

# A new study of Sardinian men finds height is a factor in longevity

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(Medical Xpress) -- This new study supports over 12 previous studies that have found that shorter height promotes greater longevity. Sardinia is known as a blue zone, which means it has a remarkably high percentage of long-lived people.

Sardinians are shorter than people in the rest of Europe and tend to live longer. Within Sardinia, there is a group of 14 municipalities that exhibit higher longevity compared to the rest of the island. In addition, as height declines among these municipalities, longevity increases with the shortest municipality, Villagrande Strisaili, having the greatest longevity. Professor Poulain, University of Louvain (Belgium) and Dr. Salaris, University of Cagliari (Italy), led a study to determine whether there was a relationship between height and longevity among almost 500 males born between 1866 and 1915. Salaris and Poulain found that shorter men lived about 2 years longer than taller men. The results of the study were published in the journal *Biodemography and Social Biology*.

This Sardinian study is consistent with a study conducted in Spain by Dr. Holzenberger. This study tracked 1.3 million men through a 70-year period and found that longevity increased with reduced height. Similar results were found in an Ohio study by Professor Dennis Miller based on about 1700 men and women. Samaras, a longevity researcher, found similar results based on baseball players, California veterans, football players, basketball players and famous people. Professor Krakauer also found that shorter elderly Swedish men and women live longer.

The researchers of this study noted that women are shorter than men and live longer in virtually all populations. However, Professor Miller found that when he compared men and women of the same height, their longevity was about the same. Contrary to what was expected, Poulain and Salaris found that men live as long as women in Villagrande.

A number of scientists have observed that within a species, the smaller individual tends to live longer than the bigger one. This is illustrated by smaller dogs who live longer than medium and large size dogs. Smaller mice, rats, ponies and monkeys generally live longer as well. The Asian elephant also lives longer than the larger African elephant.

The study also provides a number of biological mechanisms that explain why smaller bodies tend to live longer. These include lower DNA damage, greater cell replacement potential, higher heart pumping efficiency, decreased C-reactive protein and higher sex hormone binding globulin.

Salaris and Poulain reported that height is only one factor in how long anyone will live. It probably constitutes less than 10% of anyone's longevity profile. Regardless of height, anyone can extend his or her longevity by healthful nutrition, low body weight, exercise, good medical care, a positive and happy spirit, and good social relations. Therefore, tall people have the potential to reach 100 years under the right conditions.

During the last 20 years, Reventropy Associates has been involved in evaluating the ramifications of body size and height on longevity and other factors in human society. The contributors to the Sardinia study have published over 40 peer reviewed papers and books on human body size and its relation to [longevity](#), resource consumption, and long-term human survival.

**More information:** *Biodemography and Social Biology* (4/26/12):  
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