

## Longevity at sixty: factors influencing life expectancy in old age

Item Type	Journal article
Authors	Kar, Nilamadhab
Citation	Kar, N. (2024) Longevity at sixty: factors influencing life expectancy in old age. Journal of Geriatric Care and Research, 11(2), pp. 33-34.
Publisher	Geriatric Care and Research Organisation (GeriCaRe)
Journal	Journal of Geriatric Care and Research
Download date	2026-06-06 20:02:37
License	<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/</a>
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2436/625799">http://hdl.handle.net/2436/625799</a>

## Longevity at sixty: factors influencing life expectancy in old age

Nilamadhab Kar

### Abstract

While longevity is increasing in general, factors that can prolong the life of older adults constitute an area to explore. At the same time, it is not just adding years to life, but having increased periods of disability-free life, with increased productivity and functioning. Many factors influence remaining life expectancy at the age of 60 which could be biological, clinical, and psychosocial in nature. The usual ingredients that support a healthy life may help in older adults as well, however, specific efforts to prevent diseases and adequate management of existing physical and mental illnesses are the key factors; along with diet and nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation, socialisation, availability of medical and nursing facilities, and appropriate health policies are other determinants. Efforts to improve health and a disability-free life after the age of 60 need further understanding and research.

### Keywords

Aged, Health Behaviour, Longevity, Risk Factors,

### Introduction

Although being old cannot be defined just by years of age, the age of 60 has been considered an administrative, statistical, and even clinical milestone in various contexts. However, observations and opinions differ.<sup>1</sup> People age differently, both physical and psychological processes vary among individuals, regions, and races. Only a proportion of the population reaches this age, however, as longevity is generally increasing worldwide, a higher proportion of people are living above the age of 60 years.<sup>2</sup>

The increase in longevity may not be all due to healthy ageing with improved health of a population, but it could be due to the increased medical capability in keeping ailing people alive.<sup>3</sup> It is known that many older adults spend a substantial amount of time with illnesses and disabilities. It would be relevant to study the longevity at 60 years of age of one's life, factors influencing the remaining life expectancy, and whether that can be influenced, precisely prolonged qualitatively.

The reported range of life expectancy at the age of 60 in 2022 worldwide was 14.3 to 29.4 years for females and 11.6 to 25.7 years for males, and the rates for India were 16.8 and 15 years respectively.<sup>4</sup> These estimated figures vary, probably secondary to region and methodology.

### Determinants of remaining life expectancy

It is important to study the determinants of remaining life expectancy at around 60-65 years of age. Genes matter in relation to longer life, however, they play only a part in it, and the variations are brought about by health behaviours. The factors that prevent accelerated ageing and age pathologies, with a hope to increase average life span have been a focus of research. The actions that can prolong a healthy life after 60, improving quality of life, are also an interesting area that needs further study.

Available literature suggests that many factors affect longevity at the age of 60. Psychosocial predictors such as academic degree, household income, financial support, and unemployment, have been reported to influence life expectancy at the age of 60 in Germany.<sup>5</sup>

Psychological stress can lead to accelerated ageing,<sup>6</sup> and excess mortality,<sup>7</sup> due to stress-related morbidities. Managing stress well is extremely important for living longer.

Keeping preventable and controllable diseases at bay and taking adequate care of the existing illnesses are the key factors. Clinical predictors such as availability of medical services, staffing levels of nursing homes and services have marginal impact.<sup>5</sup> Other factors that influence longevity are smoking, obesity, and medication use,<sup>3</sup> etc. Alcohol has a complicated relationship with ageing, while excessive alcohol use is agreed to have negative consequences, the benefits of modest alcohol use have been debated. Studies suggest a role of regular, moderate drinking in cognitively healthy longevity,<sup>8</sup> in contrast to even low-risk drinking being associated with higher mortality among older adults with health-related or socioeconomic risk factors.<sup>9</sup>

Lifestyle factors predict greater survival.<sup>10</sup> Remedial suggestions regarding healthy diet, restricted calories, exercise, adequate sleep, weight control, and engaging in leisure activities are well known. The use of antioxidants, melatonin through its influence on circadian rhythms, and peptide geroprotectors,<sup>2</sup> are gaining attention, although more research is needed. Similarly, there are concerns regarding anti-ageing measures such as hormone replacement therapy.

### Suggestions to consider

Healthful behaviours at a younger age will translate to healthy ageing and prolonged life without illness or

disability. However, adopting these at an older age may still be helpful. Perspectives from the older people themselves regarding successful ageing are physical activity, basic aspects of well-being, positive outlook, satisfaction with life, interpersonal relationship, participation in meaningful activities, and financial security.<sup>11</sup>

Exercise is especially relevant for lengthening active life expectancy, and along with this, shedding excess weight, low-calorie diets, and nutritional adjustments may probably lead to longer and healthier lives. Promoting healthy ageing and supporting older adults to age safely in an age-friendly environment, with a scope of regular monitoring for prevention, early detection and management of ailments are essential. This would need appropriate public health policies and their implementation.

