

Study suggests maintaining optimism contributes to better mobility in women as they grow older

March 28 2024, by Bob Yirka



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A large team of social scientists, psychologists and geriatric specialists affiliated with a host of institutions across the U.S. reports that women

who remain optimistic as they grow older tend to have better mobility as the aging process begins to take a toll on their bodies.

In their [study](#), published in the journal *JAMA Psychiatry*, the group interviewed thousands of [older women](#) at several clinical centers and also tested them on [grip strength](#), [walking speed](#) and the ease with which they could rise from a chair.

Prior research and a lot of anecdotal evidence have shown that as people reach a certain age, their bodies begin to work less well. The timing of the process and the speed at which it develops are different for everyone because they are related to so many other factors, though some factors have been found to have a direct impact.

The foods a person eats, for example, or how much exercise they get, can greatly influence how well a person ages. In this new effort, the researchers have found that a woman's outlook can have an impact, as well.

The research team interviewed almost 6,000 women aged 65 and older at 40 [clinical settings](#) in the U.S. The researchers measured volunteer grip strength, walking pace and rated the ease with which they could rise from a chair. Each of the women went through the same testing process four times over a six-year period. The research team then compiled their data and looked for patterns.

One of the patterns they found was that those women who had a more optimistic outlook as they grew older tended to see more minimal declines in their ease in standing and their walking speed, but not in their grip strength. The researchers suggest that optimism may protect aging women from damage due to stress-induced inflammation, and in some cases, cause them to make better lifestyle choices. The findings also suggest that women can slow age-related mobility problems by

improving their [outlook](#).

More information: Hayami K. Koga et al, Longitudinal Associations Between Optimism and Objective Measures of Physical Functioning in Women, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.5068](#)

© 2024 Science X Network

Citation: Study suggests maintaining optimism contributes to better mobility in women as they grow older (2024, March 28) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-03-optimism-contributes-mobility-women-older.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.