

Lifestyle as a factor in longevity in the Pollog region

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ABSTRACT

At least once a lifetime, everyone asks himself or the others whether he wants to live long or have a healthy and happy life? A difficult question to respond but the ever increasing efforts of scientists to extend longevity are increasingly evident.

The number of people who live long has changed over time. There are different reasons on what longevity may depend on, such as: genetics, lifestyle where nutrition, physical work, different diseases etc. take part. The question of the study is: *Which factors of lifestyle contribute to longevity in the Pollog valley?* In this study lifestyle (nutrition, physical work, diseases, parents' longevity, leisure, sleeping habits) and the type of personality are examined. The research included 30 subjects aged over 75 which compels the sample to be intentional, of which 15 subjects were male and 15 female. The semi-structured interview and A – B personality test is used to collect data. The results show that the subjects feed mostly on milk products (87%), fruit & vegetables (80%), corn products (80%) and cereals (70%), have one parent who lived long (83%), have not had much free time when they have been young, have worked physically (93%), have regular sleeping habits and 77% of them are type B of personality. From the results we can conclude that factors such as: food, work, genetics, sleeping habits and the type of personality contribute to longevity.

Keywords: longevity, lifestyle, type of personality.

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Introduction

From the past until nowadays the number of people who live longer has been changed. There are different reasons for the issue of human life longevity and they are as follows: genes, the style of life where nutrition, physical and health services are part of it. Some researchers say that it is useless to relate the people's life longevity with the issue of diet since there have been a lot of cases where people have had a very bad diet and they have been remembered for their long life.

According to the World Health Organization health is defined as: "The complete physical, mental and social welfare state and not simply the absence of sicknesses and helplessness of the body" (WHO, 1948).

The main question of this scientific research is: Which factors of life style contribute to the human longevity in the Pollog region? The aim of this research is to verify if there are any similarities in the lifestyle and to analyze if there are differences between genders in their lifestyle. As part of this research we have also included

which factors contribute in the people's life longitude with an age beyond seventy five. These factors are included in this research based upon the researches of other scientists which have tried connecting the life longitude and some factors as: diet, physical work, life in the city or village, heritage, physical health etc.

In the last decades there have been done essential advancements in medical modelling of the basic causes of death, quantifying of the danger factors which are closely connected to smoking, high blood values, cholesterol and the body mass index (Khaw, et all, 2008). This scientific inquiry is focused on understanding the measurable parameters which are connected to sicknesses and pathology. But the numbers of death analysis are bigger than the studies related to what really kills people as well as what keeps them alive.

The life longitude includes the life period from the time they were born until they died. Different from the other researches where they have been focused on the reasons of the death, this research will try to focus on and will also try to research is there are any similar common factors of the life style at people with age above seventy five.

The term itself life style has been used by the psychiatrist Alfred Adler as one of the descriptive constructions of the personality dynamics. It reflects the unique way, without any feelings and repetitions (or avoidance) the main life tasks of the individuals: friendship, love and work. (Boeree, 2004). In wider sense the life style includes the self concept, the self ideal (or ideal ego), an ethical attitude and a wider view of the world. The life style is also expressed at work in their free time, the behavioral patterns (in individual manners) in the activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values and distribution of income. He also reflects the self image of the person or the self-concept, the manner of how do they see themselves and how do the others see them. The life style is a combination of motives, needs and wishes of the person and it is affected by other factors as culture, family, reference groups and social classes.

The concept of life longevity includes body development from the moment when they were born until the time that they die. The science believes that life longevity depends upon genes that we as human beings posses and inhere. This theory that our potential age it is decided upon the moment of conception and the evidence to support this theory is not absent. They say that genes could explain or define 35 % of the life longevity, while the other part depends upon behavior, exposures and luck. The healthy life style affects the growth of the life longevity in the third phase of life: five years for women and six years for men (Christensen, & Vaupel, 1996).

Different data in relation to changes of the people's life longevity in different countries of the world show that life longevity is increasing for many years and it is longer than it was in the past. This is a very positive development for all of those who show interest on dieting.

Problem Statement

The number of people who live long has changed over time. There are different reasons on what longevity may depend on, such as: genetics, diet, physical work etc.

Research Questions

The main question of this scientific research is: Which lifestyle factors contribute to human longevity in the Pollog region?

