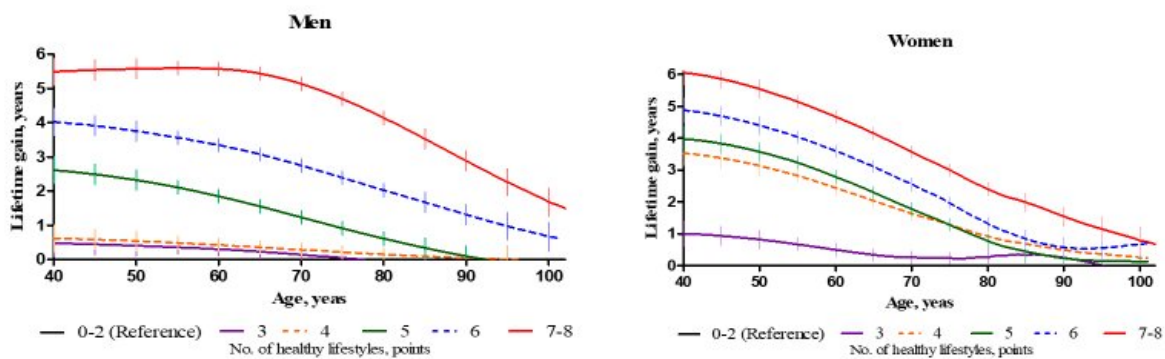


# How taking ownership of your health can help you increase your lifespan

May 11 2022



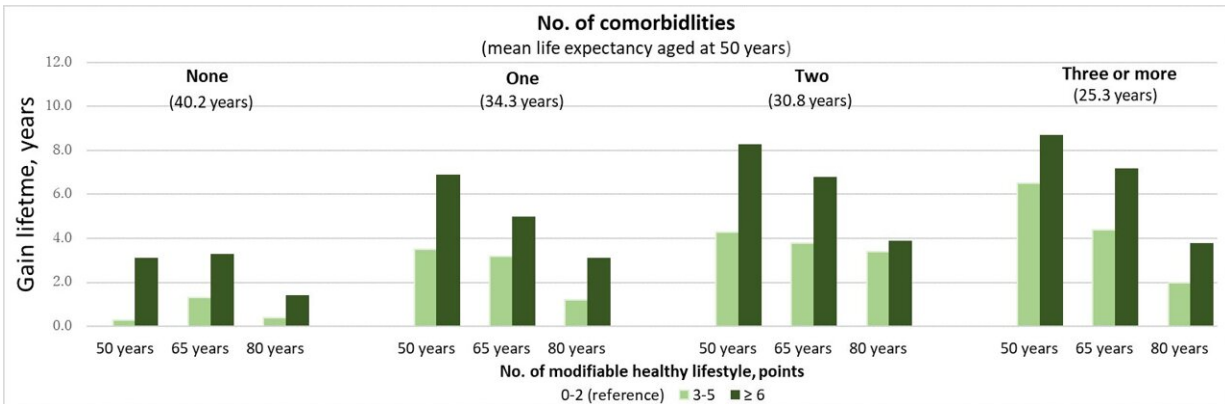
Estimation for lifetime gain and 95% interval confidence (95% CI) according to the number of modifiable healthy lifestyles. Credit: 2022 R.Sakaniwa et al. Impact of modifiable healthy lifestyle adoption on lifetime gain from middle to older age. Age and Ageing

Idioms and proverbs about the importance of maintaining good health span the ages. Many emphasize how closely health is tied to happiness and the opportunity to live a fulfilling and enjoyable life. A study

published this month in *Age and Ageing* by The Japan Collaborate Cohort (JACC) Study group at Osaka University assessed the impact of modifying lifestyle behaviors on life expectancy from middle age onwards. The researchers found that adopting five or more healthy lifestyle behaviors increased life expectancy even for individuals greater than 80 years of age, and importantly, also for those with chronic conditions.

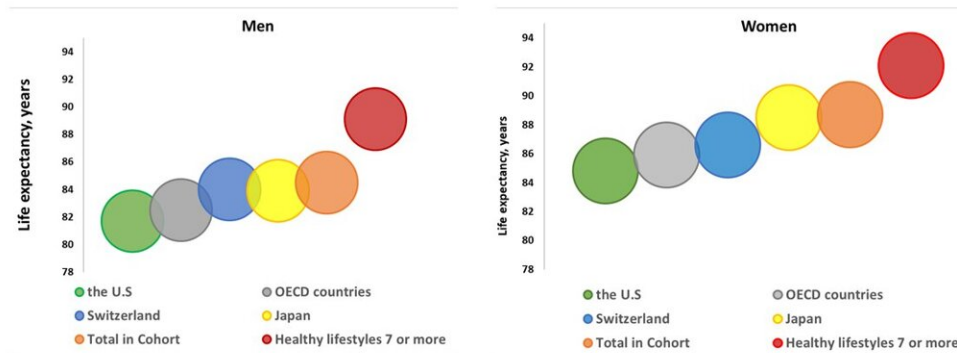
Lifespan is dependent on [social factors](#) such as socioeconomic status, policy factors such as assisted access to healthcare, and lifestyle factors like diet and exercise. The current study used a baseline survey from the JACC study, a large research project of 49,021 individuals conducted from 1988 to 1990 in 45 areas of Japan. The aim was to increase knowledge about what factors contribute to death from cancer and cardiovascular disease; thus, the questionnaire included components such as diet, exercise, alcohol intake, smoking status, sleep duration, and body mass index. Points were given for each healthy behavior and the impact of modifying these lifestyle behaviors on projected [lifespan](#) was assessed.

The study continued until December 2009, by which time 8,966 individuals had died. The study's primary author, Dr. Ryoto Sakaniwa, said, "The results were very clear. A higher number of modified healthy behaviors was directly associated with great [longevity](#) for both men and women." The lifetime gains were highest for reducing alcohol intake, not smoking, losing weight, and increasing sleep, adding up to 6 years of life for healthy 40-year-olds.



Estimation of lifetime gains at the age of 50, 65, and 80 years according to the number of modifiable healthy lifestyles among patients with none, single, double, and triple or more comorbidities. Credit: 2022 R.Sakaniwa et al. Impact of modifiable healthy lifestyle adoption on lifetime gain from middle to older age. Age and Ageing

This benefit was prominent even among older individuals (80 years or more) and those with one or more major [comorbidities](#) including cancer, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and kidney disease, and in each life stage from middle age onwards. "This is a particularly important finding given that the prevalence of chronic disease has increased globally and is a major cause of death in older populations," says senior author Prof. Hiroyasu Iso. This is one of the first studies to measure the impact of improvements to health behavior among older individuals in a country with a national life expectancy achieving almost 85 years.



Comparison of estimated life expectancies age at 60 years. Credit: © R.Sakaniwa

The finding that lifestyle improvements has a positive impact on health despite [chronic health conditions](#) and older age is an empowering one, especially given the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions and longer life. The findings of this study will contribute to the design of future healthcare settings, public health approaches, and policies that work in partnership with patients to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

**More information:** Impact of modifiable healthy lifestyle adoption on lifetime gain from middle to older age, *Age And Ageing* (2022). [DOI: 10.1093/ageing/afac080](https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afac080)

Provided by Osaka University

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