

# Walking slowly at age 45 could be a sign of accelerated aging

April 8 2020, by Nancy Clanton

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

How fast you walk can be used as an indicator of how fast you're aging, a new study finds.

"Slower walkers were shown to have 'accelerated aging' on a 19-measure scale devised by researchers," Duke Research wrote, "and their lungs, teeth and immune systems tended to be in worse shape than the people who walked faster."

The study, published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical*

*Association*, used data from nearly 50 years of testing on 904 participants born the same year in Dunedin, New Zealand. The [research subjects](#) were "tested, quizzed and measured their entire lives," most recently at age 45.

"Doctors know that slow walkers in their seventies and eighties tend to die sooner than fast walkers their same age," said senior author Terrie E. Moffitt. "But this study covered the period from the [preschool years](#) to midlife, and found that a slow walk is a problem sign decades before old age."

According to the data, tests the participants took at age 3—IQ, understanding language, frustration tolerance, [motor skills](#) and emotional control—could predict who would be a slow walker at age 45.

MRI exams during the most recent assessment showed the brains of slow walkers had lower cortical thickness and less surface area, meaning they appeared older.

But it wasn't just brains that looked older. When a panel of screeners were shown photos of the 45-year-olds, they thought the slow walkers looked older.

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