

How long and happy people live:

Trend in Happy Life Years^{1,2,3} 1946-2003

Rise/decline

Cases

Technical details

Cite as

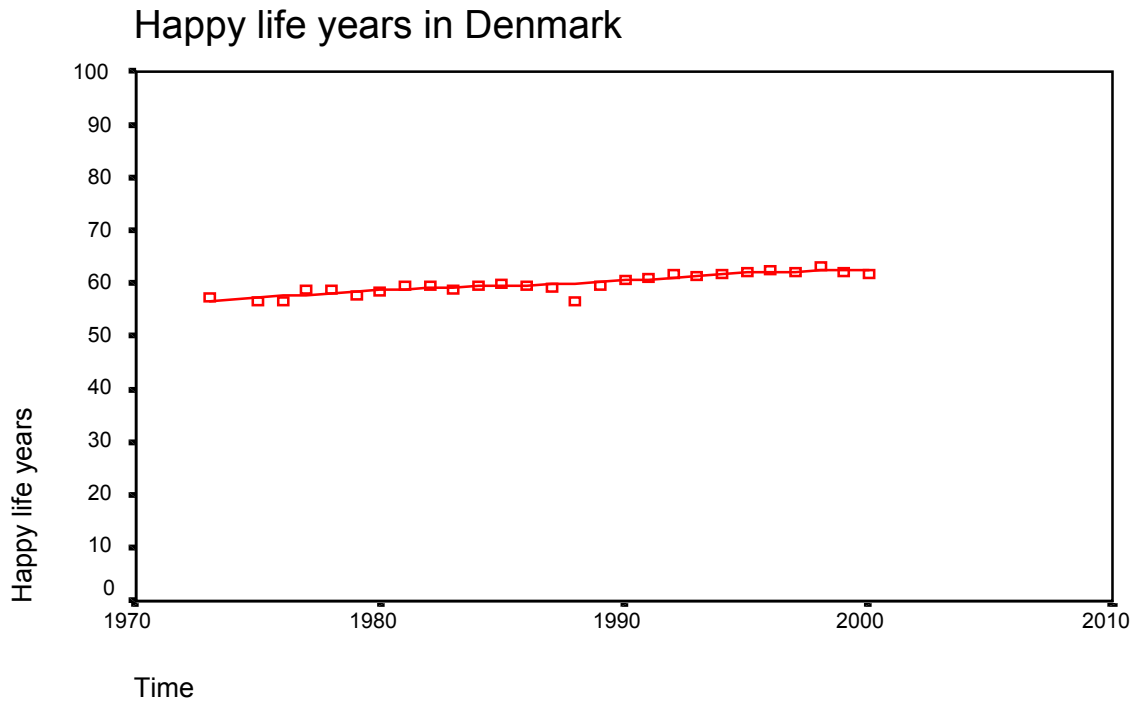
Rise/decline

Expressed in linear regression coefficient⁴ Happy life years – Year

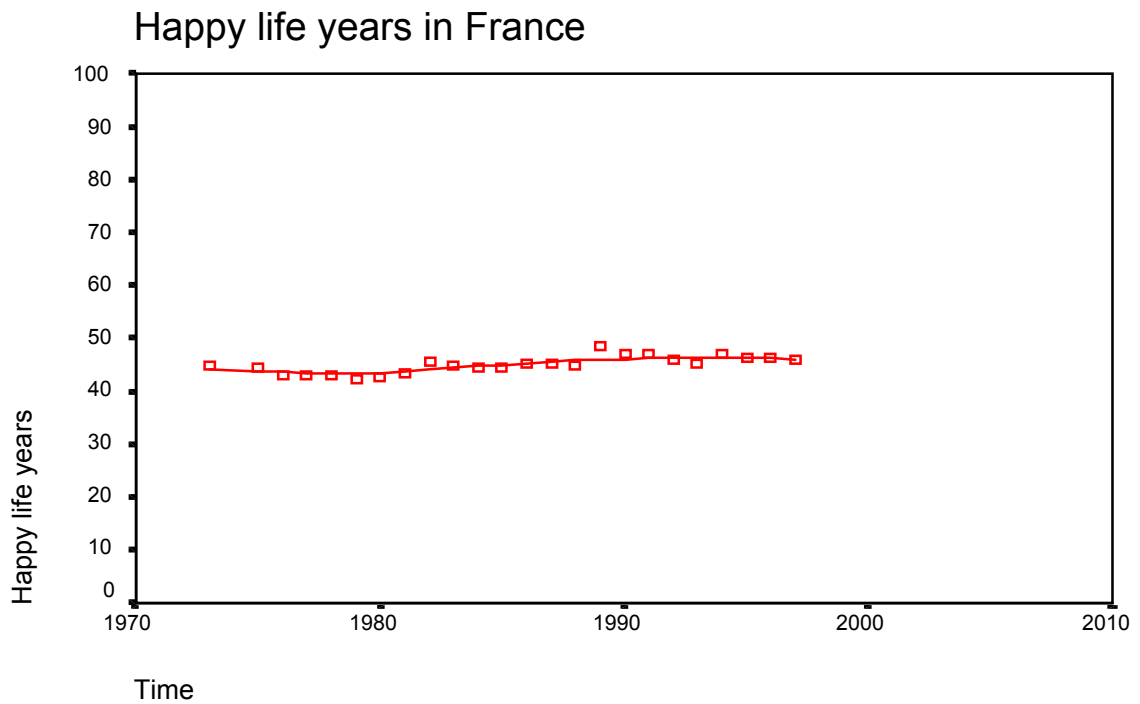
<i>Rise</i> Significant increase		<i>Stable</i> Not significant		<i>Decline</i> Significant decrease	
Italy 1973-2001	+ .432	East Germany 1990-2001	+ .030		
Denmark 1973-2001	+ .214	Germany 1991-2001	- .368		
Japan 1958-2003	+ .188				
West Germany 1973-2001	+ .184				
France 1973-2001	+ .159				
United States 1946-1998	+ .155				
Great Britain 1973-2001	+ .154				
Netherlands 1973-2001	+ .153				

The number of nations that show a rise in happy life years is significantly greater than the number of countries that show a decline (binominal test, $p < .021$).

