

Volunteer Research

VOLUNTEER NOTES:

Researchers have attempted to measure the benefits that volunteers receive, including the positive feeling referred to as “helper’s high,” increased trust in others, and increased social and political participation.

Over the past two decades we have seen a growing body of research that indicates volunteering provides individual health benefits in addition to social benefits. This research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. Comparisons of the health benefits of volunteering for different age groups have also shown that older volunteers are the most likely to receive greater benefits from volunteering, whether because they are more likely to face higher incidence of illness or because volunteering provides them with physical and social activity and a sense of purpose at a time when their social roles are changing. Some of these findings also indicate that volunteers who devote a “considerable” amount of time to volunteer activities (about 100 hours per year) are most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes.

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Keeping Baby Boomers Volunteering: A Research Brief on Volunteer Retention and Turnover and Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974

[Article in HBR re:health and volunteerism – cites a Carnegie Mellon Study in APA](#)

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