

Older adults satisfied with aging more likely to seek health screenings

October 16 2014, by Jared Wadley

Adults over 50 who feel comfortable about aging are more proactive in getting preventive health care services, a new University of Michigan study found.

Sometimes, the older population does not visit their doctor because they believe that physical and mental declines typify old [age](#), says Eric Kim, a U-M doctoral student in clinical psychology. They think that lifestyle changes will not make a difference, making them less likely to seek [preventive care](#). This is not true and also not a healthy mindset, he says.

Studies show that older adults can go down several different trajectories of health as they age: some decline, some maintain and some even get healthier. Different mindsets influence which health trajectories people follow because mindsets influence health behaviors, says Kim, the study's lead author.

If people are satisfied with their aging process, which includes feeling useful and having high energy, they sought health screenings.

The study's 6,177 participants were drawn from the Health and Retirement Study, a nationally representative panel study of American adults over the age of 50. Each respondent answered questions about use of preventive [health](#) services over time.

Individuals who reported higher satisfaction with aging were more likely to obtain a cholesterol test and colonoscopy over time. For women, they

received a mammogram/X-ray or pap smear with greater frequency. Men made medical appointments more often to get a prostate exam, the study showed. These associations remained even after adjusting for potential confounding factors.

One area that did not improve based on aging satisfaction: getting a flu shot.

More information: The aging satisfaction study is available online: ns.umich.edu/Releases/2014/Oct...-Health-Services.pdf

Provided by University of Michigan

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