

Study: Looking young may mean living longer

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Those baby-faced people now have another reason to be smug: a new Danish study says looking young apparently means a longer life.

Research published online Monday in the British medical journal *BMJ* suggests that [people](#) who look younger than their years also live longer.

In 2001, Danish researchers conducted physical and cognitive tests on more than 1,800 pairs of twins over aged 70, as well as taking photos of their faces. Three groups of people who didn't know the twins' real ages guessed how old they were. The researchers then tracked how long the [twins](#) survived over 7 years.

The experts found that people who looked younger than their actual [age](#) were far more likely to survive, even after they adjusted for other factors like gender and environment. The bigger the difference in perceived age within any twin pair, the more likely it was that the older-looking twin died first.

They also found a possible biological explanation: people who looked younger also tended to have longer telomeres, a key DNA component that is linked to aging. People with shorter telomeres are thought to age faster. In the Danish study, the more fresh-faced people had longer telomeres.

The authors said that perceived age, which is widely used by doctors as a general indicator of a patient's health, is a good [biomarker](#) of aging that

predicts survival among people over age 70.

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