

# A positive boost to the immune system

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

(Medical Xpress)—A positive attitude can improve your immune system and may help you live longer, according to a University of Queensland study.

The research, published in *Psychology and Aging* has found that older people who focused on positive information were more likely to have stronger immune systems.

Lead researcher Dr Elise Kalokerinos, from UQ's School of Psychology, said a [positive attitude](#) played an important role in healthy ageing.

"Despite the fact that people often think of late life as a period of doom and gloom, older people are often more positive than younger people," Dr Kalokerinos said.

"Our research suggests that this focus on the positive may help older people protect their declining health."

The study involved following 50 adults, aged 65-90 years, across two years.

Participants were shown a series of positive and negative photos, which they were later asked to recall, and their [immune function](#) was also measured through a series of blood tests.

Dr Kalokerinos said participants who remembered more positive than negative images also showed better immune functioning up to two years later.

"Participants who recalled more positive than [negative images](#) had antibodies in their blood suggesting stronger immune systems than those of their counterparts, who did not show this positivity in memory," she said.

"By selectively remembering the positive, [older adults](#) seem to boost their immune functioning just when they need it the most.

"We already know that happiness provides a range of health benefits and this research shows that focusing on positive information may have the same effect for [older people](#).

"A person who focuses on [positive information](#) over negative information may be better able to cope with stressful situations, may take a more positive long-term outlook on life, and may maintain positive social interactions, thus reaping the immune benefits.

"These findings raise the possibility that humans have evolved to become more positive late in life in order to enhance their own longevity."

Provided by University of Queensland

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