

# Self-Rated Health and Functional Disability Status Transitions among the Elderly in Taiwan

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## Abstract

Self-Rated Health (SRH) has proven to be a useful predictor of many objective measures of health status such as mortality. It is believed that the predictive value of this single item may lie in the explanation that people incorporate their health changes into their health ratings, meaning that SRH actually reflects a person's health trajectory. Using data from two waves of a longitudinal survey (N=2,480) conducted in Taiwan, this study aims to examine the association between SRH and other objective health measures. Furthermore, those who rated their health as "excellent/good" in 1993, their likelihood of having a downward transition in SRH is regressed on ethnicity, age, gender and education, controlling for the transitions in chronic disease, functional and disability status. The findings in this study are consistent with the notions that SRH reflects a person's health trajectory and the single-item of self-rated health is a useful and valid measurement for health status.

**Key words:** Elderly, functional status, health transitions, self-rated health, Taiwan