

DEMOCRACY IS GOOD FOR THE HEALTH, LANCET STUDY FINDS

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

A Lancet study found cardiovascular disease, tuberculosis, transport injuries and non-communicable diseases fell in countries that have turned democratic in the last 50 years. | Photo Credit: [AP](#)

People live longer in countries that became democracies from 1970 to 2015 noted a *Lancet* report released earlier this week stating that democracy reduced chances of dying from — heart diseases, cirrhosis, stroke and road accidents.

Study of 170 countries found that life expectancy improved more quickly in countries that switched to democracy over the past 50 years with this effect being far stronger than GDP growth effect.

"Free and fair elections appear important for improving adult health... most likely by increasing government accountability and responsiveness," the study said. "Democracies are more likely than autocracies to lead to health gains."

Thomas Bollyky, the lead author, director the Global Health Programme at the US Council on Foreign Relations, said: "Health and elections are inevitably linked. We estimate that, between 1994 and 2014, the increases in democratic experience resulted in 16 million fewer deaths from cardiovascular disease globally."

The study compared trends in countries that had transitioned from autocracy to democracy since 1970 with 55 states that had not. The impact of HIV was factored out, because the huge amount of foreign aid devoted to the virus would have skewed the findings.

It found that life expectancy at age 15 was 3% higher in countries 10 years after their transition to democracy than in counterparts that had not changed government type. Cardiovascular disease, tuberculosis, transport injuries and non-communicable diseases also fell.

Across the world more than several billion people live in countries where democracy hasn't established its roots yet.

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Reiterating the need for physical activity to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCD), the World Health Organisation (WHO) has

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