Purpose of the Study

In this research we have aimed at the following questions:

- Have the respondents included in this research worked physically in their youth or when they were mature?
- Do the respondents included in this research have similar ways of dieting?
- Are they healthy and were they healthy in their early life, did they have and serious illness?
- What type of personality are they?

Research Methods

In this scientific inquiry we have included 30 respondents. The sample of this inquiry is intentional as a result of the age the respondents who were included in the research. The respondents are beyond the age of 75, where the youngest respondent was 75 years old while the oldest was 99 years old. They were 15 females and 15 males respondent of the Pollog region. All the respondents who participated in this inquiry were volunteers. The time period that this inquiry took place was in August 2016.

The instruments which were used in this inquiry are: half structured interviews for the factors of life style and the test for the personality type A or B which measure the type of personality according to the reactions in stressful situations.

Findings

This inquiry is a qualitative one and the results are presented in percentage and charts. The result analysis is done separately for each life style factor for which we have interviewed the respondents or participants in this research. Regarding the life longevity of their ancestors (parents of the respondents) the results that appeared are as follows: 67% of the female respondents have reported that one of their parents has lived beyond the age of 75, while 33% reported that both of their parents have lived beyond the age of 75 and they were at the percentage of 100. This generally means that the majority of the respondents had one their parents who lived beyond the age of 75 (83% of the respondents).

As far as physical activity is concerned from 15 male respondents 87% of them stated that they have done hard physical work and only 13% have done easy jobs, while 15 of the female respondents 100% from them declared that they started to do physical work from their younger age. Overallly from the included respondents in this inquiry 93% have done physical work from the time when they were small, while 7% easier jobs. Some of the respondents even in the later age continued to do physical jobs and the percentage of males is 87% while from

women 47% who still continued to do hard physical work (agriculture), while 13% of males and 13% of females have continued to do easier physical jobs, which means that they are still physically active.

Table 1. Presenting in percentage the consumed food products by the respondents

	Milk products	Fruits and vegetables	Meat	Drinks	Cereals	Corn products	Pulp
Males	13	13	5	2	9	12	9
Females	13%	11	5	4	12	12	10
Total	26	24	10	6	21	24	19
%	87%	80%	33%	20%	70%	80%	63%

The food that was more consumed by the respondents was: 87% of dairy products, 80% of fruits and vegetables, 70% of cereals, 80% of corn products. While the food that they haven't consumed in large amounts either in the past as well as now are meat and artificial drinks. The food that they consumed in the past were largely prepared with butter (80% of the respondents stated) and now they prepare it with oil, while 20% of the respondents continued to prepare food with butter.

Table 2. The difference between the percentage of the absence of the difficult diseases between males and females

	% The absence of sicknesses	CR for %	$\sigma D\%$	P
Males	80%	2.25	17.8	0.05
Females	40%			

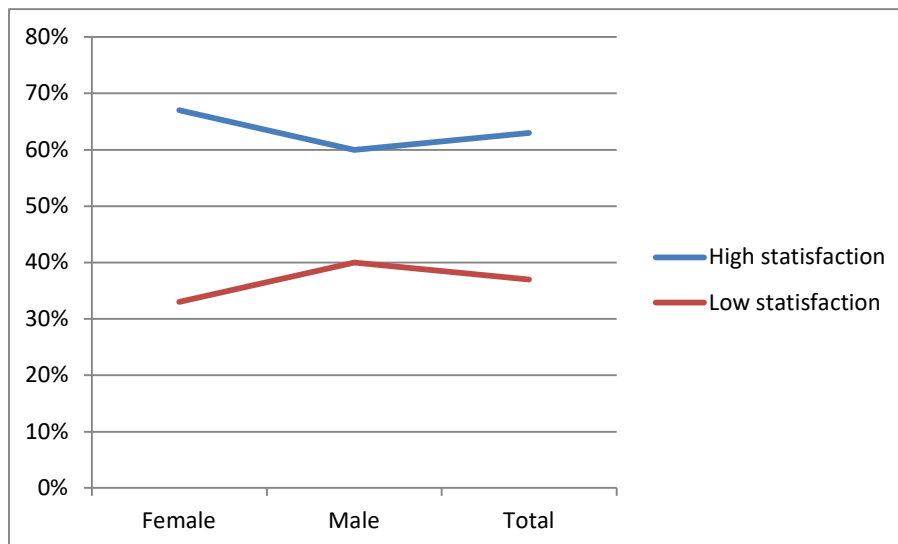
When the respondents have been asked if they were suffering from any diseases, 80% of the male respondents stated that they didn't have except mild body pains, only 20% have non chronic or chronic diseases as for an example a problem with the senses, blood pressure, diabetis etc. while 40% of the females stated that they didn't have any diseases and 60% were suffering from pains in the legs, sense problems, diabetis, blood pressure etc. Totally: 40% of the respondents in the inquiry have mild diseases, while 60% didn't have any disease. In order to prove all this, there are statistical differences which are very important for males and females regarding their health, we can figure out the difference with the help of the difference in the percentage. The result in the tabel 2 show ($t=2.25$ important in $p<0.05$) that there are important statistical differences between the two genders as far as the appearance of diseases is concerned. Regarding the results that we came up with it shows that males are healthier than females.

