**Elderly patients are more likely to die if their doctor is over 60 because their knowledge is likely to be 'outdated'**

* **Study suggests elderly patients are more likely to die if they have an older doctor**
* **Doctors aged over 60 do more research and spend less time treating patients**
* **The new research suggests older doctors' medical knowledge may be outdated**

By [Sophie Borland, Health Editor For The Daily Mail](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Sophie+Borland,+Health+Editor+For+The+Daily+Mail)

**PUBLISHED:** 01:54, 17 May 2017 | **UPDATED:** 01:58, 17 May 2017

* [e-mail](mailto:?subject=Read%20this:%20Elderly%20patients%20are%20more%20likely%20to%20die%20if%20their%20doctor%20is%20over%2060%20because%20their%20knowledge%20is%20likely%20to%20be%20%27outdated%27&body=Elderly%20patients%20are%20more%20likely%20to%20die%20if%20their%20doctor%20is%20over%2060%20because%20their%20knowledge%20is%20likely%20to%20be%20%27outdated%27%0A%0AThe%20study%20found%20doctors%20over%2060%20who%20saw%20high%20numbers%20of%20patients%20were%20no%20less%20safe%20than%20younger%20ones.%20But%20overall%2C%20elderly%20patients%20were%20more%20likely%20to%20die%20within%2030%20days%20if%20treated%20by%20an%20older%20doctor.%0A%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4513116%2FElderly-patients-likely-die-doctor-60.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top%0A%0A%0AMost%20Read%20Articles%3A%0A%0ARevealed%3A%20What%20it%27s%20like%20to%20get%20vitamin%20injections%20-%20and%20do%20you%20really%20feel%20amazing%20after%3F%C2%A0%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4645022%2FWhat-s-like-vitamin-injections.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0AMother%20who%20gave%20birth%20to%20stillborn%20son%20after%20vomiting%20blood%20learns%20she%20has%20stage%204%20cancer%20which%20killed%20her%20child%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4641536%2FMother-stillborn-learns-stage-4-cancer.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0ALate%20abortions%20should%20be%20LEGAL%20says%20doctors%27%20union%20in%20controversial%20call%20for%20a%20law%20change%20meaning%20women%20could%20choose%20terminations%20up%20to%20their%20due%20date%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4643036%2FAbortion-DECRIMINALISED-say-medics.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0A)

**81**shares

**[106](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4513116/Elderly-patients-likely-die-doctor-60.html" \l "comments)**

[View comments](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4513116/Elderly-patients-likely-die-doctor-60.html" \l "comments)

Elderly patients are more likely to die if they are looked after by an older doctor, research suggests.

Scientists found that pensioners seen by a doctor over 60 had a higher chance of dying within the next 30 days than if they were treated by a doctor under 40.

The Harvard University researchers worked out that if 77 patients were seen by an older doctor there would be one extra death than if they were all treated by a younger doctor.

The study suggests older doctors' medical knowledge may be outdated.

Doctors over 60 tend to do more research or teaching and devote less of their time to treating patients.

Interestingly, the study found that doctors over 60 who saw high numbers of patients were no less safe than younger ones. But overall, elderly patients were more likely to die within 30 days if treated by an older doctor.

Although the research was carried out in the US, statistics from the UK suggest trends are very similar.

The latest data from the General Medical Council shows doctors over 50 are much more likely to be complained about.

Some 19 per cent of male specialist doctors over 50 have a complaint lodged against them compared to just 12 per cent of those under 50.

The statistics are similar for female specialist doctors with 11 per cent of over-50s being complained about compared to 7 per cent of younger colleagues.

The Harvard study looked at the records of 736,537 elderly hospital patients in the US treated by 18,854 doctors of all ages.

It found that 10.8 per cent of patients treated by a doctor under 40 died within 30 days.

This rose to 11.1 per cent if they were cared for by a doctor aged 40 to 49 and 11.3 per cent for a doctor aged 50 to 59. Some 12.1 per cent of patients died within 30 days if treated by a doctor aged 60 or over, the British Medical Journal reports.

The researchers concluded that 'within the same hospital, patients treated by older physicians had higher mortality than patients cared for by younger physicians, except those physicians treating high volumes of patients.'

All doctors have to prove they are still fit to practise every five years, a process known as revalidation. But some experts say older doctors should go through this process more frequently.

Study leader Dr Yusuke Tsugawa said: 'Scientific knowledge, technology, and clinical guidelines in medicine change regularly, and it may be overwhelming for older doctors to keep up with those changes and incorporate those in their clinical practice.'

Patients who research their ailments online can improve their healthcare, a study shows.

Researchers from the University of Leuven in Belgium surveyed 718 patients aged 18 to 75 who frequently looked up symptoms online, often referred to as 'Dr Google'. More than half (57 per cent) said the knowledge they gained from the internet gave them more confidence in their GP.

The study also questioned nine GPs about patients who looked up symptoms online. Eight of them said it had a positive impact on the patients' healthcare

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4513116/Elderly-patients-likely-die-doctor-60.html#ixzz4lIc95o6w>   
Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rw?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=MailOnline) | [DailyMail on Facebook](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rf?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=DailyMail" \t "_blank)