

Gender gap in Health and Survival and the Impact of Population Aging on Working Life Expectancy

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The female-male health-survival paradox describes the phenomenon where despite women having longer lives, they tend to report higher rates of morbidity. While previous research has explored gender differences in health and mortality, the paradox and its mechanisms remain not fully understood. This research offers insights into the complex factors that contribute to the gender gap in life and health expectancy and highlights the need for continued efforts to improve health outcomes for both men and women across all ages and causes of death. The findings suggest that as mortality is delayed, the significant age contributors to the gender gap in mortality shift towards older ages, but the shift is not uniform and can involve either compression or dispersion based on the cause of death and country. The study also highlights the effectiveness of Functional Data Analysis in understanding demographic patterns. Additionally, it reveals that while behavioral risk factors attenuate the cancer-free life expectancy disadvantage of men compared to women, being widowed amplifies the depression-free life expectancy disadvantage for men. Furthermore, governments globally raising retirement ages due to aging populations may impact social and health outcomes. Examining healthy working life expectancy among those aged 50 and above, disparities based on race/ethnicity, education, and smoking habits emerge. Socioeconomic factors and smoking behavior contribute to differences, with men and non-smokers experiencing longer healthy working life expectancy. Lower-educated individuals face 1.2–1.5 years less than their higher-educated counterparts. Addressing socioeconomic inequalities and promoting non-smoking habits are crucial for sustainable workforce outcomes.