

Health benefits of healthy lifestyle quantified in U.S.

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(HealthDay)—For people age 50 years and older, having a favorable

behavioral profile is associated with increased life expectancy and delayed onset of disability compared with the whole U.S. population, according to a study published online July 19 in *Health Affairs*.

Neil Mehta, Ph.D., from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and Mikko Myrskylä, Ph.D., from the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany, examined the extent to which risky behaviors (such as smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol consumption) are responsible for reducing the [health](#) and life expectancy of the U.S. population. The authors obtained data from the Health and Retirement Study for people aged 50 [years](#) or older who had never smoked, were not obese, and had moderate alcohol consumption.

The researchers found that individuals with such a favorable behavior profile had a [life](#) expectancy at age 50 years that was seven years longer compared with the whole U.S. [population](#); they also experienced a delay of up to six years in the onset of disability.

"These results provide a benchmark for evaluating the massively damaging effects that behavioral risks have on health at older ages and the importance of prioritizing policies to implement behavioral-based interventions," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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