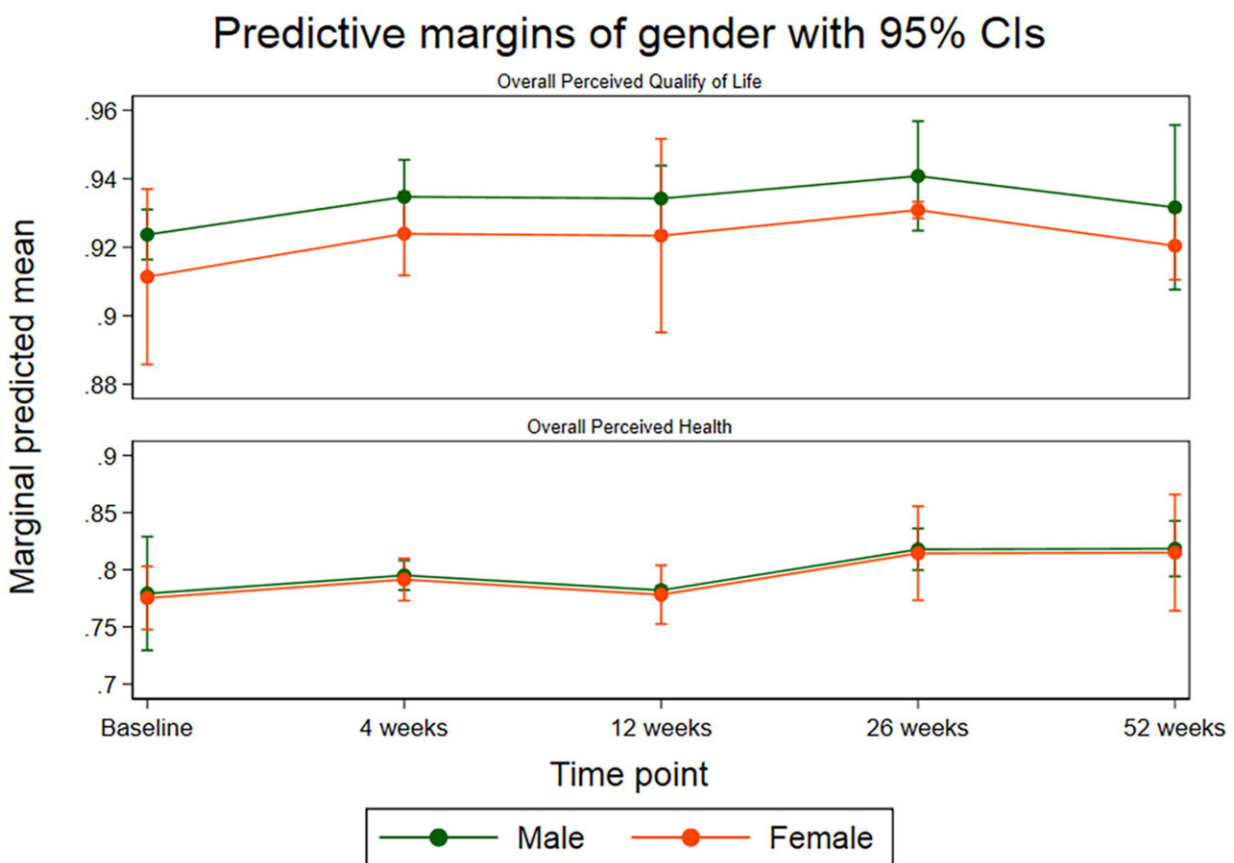


# Treatment for alcohol use disorder improves quality of life in men and women aged 60+, study finds

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Predicted probabilities (estimated marginal effects) of having Neutral/good or Neutral/satisfied Overall Perceived QoL and Health, respectively, by gender and time points. Credit: *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2023) DOI: 10.1111/acer.15170

Adults aged 60 and older reported better overall health and quality of life after treatment for their alcohol use disorder, according to a new study published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Both male and female study participants also reported improvements in specific [quality of life](#) measures, including physical and [psychological health](#), [social relationships](#), and other [environmental factors](#) (e.g., including home environment, financial resources, transportation), and these improvements continued over time. The study supports the value of treatment of alcohol use disorder in [older men](#) and women, whose alcohol use disorder tends to be misdiagnosed and undertreated.

The study found small but significant improvements after treatment throughout the year-long study in overall perceived health among study participants. Improvements in overall perceived quality of life were significant in the short-term; and specific quality of life domains saw improvements that were maintained: [physical health](#), psychological health, social relationships, and environmental health. Gender was not associated with changes in any quality of life outcome measure.

In general, quality of life refers to an individual's perceptions of how well they are doing in various domains, e.g. physical health, such as energy, pain, and fatigue; psychological health, such as self-esteem and positive and negative feelings; social relationships, e.g., personal relationships and social support; and environmental health, such as financial resources and engagement in recreational opportunities.

The purpose of this study was to examine how treatment for alcohol use disorder affected the quality of life of adults aged 60 and older and whether quality of life outcomes differed by gender. Researchers analyzed data from a single-blind randomized control study of almost 700 adults aged 60 and older diagnosed with alcohol use disorder, conducted at sites in Denmark, Germany, and the United States from

2014 to 2016.

Participants received weekly treatment for up to 12 sessions and were asked to report on various measures, including drinking and quality of life at four, 12, 26, and 52 weeks. Seventy-one percent of participants reported reductions in the number of days they drank.

Older adults are more vulnerable to alcohol's harmful effects, such as falls and accidents, and to the positive effects of treatment for alcohol use disorder. Yet, prior studies have suggested that [alcohol use disorder](#) is under-detected and undertreated in older adults, possibly because health care providers may believe that treatment is unlikely to benefit older adults.

This study demonstrates the benefit of screening and treating older adults for problem drinking and the value of quality-of-life measures in assessing treatment effectiveness. It is unclear whether the study's findings can be generalized to [older adults](#) from countries not included in this study, people with co-occurring health and mental health issues, or those with less severe levels of alcohol use.

**More information:** Kjeld Andersen et al, Improvement in quality of life among women and men aged 60 years and older following treatment for alcohol use disorder, *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/acer.15170](https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.15170)  
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