All cases, alphabetic

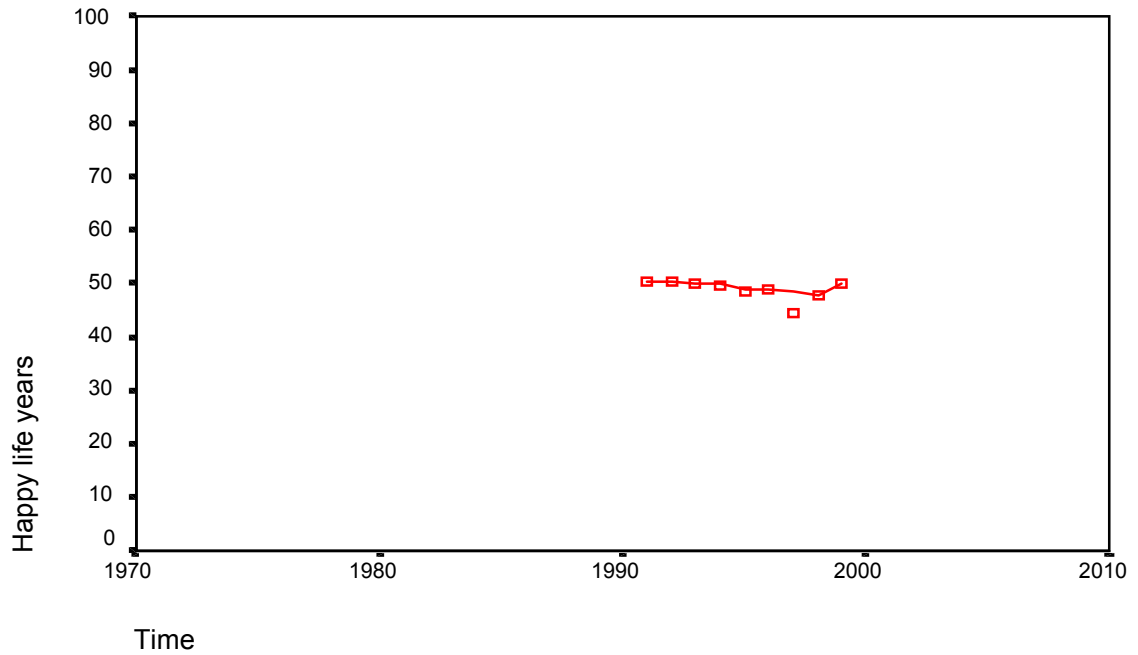


The linear regression coefficient in Denmark is: +214, 95% confidence interval: [+167,+262]



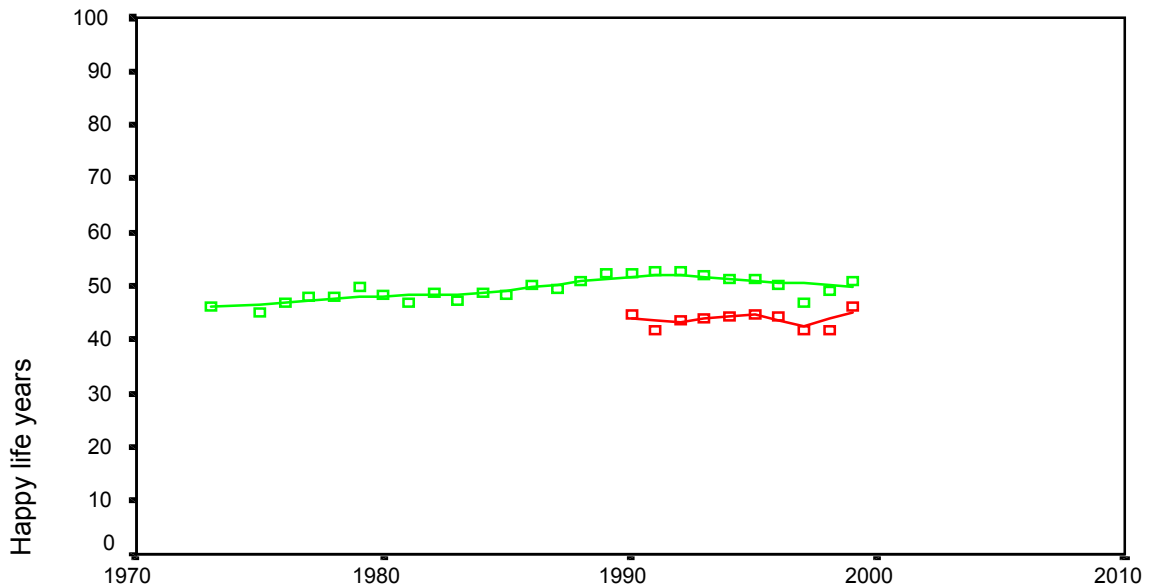
The linear regression coefficient in France is: +159. 95% confidence interval: [+092,+226]

Happy life years in Germany (reunited)



The linear regression coefficient in reunited Germany is: -0.368 . 95% confidence interval: -0.881 to $+0.114$

