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Does childhood personality predict longevity?

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[Friedman HS](#), [Tucker JS](#), [Tomlinson-Keasey C](#), [Schwartz JE](#), [Wingard DL](#), [Criqui MH](#).

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Key models relating personality and health predict that personality in childhood is indicative of later health and longevity. Longevity predictions are tested using data derived from the 7-decade longitudinal study initiated by L. M. Terman 1921 (L. M. Terman & M. H. Oden, 1947). Variables representing major dimensions of personality are used in statistical survival analyses of longevity in 1,178 males and females. Conscientiousness in childhood was clearly related to survival in middle to old age. This finding (a) establishes that childhood personality is related to survival decades into the future, (b) confirms the validity of the conscientiousness dimension in conceptualizing personality, and (c) points to likely and unlikely pathways linking personality to health. Contrary to expectation, cheerfulness (optimism and sense of humor) was inversely related to longevity, suggesting a possible need for reconceptualization of its health relevance.

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