

Do Oscar Winners Live Longer than Less Successful Peers? A Reanalysis of the Evidence

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In an article published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* in 2001, Redelmeier and Singh reported that Academy Award-winning actors and actresses lived almost 4 years longer than their less successful peers. However, the statistical method used to derive this statistically significant difference gave winners an unfair advantage because it credited an Oscar winner's years of life before winning toward survival subsequent to winning. When the authors of the current article reanalyzed the data using methods that avoided this "immortal time" bias, the survival advantage was closer to 1 year

and was not statistically significant. The type of bias in Redelmeier and Singh's study is not limited to longevity comparisons of persons who reach different ranks within their profession; it can, and often does, occur in nonexperimental studies of life- or time-extending benefits of medical interventions. The current authors suggest ways in which researchers and readers may avoid and recognize this bias.

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