



Volunteering

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Volunteering can make you happier and help you live longer, according to a new study. A research paper published on Friday in the journal BMC Public Health says doing good deeds for others boosts your mental health and increases your longevity. Researchers from the UK's University of Exeter reviewed 40 academic papers into the effects of volunteerism on our health. They found that volunteers had lower rates of depression, an increased sense of well-being, and a 22 per cent reduction in the chances of dying within the next seven years. Australians lead the way in volunteering, with an estimated 36 per cent of the population lending a hand.

Lead researcher Dr Suzanne Richards said: "Our systematic review shows that volunteering is associated with improvements in mental health, but more work is needed to establish whether volunteering is actually the cause." She added: "It is still unclear whether biological and cultural factors and social resources that are often associated with better health and survival are also associated with a willingness to volunteer in the first place." In a separate study from the University of Michigan, researchers suggested three reasons why volunteering may be beneficial. First, it involves physical activity; second, the social connections we make help to reduce our stress; and third, it gives us a deep sense of happiness.

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New Words or Phrases

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