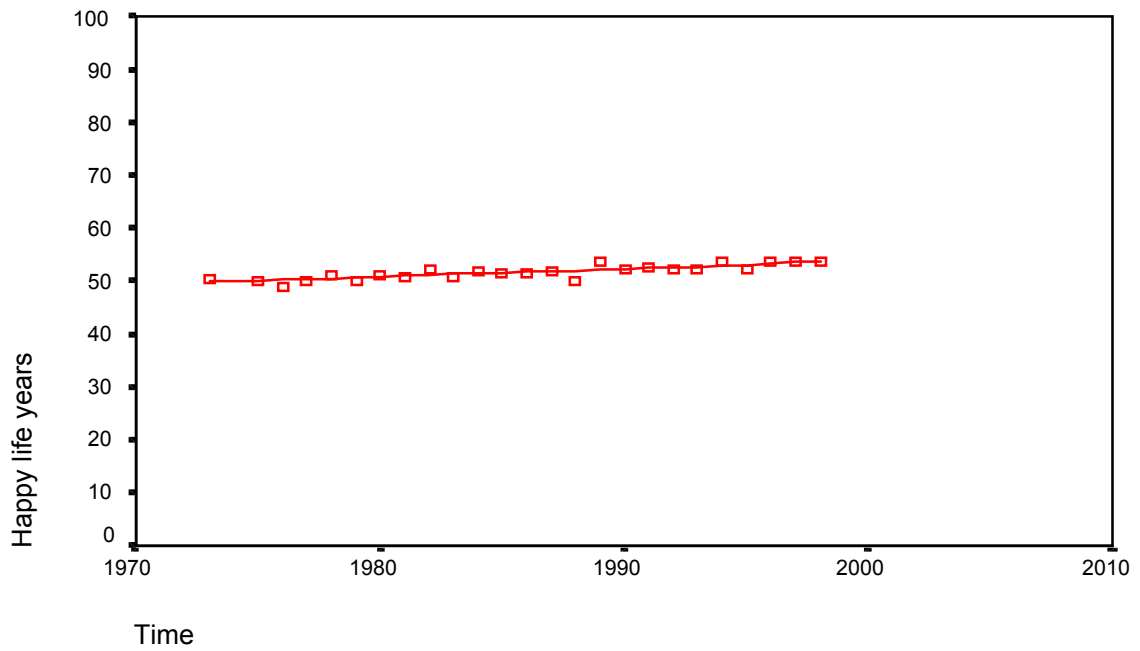
Happy life years in East and West Germany (seperately)



The linear regression coefficient in East Germany is: $+0.030$. 95% confidence interval: $[-0.362, +0.422]$

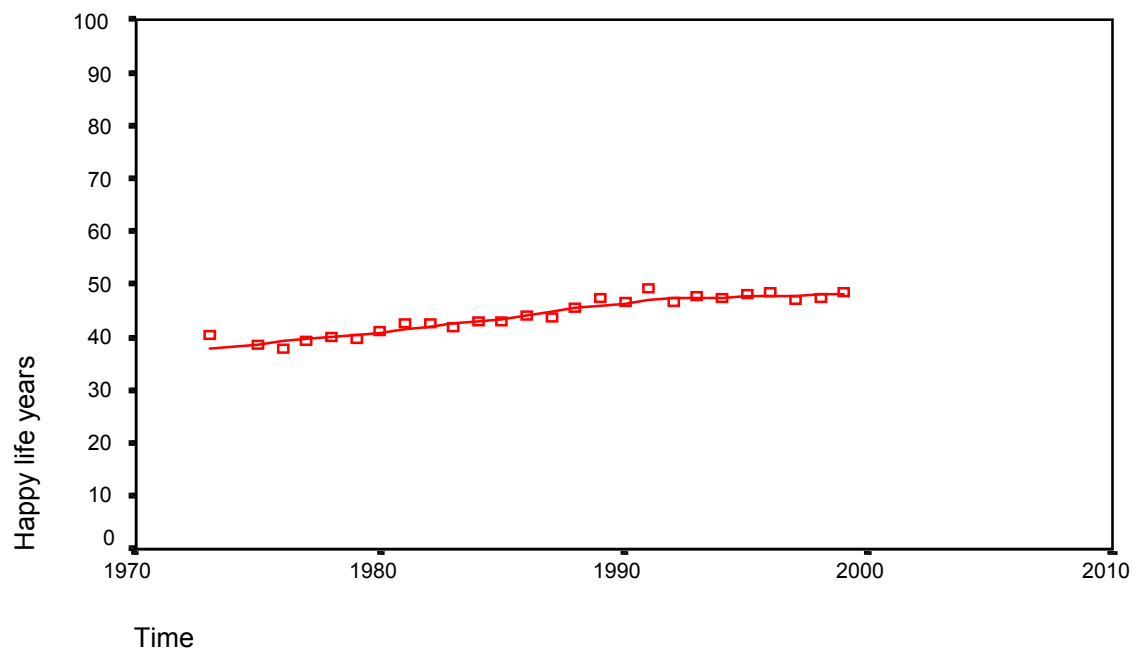
The linear regression coefficient in West Germany is: $+0.184$. 95% confidence interval: $[+0.094, +0.274]$

