

## Why women live longer than men

[E]ven as people live longer overall, a new study finds that there remains a gap of three or four years between male and female life expectancy.

An international team of researchers found that all demographic data for humans past and present, dating back to hunter-gatherer populations in both Africa and South America, show precisely the same gap between men and women. The same also holds true for several monkey and ape species, and that fact suggests the cause is tied up in millions of years of evolution.

[Duke University biologist Susan Alberts] speculates as to three possible explanations. One is that men are more likely to take risks that could lead to early deaths...Another hypothesis is that females have more effective immune systems — either because higher testosterone in males potentially suppress male immunity or as a byproduct of evolution's emphasis on the female reproductive role.

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The final possible explanation lies in primate genetics. Women have two X chromosomes, while men have one X and one Y. In this theory, women live longer because they have a backup X chromosome that can guard against harmful mutations on one of the chromosomes. That's unlikely, however, since one of a woman's two X chromosomes is actually inactive.

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**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why men keep dying sooner than women](#)**