



# Fewer Centenarians: Declining Life Expectancy Hinders Longevity Goals

## Description

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Few people get to celebrate their 100th birthday

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Are you destined to reach the centennial mark? The prospect seems unlikely for most individuals, with the growth in life expectancy tapering off in affluent nations, despite advancements in healthcare and living standards. This hints at a possible biological threshold dictating the upper limit of human longevity, although some experts remain optimistic about the potential for further breakthroughs.

The deceleration in life expectancy contrasts sharply with the rapid strides made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where each passing decade saw an additional three years added to the average lifespan in developed regions, a phenomenon researchers refer to as "radical life extension." From a mere 20-50 years in the mid-1800s, life expectancy soared to the 50s-70s by the 1990s.

Expectations were high in the early 21st century that newborns would routinely cross the 100-year mark, but current data indicates a less rosy reality.

Recent analysis by [S. Jay Olshansky](#) and his team from the University of Illinois in Chicago reveals a 6.5-year increase in average life expectancy at birth from the 1990s to 2019 across nine affluent nations. While the US reached 78.8 in 2019, Hong Kong boasted an impressive 85.

However, the pace of growth has slowed in most countries in the last decade compared to the previous two, with the US lagging behind due to factors like the opioid crisis. Conversely, Hong Kong stands out as the sole exception, experiencing an accelerated rate of life expectancy gains post-2010, although the exact reasons remain unclear.

Projections based on existing trends suggest that men may not surpass an average life expectancy of 84, and women 90. Additionally, only a small fraction of today's newborns are anticipated to see their 100th birthday.

The recent plateau in advancements could be attributed to reaching the zenith of environmental and healthcare improvements in the 20th century, leading to a possible biological barrier to further age extensions. While some, like [Jan Vijg](#), share this view, others, like [Gerry McCartney](#) from the University of Glasgow, believe that policy decisions impacting social benefits and healthcare services have been pivotal in curbing life expectancy growth in recent years. Nevertheless, [Michael Rose](#) at the University of California, Irvine, remains hopeful that with robust investment in anti-ageing research, radical life extension might be on the horizon once more, particularly in developed nations.

In spite of the present stagnation, Olshansky emphasizes the significance of the continued increase in life expectancy, urging us to cherish the gift of longevity.

Topics:

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Prospect** /'prɒs.pɛkt/ (noun): The possibility or likelihood of some future occurrence.
2. **Tapering** /'teɪ.pər.ɪŋ/ (verb): To diminish gradually in extent or amount.
3. **Deceleration** /,diː.səl.ə'reɪ.fən/ (noun): A reduction in speed or rate.
4. **Threshold** /'θrɛʃ.həʊld/ (noun): The level at which something begins or changes.
5. **Zenith** /'ziː.nəθ/ (noun): The highest point reached by a celestial or other object.
6. **Aspirations** /,æs.pə'reɪ.fənz/ (noun): A hope or ambition of achieving something.

## Comprehension Questions

### Multiple Choice

1. What phenomenon do researchers refer to as an additional three years added to the average lifespan in developed regions each passing decade?  
Option: Radical life extension  
Option: Biological threshold  
Option: Centennial mark  
Option: Life expectancy growth
2. Which country had an impressive average life expectancy of 85 in 2019?  
Option: US  
Option: Hong Kong  
Option: Australia  
Option: Japan
3. What is one of the factors contributing to the US lagging behind in life expectancy gains?  
Option: Environmental pollution  
Option: Economic recession  
Option: Opioid crisis  
Option: Lack of healthcare advancements
4. Who remains hopeful about the potential for radical life extension through investment in anti-ageing research?  
Option: Jan Vijg



- Option: Gerry McCartney
- Option: Michael Rose
- Option: S. Jay Olshansky

5. What possible biological barrier is mentioned as a reason for the recent stagnation in life expectancy growth?

- Option: Social benefits impact
- Option: Environmental improvements
- Option: Healthcare services impact
- Option: Life expectancy plateau

6. Who emphasized the significance of the continued increase in life expectancy?

- Option: Jan Vijg
- Option: Gerry McCartney
- Option: Michael Rose
- Option: S. Jay Olshansky

### True-False

- 7. The recent analysis by S. Jay Olshansky revealed a decrease in average life expectancy in affluent nations.
- 8. Recent data indicates that a high percentage of newborns are expected to reach their 100th birthday.
- 9. Hong Kong is the only country experiencing a deceleration in life expectancy growth post-2010.
- 10. Rapid strides in life expectancy were observed in affluent nations in the 21st century.
- 11. Some believe that policy decisions affecting social benefits and healthcare services have impacted life expectancy growth.
- 12. The recent plateau in life expectancy advancements is attributed to the zenith of environmental improvements.

