

# Age-Related Changes in Factors Associated with Loss of Good Health

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## **Abstract**

Using longitudinal data from the Canadian National Population Health Survey, proportional hazards models were used to identify factors associated with loss of good health (from good to poor self-rated health) over a 14-year period among persons aged 20 to 44, 45 to 64, and 65 and over. The data show that about 30 percent of persons aged 20-44 lost their good health over this period, compared to about 50 and 80 percent of middle and old age persons respectively. The data further reveal that determinants of health loss vary across the three age groups—loss of good health among young and middle-aged adults was significantly associated with socioeconomic factors, and less so with behavioural and psychosocial ones. Elderly persons, on the other hand, who previously smoked or who remained physically inactive with an unhealthy body weight were most likely to experience loss of good health. Alcohol consumption and social involvement helped to prevent health decline in old age. The results help to better understand determinants of healthy aging and to develop policies and programs aimed at keeping people healthy as they grow old.