopted child most commonly belonged to a daughter, son or niece; for the middle-class group, the child adopted or raised most likely belonged to a relative.

#### **Relatives Other than Children Living With Respondents**

Very few of these women lived alone, instead they had fairly large numbers of relatives and non-relatives living with them. Fifty three percent (53%) of Group A and 55% of Group B had children living with them and 53% and 31% of the groups respectively had people other than offspring living with them (Table 1). The mean number of persons other than relatives living in these households were 2.2 and 2.0 respectively for the groups. The most likely person to be in the home other than an offspring was a grandchild. The differences here were not statistically

significant. Some 69% of the working class group had such children in their homes, as did 53% of the middle class group. The niece was an important other person in these women's homes, especially in the homes of the lower income women.

### **Family Relationships : Economic and Social Interdependence**

The most common services which women of both groups did for their relatives were what they referred to as the usual family caring (childminding included); providing shelter and doing housework, which included cooking.

The most frequently mentioned service which these relatives did for these women was helping with housework (25.7% for the working class group and 12.3% for the middle class); and contributing financially (21.6% for the working class group and 12.3% for the middle class group). Other services which were provided by these persons were shopping, paying bills and giving advice.

The women from both groups, whether they worked outside the home or not, did a variety of household tasks such as washing, cooking, overseeing the housework, gardening etc. Many still did all the housework (27% of Group A and 14 % of Group B). The differences in what they did were not statistically significant by class. This means that the women did very similar activities in their households, regardless of their class affiliation. Middle-class women though, who had maids would at times have some relief from their household tasks.

The reasons these women gave for having to perform the various household tasks were however highly statistically significant (by chi-square,  $p < 0.0077$ ). The most frequently mentioned reason given by women of the two groups was that the house work was "my responsibility" (20.5% for the working class and 40.7% for the middle class). Other reasons offered included

that they could not afford helpers/maids, or that they could only afford a "day worker" once or twice per week.

The people most likely to help around the house, for both groups were daughters, husbands and sons in that order for Group A, and sons first for Group B, followed equally by daughters and husbands. (This latter finding was an unexpected one as one assumes that a daughter is more likely to help, if she lives at home. This assumption which might be erroneous was that mothers of this age group (50-74) would not have socialized their sons to help within the home). This data suggests that more sons than daughters were found in middle class homes. These sons were available and helped their mothers.

Many of these women had relatives living with them, while very few lived in the homes of relatives (a total of 8 working class women and 7 middle-class women did). They gave a wide range of reasons why their relatives lived with them, such as :-

- because they wanted them to
- it was financially advantageous to both
- rents were high
- relatives were unable to find accommodation
- daughter had become divorced
- grandchildren's parents were abroad
- to reduce the need to travel in and out of Kingston

The most frequent reasons were "I want them here", and " It is cheaper for them to live here".

When feelings of closeness were explored, the working class women stated that they felt closest

firstly to their daughters, then to their sons, then to their husbands. The middle-class women felt closest to their daughters, then to their husbands, then to their sons. Some reported no preference, but felt equally close to all family members. The differences reported here by group were statistically significant (Table 2).

With regards to financial assistance, it was quite difficult to discern exactly the situation of financial assistance received from relatives. Clearly for many women of the middle class group, it was not necessary for them to receive any assistance. However, as many as 71% of the working-class group and 47% of the middle-class group responded positively about receiving financial assistance from relatives, who lived with them. There was clear evidence that at least 17% of Group A and 20 % of Group B reported themselves as receiving sums in excess of \$200 per month.

### **Relatives Abroad**

Many of these women had relatives living abroad, (58% for Group A and 88% for Group B) mainly in the U.S.A, U.K and Canada. Of these women with relatives abroad, 50% of the working class group and 25% of the middle class replied in the affirmative about receiving financial assistance from these relatives.