### Gap-Fill



13. The pace of growth has slowed in most countries in the last decade compared to the previous two, with the US lagging behind due to factors like the \_\_\_\_\_ crisis.
14. Projections suggest that men may not surpass an average life expectancy of \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Michael Rose believes that with robust investment in anti-ageing research, radical life extension might be on the horizon once more, particularly in developed \_\_\_\_\_.
16. S. Jay Olshansky revealed a 6.5-year increase in average life expectancy at birth from the 1990s to \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Gerry McCartney from the University of Glasgow believes that policy decisions impacting social \_\_\_\_\_ and healthcare services have been pivotal in curbing life expectancy growth in recent years.
18. Olshansky emphasizes the significance of the continued increase in life expectancy, urging us to cherish the gift of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Radical life extension 2. Hong Kong 3. Opioid crisis 4. Michael Rose 5. Life expectancy plateau 6. S. Jay Olshansky

**True-False:** 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False

**Gap-Fill:** 13. opioid 14. 84 15. nations 16. 2019 17. benefits 18. longevity

## Vocabulary quizzes

### Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )

1. What term is used to describe a significant development or discovery?

Option: Congestion

Option: Revolutionizing

Option: Breakthrough



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Option: Innovative

2. What are the objects or instruments carried aboard a vehicle such as a spacecraft?

Option: Payloads

Option: Multiplex

Option: Integration

Option: Mechanisms

3. Which term refers to something made or produced by human beings rather than occurring naturally?

Option: Artificial

Option: Atmospheric

Option: Self-sufficiency

Option: Tapering

4. What is the point or level at which something begins or changes?

Option: Implications

Option: Threshold

Option: Disaster

Option: Calamities

5. What term refers to the action or process of combining different elements into a whole?

Option: Groundbreaking

Option: Reusability

Option: Integration

Option: Harvesting

6. Which term describes the possibility or likelihood of future success or something happening?

Option: Criticism

Option: Prospect

Option: Approvals

Option: Guidelines

7. What term describes introducing new ideas methods or products?

Option: Innovative

Option: Revolutionizing

Option: Deceleration

Option: Zenith

8. What word describes events causing great and often sudden damage or distress?



- Option: Innovative
- Option: Calamities
- Option: Self-sufficiency
- Option: Breakthrough

9. What term refers to the maximum data transfer rate of a network or internet connection?

- Option: Deceleration
- Option: Bandwidth
- Option: Zenith
- Option: Multiplex

10. Which term describes something innovative or pioneering?

- Option: Threshold
- Option: Atmospheric
- Option: Groundbreaking
- Option: Harvesting

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

11. The new \_\_\_\_\_ cinema is equipped with multiple screens for simultaneous screenings.

12. The earthquake resulted in a humanitarian \_\_\_\_\_ with widespread destruction and loss of lives.

13. The community aimed for \_\_\_\_\_ by growing their own food and generating electricity.

14. The project cannot proceed without the necessary permits and \_\_\_\_\_ from the authorities.

15. Employees are required to follow the safety \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent accidents in the workplace.

16. The new technology is \_\_\_\_\_ the way we communicate and access information.





17. The medication dosage should be gradually reduced in a process known as \_\_\_\_\_.
18. The company reached the \_\_\_\_\_ of success with record profits and global recognition.
19. Farmers began \_\_\_\_\_ crops as soon as they ripened to ensure a good yield.
20. The new design received mixed \_\_\_\_\_ from experts in the field.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

21. The decision to cut costs had significant consequences for the company's workforce.
22. The introduction of new technology led to improved efficiency and customer satisfaction.
23. Effective communication is for the success of any team or organization.
24. The in place ensure the safety and security of the building occupants.
25. The internet speed test measures the available for data transfer.
26. The driver had to apply brakes to slow down the car's on the sharp curve.
27. The company was at the of a major breakthrough in renewable energy technology.
28. His career included becoming a top executive in the industry.
29. The innovative product is the way consumers interact with technology.
30. The new cinema offers a variety of movie genres for viewers to choose from.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Breakthrough 2. Payloads 3. Artificial 4. Threshold 5. Integration 6. Prospect 7. Innovative 8. Calamities 9. Bandwidth 10. Groundbreaking

**Gap-Fill:** 11. Multiplex 12. Disaster 13. Self-sufficiency 14. Approvals 15. Guidelines 16. Revolutionizing 17. Tapering 18. Zenith 19. Harvesting 20. Critical

**Matching sentence:** 1. Implications 2. Innovation 3. Crucial 4. Mechanisms 5. Bandwidth 6. Deceleration 7. Threshold 8. Aspirations 9. Revolutionizing 10. Multiplex



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## CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

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