Happy life years in Great Britain



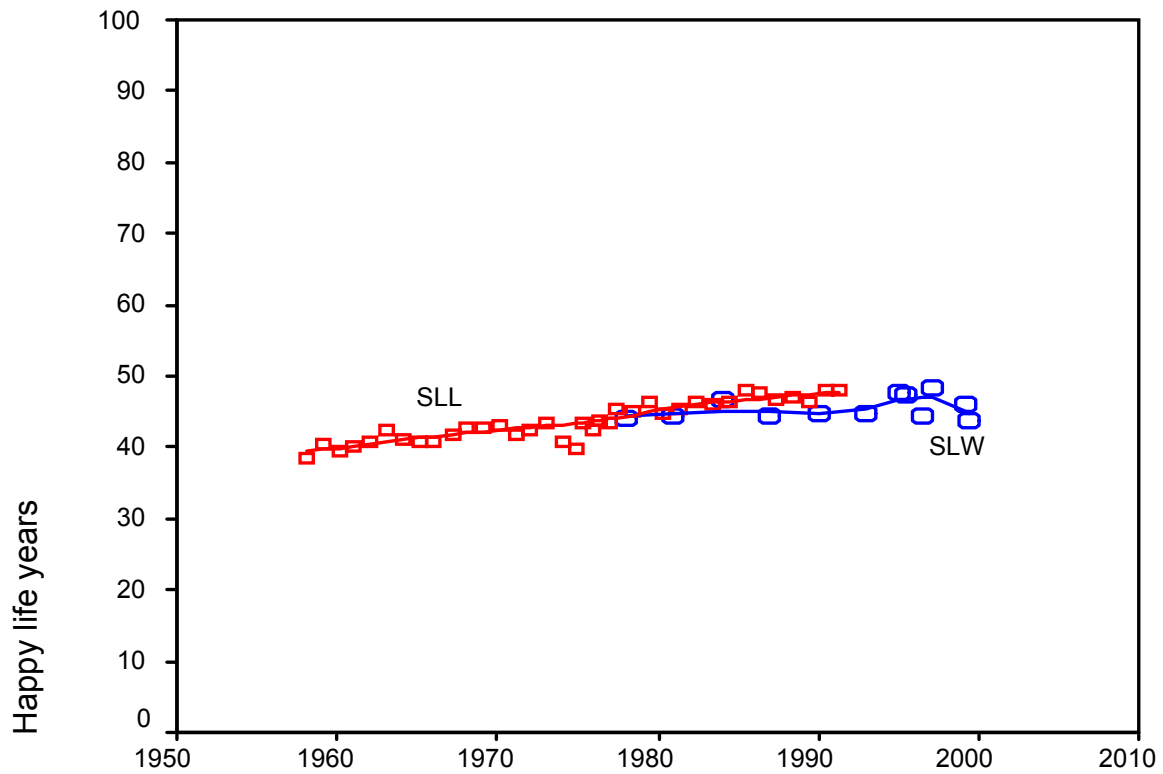
95% Confidence Interval of the linear regression coefficient for Great Britain: $+.109,+.199$

