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## Want to Live to 100? Researchers Discover Trends for Longevity/ 27.5.2013• A. Velasco• Posted At 07:48 PM



A new study has uncovered distinctive trends among men who were fortunate enough to live to the ripe old age of 100.

Longevity scientists, who study aging in the human body and discover new ways to prolong human life, set out to see if males who lived to 100 had different physical characteristics when they were younger compared to their shorter-lived peers. The peer-reviewed results, published in the academic journal *Biodemography and Social Biology*, showed some surprising results.

### A peaceful life filled with children

The scientists first started by looking at the characteristics of 240 confirmed centenarians, who were all born in 1887 and who all had U.S. World War I civil draft registration cards.

These draft cards were then matched with shorter-lived men who all had the same race, year of birth, and place of draft registration. This allowed them to compare physical characteristics, lifestyles and occupations of both centenarians and shorter-lived men when they were all just 30 years old.

Some conclusions were not particularly surprising. For instance, Dr. Leonid Gavrilov,, co-author of the study and Principal Investigator of the NIH research project at NORC at the University of Chicago, said of the findings: "Our study found that males with "stout" body build (being in the heaviest 15 percent of the population at age 30) have much smaller chances to live to 100 years, compared to men with medium and slender body build. Obesity prevents longevity."

While it's no secret that obesity prevents longevity, there were a few secrets to long life that the study unearthed.

"On the other hand, being a farmer, and having a large number of children (4 or more) at age 30, increases the chances of exceptional longevity for males," Dr Gavrilov continued. The scientist went on to say that having the occupation of farmer also increased men's likelihood of living to the age of 100. It seems that having a slower paced, more peaceful life – but for the sounds of many children running about – really may be the secret to fighting off old age.

### Consequences of longer life

When asked why scientists would study old draft cards, or try to find trends among people who have lived longer than usual, Dr. Gavrilov said: "People with exceptional longevity may represent particularly interesting outcomes of successful, yet unintended experiments of Nature on delaying ageing and preventing age-related diseases. We can learn a lot from analysis of such natural life-extension experiments. Therefore, studies on centenarians could become a goldmine for unravelling the secrets of human longevity."

Of course, living longer also brings its own unique sets of problems. For a person retiring at 65, becoming a centenarian would mean spending a full 35 years in retirement, or being a pensioner nearly as long as they had been a part of the workforce.

Arabela Velasco of PensionCalculator.org said of the research: "We're all secretly planning to live to 100, but how many of us are truly prepared for the costs of such a long retirement? As scientists get closer to unlocking the secrets of longevity, our responsibility to save for the future and financially protect our longer lifespans grows as well."