

New study: Living near the ocean may help prolong life

A recent study from Ohio State University found that living near the ocean – particularly within about 50km of the coast – is strongly linked to a longer than average lifespan.

A recent study from Ohio State University found that living near the ocean—specifically within about 30 miles of the coast—is strongly associated with a longer than average life expectancy. Meanwhile, people living near large rivers or lakes in inland urban areas don't get the same benefit, and may even live slightly shorter than average.

Using data from more than 66,000 neighborhoods across the United States, the team analyzed the relationship between geographic location—specifically, proximity to different bodies of water—and life expectancy. The results showed that coastal residents were likely to live at least a year longer than the national average of 79 years. In contrast, urban residents living near large inland bodies of water had a life expectancy of approximately 78 years.

In addition, people living in rural areas near rivers and lakes may also receive certain health benefits, although not as obvious as in coastal areas.



Experts explain this difference by saying that areas near the coast tend to have milder climates, fewer days of extreme heat, cleaner air, more space for outdoor activities, convenient transportation systems, and higher average incomes. Conversely, areas near inland bodies of water are more prone to pollution, lack of physical

activity infrastructure, higher risk of flooding, and more widespread poverty – factors that contribute to lower quality of life and longevity.

There is already evidence that living near water increases physical activity, improves cardiovascular health and reduces obesity rates. However, this study is the first to comprehensively analyze the differences between different types of 'blue space' – such as oceans, rivers and lakes – in relation to longevity in the US.

The results show that not all water bodies provide the same benefits, and that geographic location – combined with social and environmental conditions – can create significant disparities in public health.

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