Of all these women with relatives abroad, (64% of Group A and 100% of Group B) stated that apart from financial assistance, they also received gifts from their relatives. The women of Group B often referred to the "barrels" which were sent to them by these relatives. Relatives also did other things for these women when they travelled abroad such as provide accommodation and care for their grandchildren when their grandchildren also were abroad (26% for Group A and 8% for Group B)

### **Coping With Family**

The data reveal that although some of these women were in dire economic straits, they were willing, in most circumstances, to participate in activities which would be of assistance to their immediate and extended family. They were very involved in the care of grandchildren on a part-time as well as a full time basis.

Some 41% of Group A and 35% of Group B did child care and 21% and 16% of each group respectively also had full-time responsibility for minding a grandchild, at some time since their fiftieth year (Some of these were not currently in a childminding situation).

Some of these women were nursing sick husbands and others had ill mothers/fathers either living with them or for whom they had major responsibilities, even though they lived elsewhere. At least five women also had responsibilities for elderly women who were not their relatives.

### **Women and Work**

A very important aspect of the lives of these women was their work. All the women were employed and a total of 120 of these women were working in the home, as well as out of the home, for an income. Of these women, 58 were of working-class and 70 were middle class. More middle income women were working outside the home. (The differences here by class were statistically significant; see Table 3). All but one of Group A who reported themselves as currently employed for an income (40 women), worked full-time. This also was the case for 50 of the 68 middle class women who were currently working for pay.

Some of these women had retired from the formal labour force, but had returned to work or had been asked to continue working after formal retirement. A total of 29 and 47 women from each group stated that they were retired. That more middle income women reported themselves as

formally retired was not surprising, as one needs first to be formally employed before one can retire.

The working-class women were involved in twenty-five (25) main occupations. These included cleaning, domestic work, vending and other selling type jobs and dressmaking. For these women, the categories : traders, unskilled manual and household helpers/domestics represented 59% of recent employment for those no longer in the paid labour force. Domestic service alone represented 25%. Group B women had a wider range of occupations ( in total 43) which included teaching, nursing, real estate, accounting, law, personnel, senior administration and medicine. Among those who had described themselves as "retired", the mean age at which they had stopped working outside the home was 52.2 and 60 years respectively for the working class and the middle class.

### **Job Satisfaction**

With regard to what women liked or did not like about their jobs, the significant responses were interaction with people, salary, being able to work from home and job satisfaction. More middle class women than working-class women liked their jobs because of the satisfaction which it gave them (Table 4).

Poor salaries were a disadvantageous aspect of their jobs for 6% of Group A and 19% for Group B. Other dissatisfactions mentioned for both groups were, long hours and hard work. For 17 % of the working class group the major concern was the uncertainty of their income. Other job-related problems concerned unions, insurance and peoples' reluctance to pay promptly for service rendered.

### **Women Coping with Work**

More than 50% (109) of this entire group of women were still making an important contribution to the economy and their family, alongside their on-going work for an income. There were at least two reasons why these women were out to work. These were that the economy needed their skills and that their personal economic situation rendered their continued involvement in the labour force, a necessity. Both these explanations were relevant to the situation of many of these women. Middle class women who had retired were recalled or kept on the job after retirement because of skills they possessed. Also, inflation in Jamaica during the period under study caused some who wished to retire from paid employment to continue to work. This was true in both class groups.

Working class women of this age group continued to work in the traditional areas of women's employment and most did the type of jobs that they had done all their life. Generally, very few of these women complained about discrimination on the job, but some stated that they were more likely to be given more work and more responsibility because bosses perceived older workers as being more reliable and more responsible.

The wages reported for the working class women were low in relation to the cost of living and salaries earned by other groups.<sup>4</sup> In 1991, the income required for the minimum food basket<sup>5</sup> was \$828.16 per month. Fifty two percent (52%) of the working class women who were working earned less than this each month. The upper range here was \$2000.00 which only three (3) of these women earned per month.

### **Discussion**

Perhaps the most striking thing about the research findings was that although the major focus of the research was not economic coping, the women spent a great deal of time telling me about how they coped economically on a daily basis.

