

Shortened telomere length tied to dementia, mortality risk

July 25 2012



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(HealthDay) -- Shortened telomere length (TL) is associated with risks for dementia and mortality in a population of older adults, according to a study published online July 23 in the *Archives of Neurology*.

Lawrence S. Honig, M.D., Ph.D., from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, and colleagues used real-time [polymerase chain reaction](#) analysis to determine TL in stored leukocyte DNA from 1,983 participants in a community-based study of aging. Participants were 65 years or older and blood was drawn at a mean age of 78.3 years. Participants were followed for a median of 9.3 years for mortality, and 9.6 percent developed incident dementia.

The researchers found that TL correlated inversely with age and was shorter in men than women. TL was significantly shorter in persons dying during follow-up compared with survivors, even after adjusting for age, sex, education, and apolipoprotein E genotype. TL was significantly shorter in the participants with incident and prevalent dementia, compared with those who remained dementia-free. Shorter TL correlated with earlier onset of dementia but this association was significant in women only.

"Our results show an association between shortened TL and mortality, and more specifically an association of shortened TL with Alzheimer's disease, and are consistent with but not indicative of the possibility that TL may be a factor indicative of [biological age](#)," the authors conclude.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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Citation: Shortened telomere length tied to dementia, mortality risk (2012, July 25) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-shortened-telomere-length-tied-dementia.html>

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