

# Midlife cardiovascular fitness tied to lower health costs later

October 21 2015

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(HealthDay)—Higher cardiorespiratory fitness in middle age is strongly associated with lower health care costs later in life, according to a study published in the Oct. 27 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Justin M. Bachmann, M.D., from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., and colleagues identified 19,571 healthy individuals in the Cooper Center Longitudinal Study who underwent cardiorespiratory fitness assessment at a mean age of 49 years and received Medicare coverage from 1999 to 2009 at an average age of 71 years. Maximal metabolic equivalents (METs) were calculated from treadmill time and were used to estimate [cardiorespiratory fitness](#).

The researchers found that over 126,388 person-years of follow-up,

average annual [health care](#) costs were significantly lower for participants aged 65 years or older with high midlife fitness, compared to those with low midlife fitness in both men (\$6,846 versus \$11,299; P cardiovascular risk factors, average annual [health care costs](#) in later life were incrementally lower per MET achieved in midlife in men (6.8 percent decrease in costs per MET achieved; P

"These findings may have important implications for health policies directed at improving physical fitness," the authors write.

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Citation: Midlife cardiovascular fitness tied to lower health costs later (2015, October 21)  
retrieved 25 April 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-10-midlife-cardiovascular-tied-health.html>

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