

# Lower weight, diabetes, and heart disease can worsen quality of life for frail older women

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Researchers writing in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* recently learned that older women who are frail, and who have six or more chronic health conditions, are twice as likely to have a lower quality of life compared to women with less than three risk factors.

Frailty is a condition associated with aging that boosts risks of poor health, falls, disability, and death. Signs of frailty include weakness, weight loss, slower walking speed, exhaustion, and low activity levels. Though frail older adults can develop age-related problems, many can still maintain a good quality of life as they age.

The research team examined data from 11,070 frail women, aged 65 to 84, who were enrolled in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study. They found that the following [risk factors](#) can worsen a frail woman's quality of life and raise the risk for death:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Lower weight
- Believing yourself to be in poor or fair health
- High blood pressure (over 140/90)
- Smoking
- Older age

The researchers suggested that managing [chronic health problems](#) well may help older, frail women enjoy a better quality of life.

**More information:** Oleg Zaslavsky et al, Identification of Risk Factors for Mortality and Poor-Quality-of-Life Survival in Frail Older Women Participating in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2016). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.14042](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14042)

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