



Change in the Prevalence of Diseases among Older Americans: 1984-1994

Eileen M. Crimmins
Yasuhiko Saito

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Abstract:

The reported prevalence of diseases increased among older Americans in recent years. The largest increases have been in the proportion of the population with heart disease and cancer. There has also been a decrease in the number of older persons with no disease and an increase in the proportion of people with multiple conditions. The severity of disability among women with most diseases has been reduced; among men there has been no reduction in disability. Both the prevalence of diseases and the prevalence of disability are indicators of population health that result from a complicated process of disease and disability onset, survival probability and death rates for people with and without these health conditions. While change in disease prevalence and disability has been based on analysis of two surveys representative of the U.S. noninstitutionalized population taken ten years apart and designed to monitor health change, it is possible that changes in medical knowledge or service usage could play a role in increased reporting of disease presence.

Author's affiliation:

[Eileen M. Crimmins](#)

University of Southern California

[Yasuhiko Saito](#)

Nihon University

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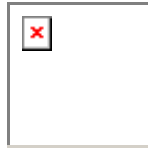
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