

Centenarians' end-of-life thoughts: is their social network informed?

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Credit: Peter Griffin/public domain

People in centenarians' close social networks are often not aware of their thoughts on end-of-life issues, a new *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study reveals.

In the study of 78 centenarians and their primary contacts (proxies), proxies misjudged whether the centenarian thought about end of life in

nearly half of cases. Although only few centenarians perceived the end of life as threatening, and approximately one-quarter reported longing for death, proxies overestimated centenarians' reports on the former and underestimated the latter. Proxies reported more centenarian end-of-life planning than centenarians themselves.

"Our findings suggest a lack of communication about end of life between [centenarians](#) and the people they count on most," said lead author Dr. Kathrin Boerner, of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. "Healthcare professionals should be aware that even among very old adults, discussions about end of life wishes need to be actively encouraged."

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