



Aichele, S., P. Rabbitt, & P. Ghisletta (2016)

*Think Fast, Feel Fine, Live Long: A 29-Year Study of Cognition, Health, and Survival in Middle-Aged and Older Adults*

in G. Ritschard & M. Studer (eds), Proceedings of the International Conference on Sequence Analysis and Related Methods, Lausanne, June 8-10, 2016, p. 893.



## Think Fast, Feel Fine, Live Long: A 29-Year Study of Cognition, Health, and Survival in Middle-Aged and Older Adults

Stephen Aichele, Patrick Rabbitt, and Paolo Ghisletta

**Abstract** In a 29-year study of 6203 individuals with ages ranging 41–96 years at initial assessment, we evaluated the relative and combined influence of 65 mortality risk factors—which included socio-demographic variables, lifestyle attributes, medical indices, and multiple cognitive abilities. Reductions in mortality risk were most associated with higher self-rated health, being female, fewer years smoking, and smaller life span decrements in processing speed. Thus, two psychological variables—subjective health status and processing speed—were among the top survival predictors. We suggest that these psychological attributes, unlike more narrowly defined risk factors, are indicative of (and influenced by) a broad range of health-related behaviors and characteristics. Information about these attributes can be obtained with relatively little effort or cost and—given the tractability of these measures in different cultural contexts—may prove expedient for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of conditions related to increased mortality risk in diverse human populations.

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