

# One in four older adults report breathlessness

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(HealthDay)—Twenty-five percent of adults aged 70 years and older

report breathlessness, which is associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and severe fatigue, according to a study published online Sept. 7 in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Alexander K. Smith, M.D., M.P.H., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues examined the prevalence and outcomes of breathlessness in adults aged 70 years and older. Breathlessness was assessed by the question "how often do you become short of breath while awake?" Responses of often or sometimes represented a level of breathlessness that warranted clinical attention.

The researchers found that one in four participants reported breathlessness. Higher prevalence of breathlessness was seen for subpopulations with [chronic lung disease](#) (63 percent), multimorbidity (45 percent), for current smokers (38 percent), and for those with heart disease (36 percent), obesity (33 percent), and education less than high school (32 percent). There were correlations for breathlessness with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and severe fatigue. Breathlessness was also linked to lower ratings of well-being, and higher rates of clinic and emergency department visits and hospitalizations (all P < .05). "One in four adults aged 70 and older in the United States experiences [breathlessness](#), which is associated with lack of well-being, greater health services use, and a 40 percent greater risk of worsened function and 60 percent greater risk of death over the next five years," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)

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