

The role of weight in postmenopausal women's longevity

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In a large multiethnic study, being underweight was linked with an increased risk of early death among postmenopausal women. Also, a higher waist circumference—but not being overweight or slightly obese—was associated with premature mortality, indicating that abdominal fat is more deadly than carrying excess weight.

Interestingly, Hispanic women in the study had a lower mortality rate at any given [body mass index](#) or waist circumference compared with non-Hispanic whites or African-Americans.

"We have used data from the large prospective cohort of the US Women's Health Initiative to add evidence on the relationship of general and central obesity with all-cause mortality in [older women](#), especially in African American and Hispanic American older women, who have not been well represented in previous research on this topic," said Dr. Zhao Chen, lead author of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study.

"Our study findings have called public health attention to reduce central obesity in older women from different racial/ethnic groups and to reconsider recommendations on the range of healthy body mass index in older women."

More information: Zhao Chen et al, Body Mass Index, Waist Circumference, and Mortality in a Large Multiethnic Postmenopausal Cohort-Results from the Women's Health Initiative, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.14790](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14790)

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