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Hyperkyphotic Posture Predicts Mortality in Older Community-dwelling Men and Women: A Prospective Study

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FROM: [J Am Geriatr Soc 2004 \(Oct\); 52 \(10\): 1662–1667](#)

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OBJECTIVES: To determine the association between hyperkyphotic posture and rate of mortality and cause-specific mortality in older persons.

DESIGN: Prospective cohort study.

SETTING: Rancho Bernardo, California.

PARTICIPANTS: Subjects were 1,353 participants from the Rancho Bernardo Study who had measurements of kyphotic posture made at an osteoporosis visit between 1988 and 1991.

MEASURES: Kyphotic posture was measured as the number of 1.7-cm blocks that needed to be placed under the participant's head to achieve a neutral head position when lying supine on a radiology table. Demographic and clinical characteristics and health behaviors were assessed at a clinic visit using standard questionnaires. Participants were followed for an average of 4.2 years, with mortality and cause of death confirmed using review of death certificates.

RESULTS: Hyperkyphotic posture, defined as requiring one or more blocks under the occiput to achieve a neutral head position while lying supine, was more common in men than women (44% in men, 22% of women, $P < .0001$). In age- and sex-adjusted analyses, **persons with hyperkyphotic posture had a 1.44 greater rate of mortality** (95% confidence interval (CI)=1.12-1.86, $P = .005$). In multiply adjusted models, the increased rate of death associated with hyperkyphotic posture remained significant (relative hazard=1.40, 95% CI=1.08-1.81, $P = .012$). In cause-specific mortality analyses, hyperkyphotic posture was specifically associated with an increased rate of death due to atherosclerosis.

CONCLUSION: Older men and women with hyperkyphotic posture have higher mortality rates.



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