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Attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, and making music or singing in a choir as determinants for survival: Swedish interview survey of living conditions.

[L. O. Bygren](#), [B. B. Konlaan](#), and [S. E. Johansson](#)

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: To investigate the possible influence of attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, making music or singing in a choir as determinants for survival. **DESIGN:** A simple random sample was drawn of 15,198 individuals aged 16-74 years. Of these, 85% (12,982) were interviewed by trained non-medical interviewers between 1982 and 1983 about cultural activities. They were followed up with respect to survival until 31 December 1991. **SETTING:** Swedish interview survey of living conditions

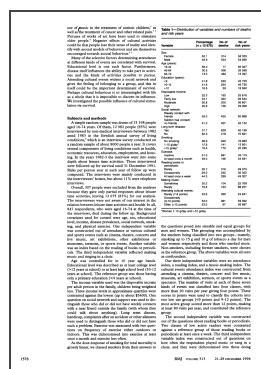
comprising a random sample of the adult Swedish population. **SUBJECTS:** 12,675 people interviewed between 1982 and 1983. **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** Survival of subjects after controlling for eight confounding variables: age, sex, education level, income, long term disease, social network, smoking, and physical exercise. **RESULTS:** 6,301 men and 6,374 women were followed up; 533 men and 314 women died during this period. The control variables influenced survival in the expected directions except for social network for men; a significant negative effective was found when the analysis was made separately for men and women. We found an influence on mortality when the eight control variables were controlled for in people who rarely attended events compared with those attending most often, the relative risk being 1.57 (95% confidence interval 1.18 to 2.09). **CONCLUSION:** Attendance at cultural events may have a positive influence on survival. Long term follow up of large samples with confounders that are well controlled for and with the cultural stimulation more highly specified should be used to try to falsify the hypothesis before experiments start.

Full text

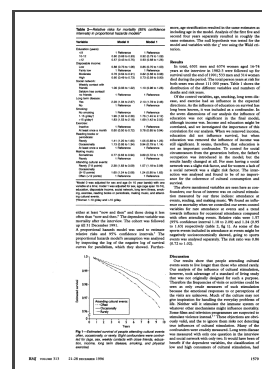
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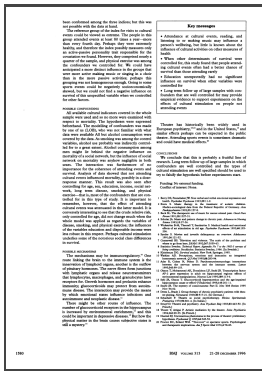
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