

The secret of a long life? Education

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The secret to a longer life may be seat time in a classroom, U.S. health economists said.

When researchers debate which social factors are needed to lead a long life, education consistently comes up in every country where it was studied, The New York Times said Wednesday. Studies found that education is more important than race or income.

Researchers agree that education isn't the only factor to longevity. Healthy choices and a network of friends and family are linked to a living a long life. But scientists said the importance of education cannot be dismissed.

"If you were to ask me what affects health and longevity," said Michael Grossman, a health economist at City University of New York, "I would put education at the top of my list."

Education may teach people to delay gratification, said James Smith, a health economist at the Rand Corporation, citing a study of middle-aged people that found those with less education were less able to think ahead.

"Most of adherence is unpleasant," Smith told the Times. "You have to be willing to do something that is not pleasant now and you have to stay with it and think about the future."

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