

GENETICS, JOKE

# WHY MEN DIE EARLIER

17.12.2007

It took me nearly one hour to locate also this series of [pictures on the net](#) after having seen them recently in the talk of a Spanish colleague.

Yes, there are also more serious comments for example in the [Behavioural Issues Blog](#)

- the Grandmother effect: ... old women can enhance the fitness of their non-descendant offspring ...
- Immune system issues: ... males invest less in long term fitness (innate immune function) than in short term things, like mating and mate acquisition
- Antagonistic pleiotropy: ... many of the traits that make a male successful at mating and mate acquisition makes them more likely to suffer in the long term.
- Y-linked effects: ... Think of the Y, only found in 1/2 the population, and only in 1 copy in those. Selection against detrimental mutations is weaker.
- X- linked effect: Here, in the male, all recessive alleles are expressed. This might cause decreased male longevity...
- Mitochondrial optimization- Mitochondria are maternally inherited organelles...

But do we really need such explanations? Or is our perception of male longevity being biased? I remember a study of Marc Luy about "Causes of male excess mortality: insights from cloistered populations" in Pop Dev Rev 2003;29:647 who traced this phenomenon back back to the first life tables by Struyck (1749) and Deparcieux (1746). The survival advantage of women increased continuously during the twentieth century while this trend has been slowed down only in the 80ies. A pointer in Medical Tribune now to his new "Klosterstudie" showed even more unexpected findings: [When analyzing 11,600 nuns and monks from 12 Bavarian monasteries](#) the life expectancy between both sexes differed only by one year, yea, yea.

a view from inside of [Kloster Andechs](#) Jan 2007



CC-BY-NC Science Surf accessed 11.01.2026 [🔗](#)