

# Subjective Life Expectancy and Health Behaviors Among STD Clinic Patients

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**Objectives:** To examine whether people who expect to live longer engage in healthier behaviors relative to people who expect to live shorter lives. **Methods:** Patients (994 black Americans, 373 white Americans) from a publicly funded clinic estimated their expected survival age and reported their health behaviors (alcohol, tobacco, and drug use; sexual behaviors; physical activity; and sleep). **Results:** Subjective life expectancy (SLE)

was a significant predictor of health behavior for both men and women. Race moderated the SLE-health behavior relation but only for alcohol and tobacco use. **Conclusions:** Future research should explore the potential health benefits of shifting SLE from a more limited to an expansive perspective.

**Key words:** life expectancy, health behaviors, race, gender, United States

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