The respondents were being asked for their free time: Did they have free time and how did they spent it? Both of the female and male respondents answered that they didn't have too much free time especially in their past since they were working, looking after their families but when they had free time they usually went for a walk, or walked in nature, visited their cousins, friends (social interactions) etc.

All of the respondents have similar sleeping habits and they usually sleep from 21:00 until 6:00 o'clock. The respondents were asked for their pasts, if they could go back in time what is the thing that they could improve, 53% stated that they have achieved most of their life goals, only 47% would have loved to continue education if

they had better economical conditions.

The respondents were also asked if they are satisfied from the life that they lived. From all the respondents 63% stated that they were satisfied from the life that they lived until now, only 37% were not so satisfied from the life that they have lived until now, where females were happier than males and the percentage is females are 67% happier than males while concerning males the percentage is 60%.



Graph 1. The percentage result for life satisfaction.

As far as the negative habits are concerned like smoking and drinking alcohol, neither of the female respondents have never drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes, while 47% of males have smoked cigarettes in their past and only a respondent has sometimes drank alcohol, 53% has not drank alcohol and smoked cigarettes.

The achieved results for the type A or B personality show us that 15% of the female respondents 5 (33%) were between type A and B personality and from males only 2 (13%) were between A and B personality. The majority of the respondents who are included in this inquiry were type B personality: 10 (67%) females and 13 (87%) males. Those that belong in type A of behavior, they experience more stress in difference with those that belong to the type B of the behavior. What is type A of behavior?

A complex of actions and emotions which could be seen in every person, which are aggressively included in a chronic fight, with a unstoppable desire to achieve more an more in a lesser and lessees time limit and if there is a need they can achieve it against things and enemies. This is the way that both of the cardiologists Friedman and Rosenman have defined type A personality (Karaj, 2005).

The type A personality could be anybody which presents and has these signs: a continuous feeling of time emergency, uncut hurry, chronic activity, ambitious, physically tensed without humor. These are some of the characteristics of the type A behavior. All the other qualities contrary to these belong to the type B behavior.

Conclusion

In this scientific research we have tried to do an inquiry on people's life style beyond the age of 75. In

the life style are included: physical work, diet, health, life longevity of the respondent's ancestors, free time, different habits (sleeping, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes)

As far as diet is concerned and the results of it we can conclude that these respondents in the past used butter, ate traditional and natural food (dairy product, fruits and vegetables, corn products, cereals) while 27% still continue with this old way of dieting. Our results match with the results of other researchers with a similar use of food. During the interview 70% of the respondents had normal weight and only 30% were overweight. A very significant difference between genders is the issue of the diseases that they have suffered. Regarding this issue 80% of the males stated that they haven't suffered any serious illnesses and only 40% of females stated that they didn't have any disease. A better picture related to this are the statistics that show that males above 75 years old included in this inquiry are healthier than females.

The majority of the respondents who had type B of personality are people that do not rush, do not work more than one job at the same time, do not compete, they are not very ambitious, they don't have physical tension they have a good sense of humor. As regarding life style big differences between males and females are not very much seen it means that regardless the gender the majority of the respondents had similar life style.

If we want to live longer and we have genes that enable us for such a thing we have to live such a life style described in this research.

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