Happy life years in Italy



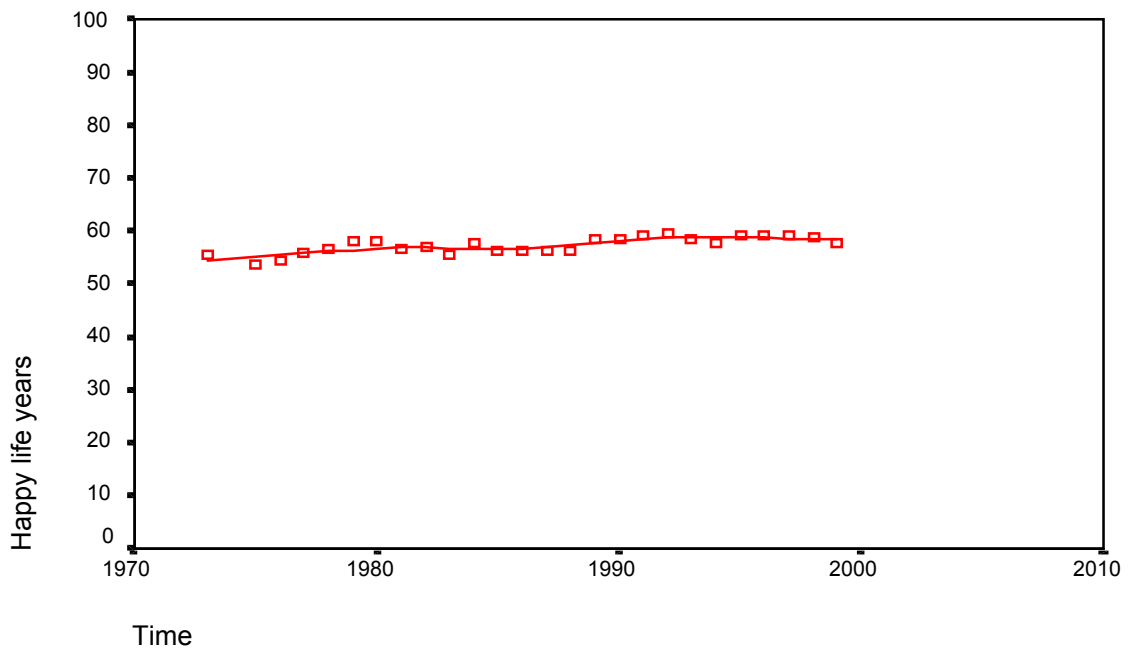
The linear regression coefficient in Italy is: $+.432$. 95% confidence interval: $+.367,+.497$

