

## Pop stars climb stairway to heaven early: Australian study

October 28 2014

---

It's long been said that pop stars live fast and die young, but a new Australian study has added scholarly credibility to the adage, finding that US musicians die up to 25 years earlier than the general population.

"This is clear evidence that all is not well in pop music land," said the University of Sydney's Dianna Kenny, who analysed the deaths of 12,665 predominantly male American [musicians](#) between 1950 and June this year.

Kenny believes the study is the first of its kind in capturing the lifespans of all popular artists over the seven decades, with her research looking at musicians across a wide range of genres from jazz to Christian pop to punk.

The psychology and music professor found that pop stars' accidental death rates were between five and 10 times greater than the general US [population](#), while suicide rates were between two and seven times higher.

Homicide rates were up to eight times greater than the wider population, she added.

The study also found that "across the seven decades studied, popular musicians' lifespans were up to 25 years shorter than the comparable US population", she said.

As such, Kenny found that while the lifespans of the two groups have

been rising over the years, male pop musicians had an average age of death of between 55 to 60 in the past decade while the [general population](#) had an average age of just above 75.

Female pop musicians had an average age of death of just over 60, unlike the wider population which had a lifespan of above 80, the study showed.

A 2011 Queensland University of Technology study debunked the myth of the "27 Club", where rock 'n' rollers succumb to their lifestyles while in their 27th year, but limited its research to only artists who had a No. 1 album in the British charts between 1956 and 2007.

Similarly, another study published by Liverpool John Moores University in England—which was published in the *British Medical Journal* in 2012—had a narrower focus, examining the deaths of 1,489 rock and [pop stars](#) from North America and Europe who became famous between 1956 and 2006.

The Liverpool John Moores University researchers found then that the musicians' mortality increased relative to the general population over time after they become famous.

Kenny said more work would be needed to confirm her initial results, but that the data showed the pop music industry needed to do more to support the young musicians they were profiting from.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Pop stars climb stairway to heaven early: Australian study (2014, October 28) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-stars-climb-stairway-heaven-early.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.