

Apathy is common and may decrease life expectancy in nursing home patients

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In a study of nursing home patients, apathy was linked with an increased risk of dying over a 4-month period, even after controlling for depression. The study also found that apathy was present in half of nursing home patients.

Apathy is defined by diminished or lack of motivational, goal-directed behavior, and a lack of cognition and emotional affect. It leads to reduced interest and participation in the main activities of daily living.

The findings suggest that screening and [treatment strategies](#) for apathy should be developed for individuals in nursing homes.

"The presence of [apathy](#) in nursing home patients should get more attention in daily care. Patients, family, and staff need to establish goals of care to improve quality of life and advanced care planning, in the context of decreased [life expectancy](#)," said Johanna Nijsten, lead author of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study.

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.15007](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.15007)

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