

Women live longer than men: Here's why

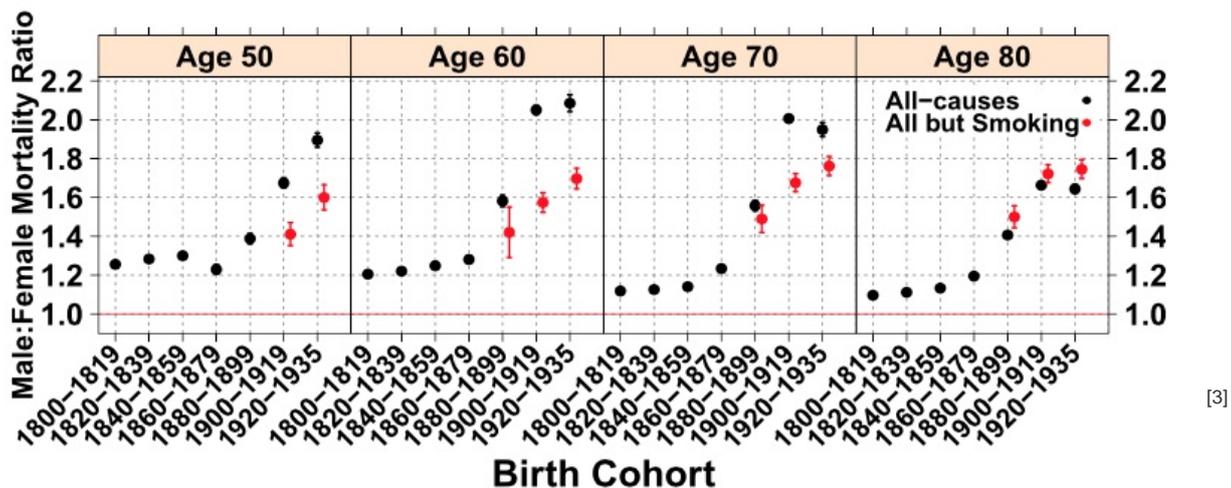
By ACSH Staff — July 8, 2015

It has long been known that women live longer than men, on average. What has remained a puzzle is why.

It isn't socioeconomic, women outlive men all across the world, and it isn't simply due to medicine or hygiene, if anything women benefited disproportionately from improvements in medical care and health knowledge. A recent paper examined longevity in 13 nations from 1800 to 1935, focusing on people over 40 to factor out child mortality and accidents that are more common in younger people. They found that after 1880, female death rates began to decline much faster, 70 percent faster than males.

"We were surprised at how the divergence in mortality between men and women, which originated as early as 1870, was concentrated in the 50 to 70 age range and faded out sharply after age 80," said University of Southern California Professor of Gerontology Eileen Crimmins [in their statement](#) [1].

The reasons? Cardiovascular disease and smoking, both of which affect men more, though in the case of smoking, it is because men smoke more. That leaves the possibility that men may have a biological risk factor for other instances. [Dr. Alex Berezow at Real Clear Science notes](#) [2] that for the 1920-1935 birth cohort, the ratio is a shocking 2.1 at age 60, meaning that 210 men died for every 100 women.



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Dr. Gil Ross, Senior Director of Medicine and Public Health at the [American Council on Science and Health](#) [4], noted that the secret may be in the age- and sex-adjusted mortality rates and hazard ratios [shown by cardiometabolic multimorbidity factors](#) [5]. "Mortality rates among adults with a history of myocardial infarction, diabetes, or stroke any one, or two, or all three as compared

with the control group who had none of those diagnoses, showed that the presence of any one of them was associated with a significantly elevated mortality rate. The presence of two of the studied illnesses was found to be about double the associated risk of having one, while the presence of all three was linked to an almost seven-fold risk of the control group's (baseline) mortality."

Citation: Hiram Beltr n-Sa nchez, Caleb E. Finch, and Eileen M. Crimmins. "Twentieth century surge of excess adult male mortality." PNAS. Published online before print: 6-July-2015.

doi: [10.1073/pnas.1421942112](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1421942112) [6]

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[1] http://www.science20.com/news_articles/why_men_dont_live_as_long_as_women-156453

[2]

http://www.realclearscience.com/journal_club/2015/07/07/mortality_gap_why_women_live_longer_than_men_109299.html

[3] <http://acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/202202male-female-death-ratios-birth-cohorts.jpg>

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