
PERSONALITY MEASURED AS MURRAY'S PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND ALL-CAUSE MORTALITY: 41 YEARS OF FOLLOW-UP OF A POPULATION-BASED SAMPLE

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Objectives To examine the associations between personality traits, measured as Murray's psychological needs, and mortality over 41 years in men and women and among the young and the old.

Methods We used a general population sample aged 18–65 ($n = 1094$) examined in 1970 according to the Cesarec-Marke Personality Schedule (CMPS). Mortality data came from national vitality registers up to 2011. The associations between eleven traits – achievement, affiliation, aggression, defence of status, guilt feelings, dominance, exhibition, autonomy, nurturance, order, and succorance – were examined using factor analysis, and their associations with mortality in Cox proportional hazard models.

Results During the 41-year follow-up, 513 persons died (47 %). In men aged 26–45, achievement and affiliation were associated with mortality: HR = 1.19, 95% CI 1.04-1.36 and HR = 1.16, 95% CI 1.01-1.33 per step on a stanine scale. In men aged 18–25, nurturance was protective: HR = 0.77, 95% CI, 0.64-0.98 per stanine. In women aged 18–25, feelings of guilt increased the risk of mortality, while dominance was protective: HR = 1.38, 95% CI 1.09-1.75 per stanine, and HR = 0.74, 95% CI 0.55-0.99 per stanine, respectively. In women aged 46–65, exhibition increased the risk of mortality: HR = 1.09, 95% CI, 1.00-1.18 per stanine. There were no significant associations when all age groups were combined.

Conclusions Our findings suggest that personality traits, measured as Murray's needs, are associated with an increased risk of all-cause mortality, but the associations differ according to age at assessment and sex.