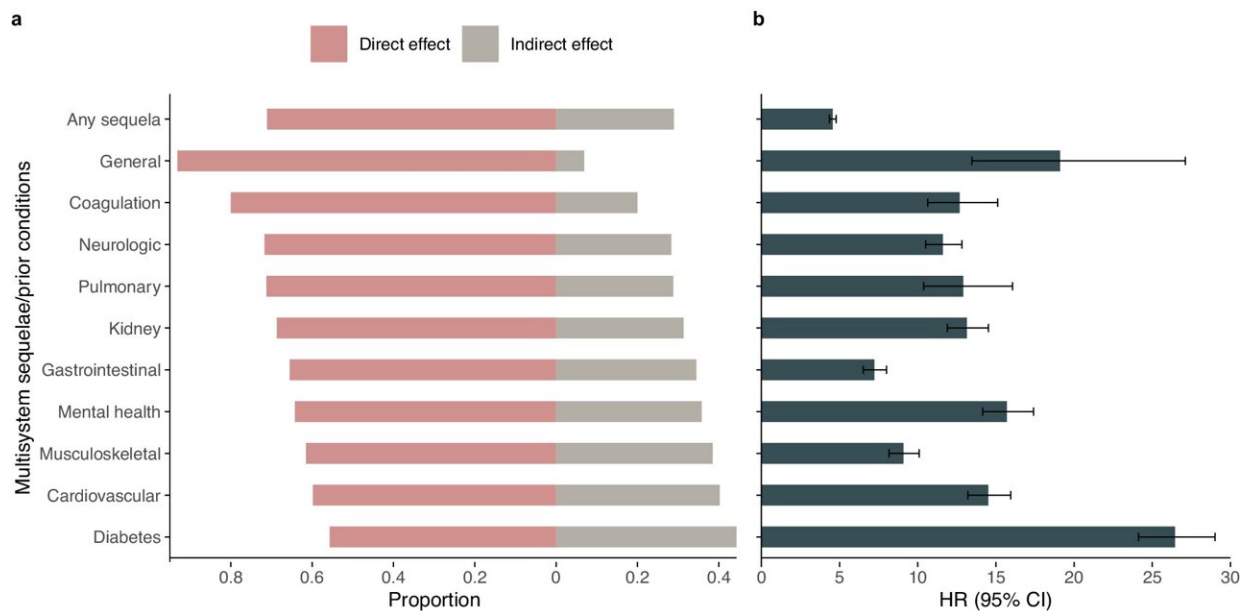


Healthy lifestyle lowers the risk of post-COVID complications, finds study

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Direct and indirect effects of healthy lifestyle, and association of pre-infection medical conditions with multisystem sequelae of COVID-19. a Proportion of the direct and indirect effect of a healthy lifestyle on multisystem sequelae b Association of corresponding pre-infection medical conditions with the risk of sequelae following SARS-CoV-2 infection. Credit: *Nature Communications* (2024). DOI: 10.1038/s41467-024-50495-7

Based on the UK Biobank cohort of more than 68,000 people, a new study led by Dr. Junqing Xie evaluated the impact of various lifestyle factors such as smoking, alcohol intake, BMI, physical activity,

sedentary time, sleep duration, and dietary habits on post-COVID complications, hospitalization, and death.

Published in *Nature Communications*, and featured as an Editors' Highlight of recent "Public health" research, the [study](#) found that individuals with a favorable lifestyle had a lower risk of hospitalization, lower incidence of long-term or on-going health issues affecting multiple parts of the body, and reduced risk of post-COVID death, compared to those with an unfavorable lifestyle.

The benefits of a healthy lifestyle were observed across all 10 organs, including cardiovascular, coagulation, metabolic, gastrointestinal, kidney, [mental health](#), musculoskeletal, respiratory disorders, and fatigue.

Importantly, the researchers found that adopting a healthy lifestyle can provide direct protection against post-COVID complications, beyond just reducing the risk of severe disease during the [initial infection](#). The benefits of a healthy lifestyle were also consistent, regardless of disease severity, vaccination status, hospitalization, or the variant of SARS-CoV-2.

Dr. Junqing Xie, a Postdoc and Extraordinary Junior Research Fellow said, "The data from our study is a convincing reminder to us all that maintaining a healthy lifestyle will not only build up resilience to many [chronic illnesses](#) but also the ability to cope with unwanted stresses, such as COVID-19."

The findings align with previous evidence on the broader benefits of a healthy lifestyle on chronic disease prevention and life expectancy. But the findings are also relevant for future pandemic preparedness, providing a clear roadmap for patients, clinicians, and policymakers to prioritize preventive strategies focused on modifiable lifestyle factors.

More information: Yunhe Wang et al, Modifiable lifestyle factors and the risk of post-COVID-19 multisystem sequelae, hospitalization, and death, *Nature Communications* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41467-024-50495-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-50495-7)

Provided by University of Oxford

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