There was clear evidence of reciprocity between these women and their offspring in that they reported that their relatives provided some amount of financial assistance. This reciprocity might be relevant in explaining the good relations which women reported as having with their relatives who lived at home with them, as well as the relatives who lived elsewhere.

The case studies give some further insight on the parent-offspring relations. Although they do not dispute the existence of these relationships, the case studies suggest that they were not nearly as harmonious as the questionnaire implied. The case studies validate the importance of assistance received from these women and also lead towards a conclusion that these women did much more for their children than was immediately obvious. For example, a high incidence of house sharing in the middle-class women's homes was an unexpected finding. This caused me to reflect on the "empty nest" which older women reputedly have to deal with when the children leave the home. We see though, that for the Jamaican women, the emptying of the nest was a slow process. More than 50% of the women of both groups still had not experienced this "emptying". We need to view this phenomenon, or rather its absence, in relation to the economic situation in Jamaica at the time; the overall unemployment rate of 15.7% and 23.1% for women and an inflation rate of 24% for 1989/90 (Labour Force 1990, STATIN, Jamaica).

A variety of reasons were given for why adult children still lived in their mothers' homes. Among the more significant ones were because their mothers wanted them there and because it was more economical both for the offspring and for the woman herself. There were instances in which these mid-life and older women lent money to the children, (daughters especially) to pay rent. Eventually the mother would decide that she could not afford to pay for the daughter's independence and privacy, and that it would be more feasible economically, for the daughter to return to the parental home.

It was significant that so few of these women lived with their relatives. It would seem that many of these women had relatives who because of recent changes in the economy were not in a position to offer shelter or assistance to their mothers. Some of these women expressed concern about when they would no longer be economically independent, as they feared that their children would be unable (note not unwilling, but unable) to assist them to live reasonably comfortable lives.

The survey questionnaire had structured questions about their work, their income whether it was earned by themselves or given by relatives or from the Government through National Insurance payments or other benefits. Almost all the working class women and many of the middle class women gave graphic details of the various innovative ways in which they managed their resources and so coped with various aspects of life. The wide range of occupations for both groups of women attest to their resilience and resourcefulness. Women who were in their late sixties and early seventies were still gainfully employed.

The women complained bitterly about the changes in the economy in the recent past, and were able to quote the price increase on specific items during the year 1990/1991. Some of the increases which seemed to have caused them greatest concern were the changes in basic food items which had been subsidised by the government but the subsidies were removed by mid 1991.<sup>6</sup>

Those women who could still afford to, including some who were low-income, had changed their shopping practices, and were buying in bulk where this was feasible. Some no longer shopped in the regular supermarkets, but shopped in other outlets where the prices were lower. Many only shopped in places where bargains were guaranteed, not only on staples and vegetables but also on other items of daily household needs. Some of the poorest women, in order to cope and manage their resources without falling into debt, shopped daily, as the money became available to them.

Although the women were in a wide range of occupations, with the exception of a few middle class women, they were still locked into what would be seen as essentially female-type occupations. Generally salaries were low, and the differential between the mean income of the working class women and the middle class women was not that great. The reality was that that all these women had relatively low incomes which placed them at a grave disadvantage, in a society with a rapidly increasing cost of living.

More middle class women declared that they did house work because it was "my responsibility." The explanation could be that the "housework ideology" is more pervasive among such women. Historically and currently, working class Jamaica women have had to take on more of the financial responsibility of the household than have middle class women, and so have been less likely to see themselves as "housewives", a term which until the last three to four decades would hardly have applied to working class women.

The issue of "closeness" was explored. The findings were particularly revealing. Women of the two class groups stated that they felt closest to their daughters. Positive statements were also made about the relationship with nieces which we might related to "female bonding" which is referred elsewhere in Caribbean literature (Massiah, 1983). These women's ability to cope appeared to be directly related to sustaining relationships which they had with other women.

