

Parenthood can boost your longevity

WANT to live longer? Have children.

If you don't die early from child-rearing stress, parenthood will boost your longevity chances, according to a new study out of Sweden.

Researchers at the Karolinska Institute used national registry data to track 1.5 million Swedes born between 1911 and 1925 as they lived through their last years.

While the risk of death naturally increased with age for all adults, the team found that those with children had greater longevity.

"Support from adult children to ageing parents may be of importance for parental health and longevity," researchers write. "At old age, the stress of parenthood is likely to be lower, and instead, parents can benefit from social support from their children.

"In addition, parents have, on average, more healthful behaviours than childless individuals."

The study, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, also revealed



A study out of Sweden suggests that the support adult children provide ageing parents may contribute to seniors living longer, in comparison to those without children. — TNS

that having children is actually more beneficial as you age, and it is particularly greater for men than women.

Men who were not married, but had children, were also living longer than those with a spouse.

For example, 60-year-old men who had children had about two years more of life than those without, with a life expectancy of 20.2 and 18.4 years respectively.

For women at 60, those with children had life expectancies of 24.6 years, while those without children had 23.1.

The life expectancy difference continued as the study group grew older.

By 80, parents had a life expectancy of 7.7 years for men and 9.5 years for women.

In comparison, the 80-year-olds without children had a life expectancy of seven years for men with-

out children and 8.9 years for women without children.

The sex of the child had no influence on their parent's longevity, according to researchers, but it should be noted that this finding was based only on families with one child.

"Perhaps being the only child is related to a greater responsibility of parents, reducing the difference in the amount of help given by sons and daughters," the study authors write.

Of course parenthood isn't the only thing boosting longevity.

"In terms of all other causes that would affect your death risk in these old ages, having a child is not among the greatest ones," study co-author Karin Modig said. "But it is still a 1.5% difference (for 90-year-old men) which is still substantial." — Miami Herald/Tribune News Service