Happy life years in Japan

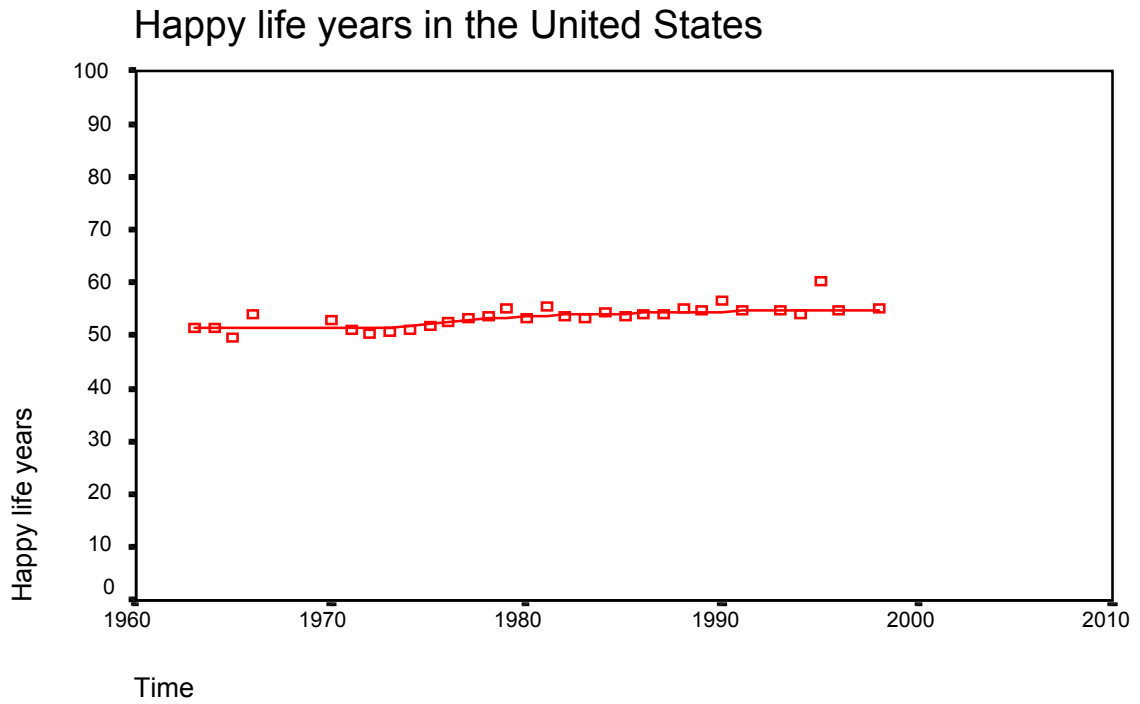


The linear regression coefficient based on item O-SLL/u/sq/v/4 1958-1991 is: $+0.260$; CI95 [$+0.222$, $+0.299$]
 The linear regression coefficient based on item O-SLW/u/sq/4/51978-2003 is: $+0.069$; CI95 [-0.076 , $+0.214$]
 The linear regression coefficient based on combined items 1958-2003 is: $+0.188$; CI95 [$+0.151$, $+0.226$]

Happy life years in The Netherlands



The linear regression coefficient in The Netherlands is: $+0.153$. 95% confidence interval: [$+0.094$, $+0.212$]



The linear regression coefficient in the USA is: $+0.155$. 95% confidence interval: $[+0.102, +0.209]$

Technical details

1. 'Years lived happy' is an estimate of how long and happy the average citizen will live in that nation in this era.
 - Computation: 0-1 enjoyment of life multiplied by expected length of life
 - Also referred to as: "Happy Life-Expectancy" shortened as HLE or "Happiness Adjusted Life-Years" shortened as "HALY's (Analogous to Disability Adjusted Life Years, or "DALY's).
 - This variable is described in more detail in Veenhoven, R. **Happy Life Expectancy. A comprehensive indicator of quality of life in nations**, in: Social Indicators Research, 1996, vol.39, pp. 1-58, that can be downloaded from: <http://www.eur.nl/fsw/research/veenhoven/Pub1990s/96b-txt.pdf>. Further argumentation of theoretical significance of this measure can be found in Veenhoven, R. **The four qualities of life: Ordering concepts and measures of the good life**, in Journal of Happiness Studies, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 1-39 (<http://www.eur.nl/fsw/research/veenhoven/Pub2000s/2000c-txt.pdf>).
 - This measure scored highest in a scholarly review of indicators. See: Hagerty, M., et. al. 'Quality of Life indexes for national policy: Review and agenda for research', Social Indicators research, 2001, vol. 55, pp. 1-96.
