

Going to synagogue is good for health and happiness, researcher finds

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Two new Baylor University studies show that Israeli Jewish adults who attend synagogue regularly, pray often, and consider themselves religious are significantly healthier and happier than their non-religious counterparts. They also report greater satisfaction with life.

"These findings nicely reinforce the inherited Jewish folk wisdom that going to shul (synagogue) is 'good for you,'" said Baylor University researcher Jeff Levin, Ph.D.

Levin holds a distinguished chair at Baylor University, where he is University Professor of Epidemiology and [Population Health](#) and Director of the Program on Religion and Population Health at the Institute for Studies of Religion.

Commitment to Jewish [religious belief](#) and practice is strongly associated with greater physical and psychological well-being, Levin said. One study, published in *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, an official journal of the [American Psychological Association](#), used 2010 data on 1,849 Jewish adults from the Israeli sample of the European Social Survey. The other study, published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, used 2009-10 data on 991 Jewish adults from the Israeli sample of the International Social Survey Programme's Religion III survey.

These new results confirm findings from other studies of Jews in Israel and the U.S. conducted over the past few years. Seven such studies have been published by Levin using data from a variety of national and global

surveys. They have consistently identified facets of Jewish religious expression as among the most reliable predictors of measures of physical and mental health and overall well-being.

Provided by Baylor University

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