

Women's rights are good for men's health

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In societies where women are equal to men, males stand a better chance of living longer, a new study shows.

Researchers from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and colleagues found gender differences in [mortality rates](#) are higher in more patriarchal societies.

Men living in the top 25 percent most patriarchal societies were 31 percent more likely to die than [men](#) in the least patriarchal quartile, compared to mortality rates for women. This only includes the societies with high quality infrastructures that provide reliable data; the true difference may be even higher, according to the study led by U-M researcher Daniel Kruger.

Males in societies where they are more socially dominant tend to engage in riskier behaviors that can lead to death, the study says. These societies also tend to have more resources and [social status](#) concentrated in a smaller group of elite men, compared to those that are more egalitarian overall. Men with greater control of resources and social status historically have had more reproductive success, according to the study.

In their quest for social dominance, not only will men go up against other men to gain power, they will engage in other forms of competitive, and sometimes dangerous, behavior.

"Gender inequality is inherently related to inequality in general, and this is bad for both men and women's [health](#), though especially harmful to

men in increasing the risk of death," Kruger said.

The researchers used sociodemographic and [mortality data](#) from the World Health Organization to study death rates for males and females. They examined all external behavioral causes, such as accidents, homicides and suicides, and internal behavioral causes, including cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease and infectious diseases. Men in the top 25 percent most patriarchal societies were 20 percent more likely to die of internal causes than those in the bottom 25 percent, and more than twice as likely to die from behavioral causes (as compared to mortality rates for women).

Kruger said there have been numerous studies on the health effects of inequality on women, but little in evidence on the role patriarchy has on the health of men. The study is published in the American Psychological Association publication *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*.

Provided by University of Michigan

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