Issues of sexuality were explored but are not developed in this paper. Apparently many of these women did not have a firm sense of themselves as sexual beings. Some reported on the advances which were made to them frequently by men of all ages; younger men included. More importantly, the data portrayed these women as having a sense of independence. Those who were widowed had mixed comments about their past relationships and did not waste time idealising the institution of marriage as one might have expected them to do. Very few seemed to

want to go back into a marriage or a permanent relationship : "It was good, but I don't really need that kind of stress now" was a frequent comment.

The women interviewed were almost all deeply religious, and one might be tempted to conclude that they were able to put issues of sexuality out of their minds, in many instances, or give it a low priority by concentrating their energies on service to church, family and community.

This paper has been presented as a summary report on two aspects of the lives of mid-life and older women in Jamaica. What was most striking about these women was that they did not appear to be daunted by the changing fortunes of the Jamaican economy, but continued to give of themselves, in ways which Jamaican families have always expected women of this age group to do. However having done this, these women were still pressured to do more because of their own children's unemployment, frustrations and other difficulties. The deepening of the economic problems of the Jamaican economy had undoubtedly affected various aspects of family relations and influenced the working patterns of these women, causing some to continue to work outside of their homes when they would prefer to have retired.

**Table 1** Adult Offspring and Other Adults and Children in the Home

	Group A		Group B	
	#	%	#	%
Adult Offspring	53	53	55	55
Other Persons	10	10	10	31
Women Living Alone	19	19	14	14

Note: The percentages shown represent a portion of the entire group of 100 women in each of the two communities and do not need to add up to 100, as some women had adult offspring and other persons living in their homes.

**Table 2** Relatives to Whom Women Felt Closest

	Group A		Group B		Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	
Daughter	26	29.5	23	23.5	49
Husband	5	5.7	22	4	27
Son	10	11.4	10	10.2	20
Entire family	14	15.9	6	6.1	20
Mother/sister	14	15.9	22	22.4	36
Niece	3	3.4	5	5.1	8
Others	14	15.9	9	9.2	23

Notes:

n= 88 and 98 for the communities respectively.

$\chi = 19.97$   $p < 0.0$

**Table 3**      **Adult Offspring and Other Adults and Children in the Home**

	Group A No.	Group B No.
<u>Formal Sector</u>		
Full-time	28	59
Part-time	6	9
<u>Total</u>	34	68
<u>Informal Sector</u>		
Full-time	10	1
Part-time	14	1
<u>Total</u>	24	2
<u>Grand total</u>	58	70

Notes :

 $\chi = 7.09$   $p < 0.0077$  (significant)

**Table 4** Reasons Women Gave for Liking their Jobs

	Group A		Group B	
	No.	%	No.	%
Salary	1	2.1	8	12.5
Interaction with People	3	6.4	13	20.3
Able to work from home	3	6.4	4	6.3
Own boss/own time	5	10.7	7	10.0
Satisfying work	8	17.0	21	32.8

Notes:

$\chi = 39.13$   $p < 0.002$  (significant)

All the categories are included here.

**ENDNOTES**

1. The Caribbean approach to older women up to this point had been concerned largely with the health of elderly women (Grell, 1987; Eldemire, 1989; Braithwaite, 1990).
2. In this article Sennott-Miller reports on the Health and Socio-economic Situation of Midlife and Older Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The report is based on an exhaustive review of available statistical data and information from published and unpublished sources on twenty three (23) countries of Latin America and twenty (20) Caribbean countries.
3. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Sixth Edition. Edited by J.B. Sykes. Oxford University Press. 1988.
4. The average earnings per week of wages in all large establishments in the first three quarters of 1990 was \$386.86. (Pg. 10 Employment, Earnings and Hours Worked in Large Establishments 1989-1990. Statistical Institute of Jamaica.
5. The cost of the basic food basket, is the cost of feeding a family of five for one week.
6. The women's complaints were not unfounded in that there was a 15.2% increase in prices for the first month of 1990 over the comparable nine months period of 1989. (Statistical Review, Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 1990).

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