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> An Online Calculator to Help Senior Citizens Predict Their Remaining Healthy and Able Years

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Want to know how many healthy years you have left if you are 65 or older? Faculty at the University of Washington School of Public Health have created an online calculator to help you figure it out.

The algorithm is based on data from the longitudinal, multi-site, federally-funded Cardiovascular Health Study (CHS), led by the Collaborative Health Studies Coordinating Center at the UW. The study collected extensive health



Photo: Katherine Turner

information on its almost 6,000 participants for more than 20 years. For each person, the number of years in which they reported excellent, very good or good health (Years of Healthy Life) and the number when they were able to perform all the activities of daily living (Years of Able Life) - such as walking, dressing, eating - were calculated from the CHS database. At the beginning of the study, the participants ranged in age from 65 to 99 years; the average was 73.

CHS researchers, led by Dr. Paula Diehr, professor emeritus in Biostatistics and in Health Services, used the data to develop a "healthy life calculator" that can help predict the number of Healthy and Able years a person has remaining if they are at least 65 years old. The questions in the calculator are

based on the predictors in the study that could be assessed by questionnaire and that were most closely correlated with self-reported health and independent living in old age.

CHS participants did not include those who, at the beginning of the study, used a wheelchair at home, were being treated for cancer, or who were unable to answer questions without assistance. And the results are based on averages. Not everyone will have an average result, and personal situations can differ.

Said Dr. Alice Arnold, associate director of the coordinating center, "There are several calculators available to estimate years of life. What is unique about our calculator is the ability to estimate remaining years of life in good health and without a limitation that typically compromises independent living."

Added Dr. Diehr, "We put a lot of effort into making this calculator useful for the general population of seniors. We hope it will be widely used and that it will help them plan for their futures."

The calculator can be found at <http://healthylifecalculator.org> (<http://healthylifecalculator.org>).

The paper, published in *Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine*, is available at

<http://ggm.sagepub.com/content/1/2333721415605989.full.pdf+html>
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