

People who frequently attend cultural events tend to live longer

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This research was conducted by **Lars Olov Bygren, Boinkum Benson Konlaan and Sven-Erik Johansson** at the **University of Umea, Sweden** and the **Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics**

Summary

By looking at a survey of people over a 10 year period the researchers were able to assess the impact of cultural engagement on survival. They are cautious because they suspect that many of the things that make someone likely to engage in culture are also factors that are known to predict good health and survival. However, after controlling for all those factors the authors were able to say that 'our results show that people attending cultural events seem to live longer than those who attend rarely'.

The study looked at adults in Sweden over a 10 year period

The researchers used data from a national survey that took a representative sample of the population and interviewed them about a range of cultural activities, their health, lifestyle and other demographic details. They then followed up with 12,675 of them ten years later. They primarily looked at survival rates and health alongside attending cinema, theatre, concerts and live music, art exhibitions, other exhibitions or museums, or sermons.

A range of other factors also affected life expectancy

The study controlled for the effects of age, sex, education, income, disease prevalence, social networks, smoking, and the amount of physical exercise people do. These affected people's survival rates as you might expect.

These claims needs more verification

The authors are keen to point out that the results should be tested with large samples. Future research should specify the type and nature of cultural activity more precisely. The authors ponder whether cultural engagement stimulates brain activity which in turn has an impact on physical health and therefore affects survival.

Keywords

survival **Sweden** **attendance** **longevity** **survey** **population** **mortality**

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