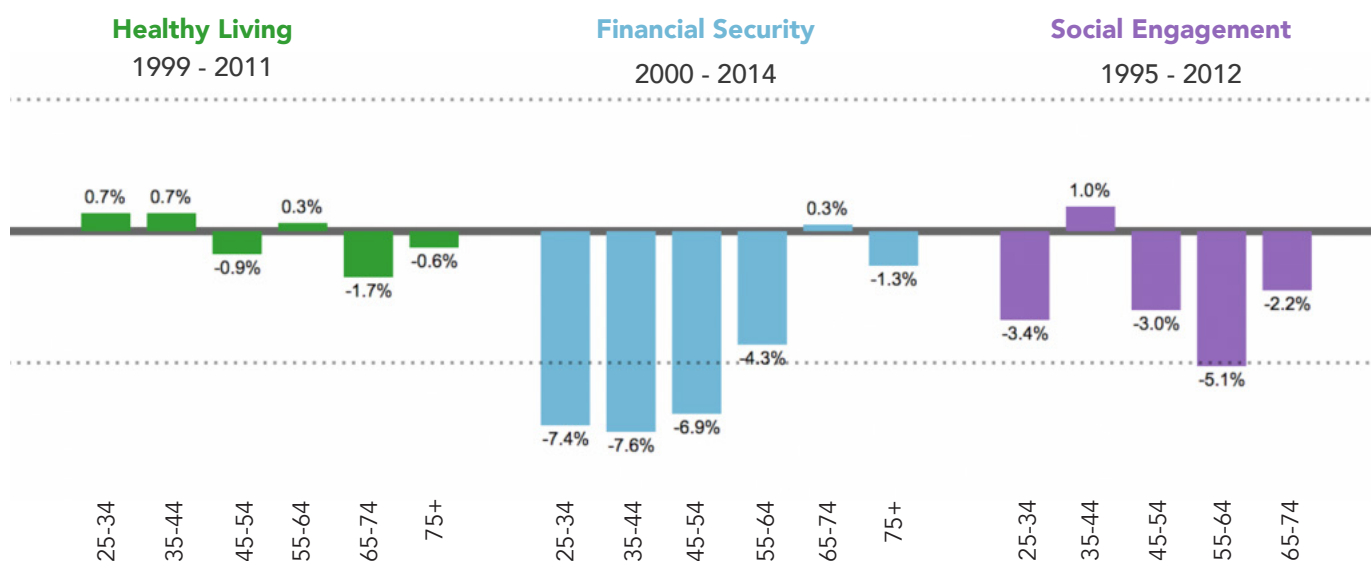




SEEING OUR WAY TO LIVING LONG, LIVING WELL IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICA

The developed world is bearing witness to a 21st century miracle – the possibility of living well to the age of 100 and beyond. Compelling scientific evidence indicates that living long and living well is most realistic for those who are socially engaged, adopt healthy living behaviors and are able to build financial security.

THE SIGHTLINES PROJECT investigates how well Americans across the adult life span are doing in each of these three areas over time. These results are intended to stir national debate, guide policy development, stimulate entrepreneurial innovation, and encourage personal choices that enhance independent, 100-year lives.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Living long and well is more realistic for people who adopt healthy behaviors, are socially engaged and are able to build financial security throughout their lives. We identified 27 actions in each of these three domains that people could take to improve their chances of enhanced longevity. These data were carefully selected based on expert panel discussions, research demonstrating their relationship to successful aging. We gathered data from seven nationally representative, high-quality, large-scale, multi-year surveys with sample sizes ranging from 3,000 to 350,000. We focused on nationally representative datasets so that our findings would be generalizable to the U.S. population. For each of the 27 actions, we measured the percentage of Americans who are “doing it right” at each of six decades of life in recent years and approximately 10 to 20 years ago. We then compared these two time points at each generation to measure whether current generations are doing better or worse than previous generations in terms of healthy living, social engagement, and financial security.

NOTABLE FINDINGS

HEALTHY LIVING



Smoking – the top preventable cause of morbidity and early mortality – is declining in every age group.



For the first time in decades, more Americans are reporting exercising regularly, especially Millennials (25-34).



Sitting, which has emerged as an independent risk factor for poor health, is steeply increasing.



Insufficient levels of healthy diet and sleep are widespread and show no signs of abating.

FINANCIAL SECURITY



A 15-year decline in health insurance coverage among the least educated is reversing since implementation of the Affordable Care Act.



Income levels of Millennials without any college education are often at or near poverty levels.



Millennials with college degrees are 50% more likely to carry debt, which is 5 times higher on average than recent college grads 15 years ago.



Only one in three Americans have any established retirement savings plans before age 55.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



Compared to their counterparts 20 years ago, Baby Boomers, are less socially engaged.



Having a college degree helps maintain levels of social engagement across age cohorts.



With the exception of 35-44 year olds, engagement in communities – which can provide physically-accessible and helpful relationships – has declined



Longer lives mean that marriages survive as well. Fifty-three percent of Americans over 75 are married, up from 42 percent in 2003



Read the full report and explore the data at:

sightlinesproject.stanford.edu