In addition to the above, ensuring financial literacy and improving financial resilience, improving access to health education and services, supporting older adults to remain productive by improving work opportunities for them beyond traditional retirement age, improved facilities for meaningful social connections are various other suggested ways for healthier and longer lives.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to be aware that older adults often experience stress, but are hesitant to discuss the causes, especially abusive experiences, and may not have resources to deal with these themselves. The role of stress management in older adults cannot be overemphasized. It should be multi-pronged, involving proactive support from different sources with a problem-solving approach. Help-seeking by older adults for their psychological stress factors should be encouraged and facilitated.

## Conclusion

There are variations in the longevity and disability of older adults, based on sociodemographic and clinical factors. There is a need for more research about the life expectancy at the age of 60, and how to have more disability-free years, with improved quality of life. The research should explore the modifiable factors influencing it, emphasizing the actions that can be taken to increase the chance of healthy ageing and improve the life experience of older adults.

**Author information** Nilamadhab Kar, MD, DPM, DNB, FRCPsych, Consultant Psychiatrist, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Wolverhampton, UK; Honorary Professor, Sri Sri University, India; Honorary Professor of Psychiatry, University of Wolverhampton, UK, Email: [n.kar@nhs.net](mailto:n.kar@nhs.net); ORCID: 0000-0002-8801-9245

**Correspondence:** Nilamadhab Kar, Steps to Health, Showell Circus, Wolverhampton, WV10 9TH, UK. Email: [n.kar@nhs.net](mailto:n.kar@nhs.net)

**Competing interests:** None

**Funding:** None

**Received:** 20 October 2024; **Revised:** 22 October 2024;

**Accepted:** 22 October 2024 **Published:** 22 October 2024

**Copyright** © 2024 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms [CC BY-NC] which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**Citation:** Kar N. Longevity at sixty: factors influencing life expectancy in old age. *Journal of Geriatric Care and Research*, 2024, 11, 2: 33-34.

## References

1. Covey HC. The definitions of the beginning of old age in history. *Int J Aging Hum Dev*. 1992;34(4):325–37.
2. Khavinson V, Popovich I, Mikhailova O. Towards realization of longer life. *Acta Biomedica Atenei Parmensis*. 2020 Mar 15;91(3):e2020054–e2020054.
3. Levine ME, Crimmins EM. Is 60 the New 50? Examining Changes in Biological Age Over the Past Two Decades. *Demography*. 2018 Apr;55(2):387–402.
4. World Bank Group. Life expectancy at age 60 (years) [Internet]. World Bank Gender Data Portal. [cited 2024 Oct 19]. Available from: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/sp-dyn-le60-in>
5. Siegel A, Schug JF, Rieger MA. Social Determinants of Remaining Life Expectancy at Age 60: A District-Level Analysis in Germany. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2022 Jan 29;19(3):1530.
6. Yegorov YE, Poznyak AV, Nikiforov NG, Sobenin IA, Orekhov AN. The Link between Chronic Stress and Accelerated Aging. *Biomedicines*. 2020 Jul 7;8(7):198.
7. Aldwin CM, Molitor NT, Spiro Avron III, Levenson MR, Molitor J, Igarashi H. Do Stress Trajectories Predict Mortality in Older Men? Longitudinal Findings from the VA Normative Aging Study. *Journal of Aging Research*. 2011 Sep 27;2011:896109.
8. Richard EL, Kritz-Silverstein D, Laughlin GA, Fung TT, Barrett-Connor E, McEvoy LK. Alcohol intake and cognitively healthy longevity in community-dwelling adults: The Rancho Bernardo Study. *Journal of Alzheimer's disease: JAD*. 2017;59(3):803.
9. Ortolá R, Sotos-Prieto M, García-Esquinas E, Galán I, Rodríguez-Artalejo F. Alcohol Consumption Patterns and Mortality Among Older Adults With Health-Related or Socioeconomic Risk Factors. *JAMA Network Open*. 2024 Aug 12;7(8):e2424495.
10. Fernández-Ballesteros R, Valeriano-Lorenzo E, Sánchez-Izquierdo M, Botella J. Behavioral Lifestyles and Survival: A Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2022 Feb 4;12:786491.
11. Bhattacharyya KK, Molinari V, Andel R. Longevity is not an ingredient of successful aging as self-reported by community-dwelling older adults: a scoping review. *Aging Ment Health*. 2023 Feb;27(2):217–29.
12. World Economic Forum. These 6 'longevity economy' principles can help an ageing population live well [Internet]. World Economic Forum. 2024 [cited 2024 Oct 20]. Available from: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2024/02/longevity-economy-principles-ageing-population/>