

Low muscle strength in teens predictor of diseases, suicide (study)

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Low muscle strength during play time may be an indicator of a medical condition.

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Having low muscle strength during the teenage years appears to be associated with certain illnesses, [depression](http://www.examiner.com/topic/depression) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/depression>) and [suicide](http://www.examiner.com/topic/suicide) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/suicide>).

According to a public release by EurekAlert on Jan. 10, researchers at the University of Granada (Spain), the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm (Sweden) and the University of Helsinki (Finland) found teenagers with low muscle strength were at a higher risk of premature death than stronger teenagers.

The teens with [low muscular strength](http://canal.ugr.es/health-science-and-technology/item/61915) (<http://canal.ugr.es/health-science-and-technology/item/61915>) had a 30% higher risk of committing suicide before the age of 55 years and a 65% higher risk of developing psychiatric diseases, such as [depression](http://www.examiner.com/article/tomatoes-may-be-a-natural-antidepressant-for-depression) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/tomatoes-may-be-a-natural-antidepressant-for-depression>).

Additionally, the researchers found low muscular strength during childhood and adolescence was a

strong predictor of early death from cardiovascular disease.

The new findings show a low muscular strength in teenagers is just as powerful a predictor as [obesity \(http://www.examiner.com/article/obesity-crisis-may-be-from-fda-hormone-approval-to-our-food-supply\)](http://www.examiner.com/article/obesity-crisis-may-be-from-fda-hormone-approval-to-our-food-supply) and high blood pressure.

The study's findings suggest giving muscle strength tests to children and teenagers to identify and implement early intervention programs to strengthen muscles.

While these interventions may stave off early mortality rates, the connection between muscle strength and [mental health \(http://www.examiner.com/mental-health\)](http://www.examiner.com/mental-health) conditions is not clear. It is not known if improving muscle strength will lower the mortality rates or just add to the frustration of having weak muscles.

Children get frustrated easily when they want to be active but have physical limitations. They may want to excel at sports but find they are physically incapable. [Adults pushing children \(http://www.examiner.com/behavior-and-discipline-in-national/frances-childress\)](http://www.examiner.com/behavior-and-discipline-in-national/frances-childress) over their physical limitations (seen a lot in competitive sports) will create unnecessary stress on the teenager, which may contribute to the adverse mental health conditions.

While physical limitations and muscle weakness may be contributing factors for the higher rates of suicide and [depression \(http://www.examiner.com/article/tomatoes-may-be-a-natural-antidepressant-for-depression\)](http://www.examiner.com/article/tomatoes-may-be-a-natural-antidepressant-for-depression), parents are advised to be extremely careful in their expectations of their children.

The [longitudinal study \(http://canal.ugr.es/health-science-and-technology/item/61915\)](http://canal.ugr.es/health-science-and-technology/item/61915) was published in the *Medical Journal*.

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