

One's ability to identify different smells may impact longevity

June 3 2015

In a recent study of older adults, those with a reduced ability to identify certain odors had an increased risk of dying during an average follow-up of 4 years. The mortality rate was 45% in participants with the lowest scores on a 40-item smell test, compared with 18% of participants with the highest scores.

The study included 1169 Medicare beneficiaries who scratched and sniffed individuals odorant strips and chose the best answer from 4 items listed as multiple-choice.

"The increased risk of death increased progressively with worse performance in the [smell](#) identification test and was highest in those with the worst smelling ability, even after adjusting for medical burden and dementia," said Dr. Davangere Devanand, lead author of the *Annals of Neurology* study. "This was a study of [older adults](#)—the question that remains is whether young to middle-aged adults with impaired smell identification ability are at high risk as they grow older."

More information: *Annals of Neurology*, [DOI: 10.1002/ana.24447](https://doi.org/10.1002/ana.24447)

Provided by Wiley

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