

One in six younger Americans wants to die before 80

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(HealthDay)—The fear of growing old may be stronger than the fear of

death among many Americans, a new survey suggests.

About one in six young and middle-aged adults in the United States wants to die before [age](#) 80, according to researchers at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in New York City. And negative views of old age are a key reason, the study authors said.

The telephone survey of more than 1,600 people aged 18 to 64 also found:

- One-third hope to reach their 80s (which is close to the current [average life expectancy](#) in the United States).
- One-quarter hope to live into their 90s.
- The rest hope to reach 100 or older, with blacks more likely to say they hope to live a century or more.

Hispanics, and those who did not identify as white, black or Hispanic, were more likely to say they hope to die before reaching their 80s. People with negative views about old age were apt to share that view, according to the survey.

"Having rather bleak expectations of what life will be like in old age seems to undermine the desire to live up to and beyond current levels of average life expectancy," the study's first author, Catherine Bowen, said in a university news release.

"People who embrace the 'better to die young' attitude may underestimate their ability to cope with negative age-related life experiences as well as to find new sources of well-being in old age," she added. Bowen is an expert on mental representations of old age and the aging process.

There was no indication that age, gender or education influenced

people's [life](#) span preferences, the researchers said.

The study was published online recently in the journal *Ageing and Society*.

More information: The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion has tips on how to [protect your health as you age](#).

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