

Male sex, high age, little physical exercise and low level of education are associated with allostatic load

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Allostatic load refers to a disorder of the body's stress response, which has been shown to increase the risk of mortality and various health risks,

as well as being associated with mental disorders. A recent study by the University of Eastern Finland explored the associations of allostatic load with depressive symptoms, lifestyles, health behaviors, and sociodemographic factors, such as age and level of education.

The study found that the older the study participant, the higher their [allostatic load](#). In addition, [depressive symptoms](#), male sex, not engaging in physical exercise, high alcohol use, and low level of education were associated with a higher risk of belonging to the group that had a high allostatic load.

According to the researchers, effective depression prevention strategies at the population level could have a significant impact on reducing allostatic load, in addition to lifestyle interventions.

"It is important for a person suffering from depressive symptoms to receive comprehensive help that takes their entire life situation into consideration," says Professor Kirsi Honkalampi of the University of Eastern Finland.

The study was based on a representative sample of the adult population in the FINHEALTH 2017 study, involving nearly 5,000 Finns. The paper is [published](#) in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

More information: Kirsi Honkalampi et al, Associations of allostatic load with sociodemographic factors, depressive symptoms, lifestyle, and health characteristics in a large general population-based sample, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2024.01.189](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2024.01.189)

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