2. Life expectancy is estimated on the basis of civil registrations of birth and death. Source: Human Mortality Database. University of California, Berkeley (USA), and Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (Germany). Available at www.mortality.org or www.humanmortality.de (data downloaded on May 01 2003).
3. Happiness assessed by means of surveys in general public samples. The trends presented here are based on standard surveys that used the same question over the years.

The trend lines in this report are based on slightly different questions:

- In the EU-nations, happiness was assessed by a single item on life-satisfaction: "How satisfied are you with the life you lead?"
 - Very satisfied (4)
 - Fairly satisfied (3)
 - Not very satisfied (2)
 - Not at all satisfied (1)

This question is categorized as type 121B, subtype O-SLu/u/sq/v/4/b.

- In Japan a similar question on life-satisfaction was used: "On the whole, are you.. with the life you lead?"
 - Fully satisfied (4)
 - Not fully, but to some extend satisfied (3)
 - As yet unsatisfied (2)
 - Very dissatisfied (1)

This question is categorized as O-SLL/u/sq/v/4/c. Two slightly different variant have been used: in 1958-63 version a, and since 1987 version b. The precise wording of these variants can be found in the item bank.

From 1978 on, the following question has also been used in Japan
Overall, how satisfied are you with your present life?

- Very satisfied (5)
- Fairly satisfied (4)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Fairly dissatisfied (2)
- Very dissatisfied (1)

This question is categorized as O-SLW/u/sq/v/5 and has also been used in slightly different variants (a, g, k, l). The precise wording of which can be found in the item bank.

- In the USA the question asked about happiness:
”Taken all together, how would you say things are these days?
Would you say you are....:
 - Very happy (3)
 - Pretty happy (2)
 - Not too happy (1)

This question is categorized as type 111A, subtype O-HL/c/sq/v/3/aa.

- The original scores on these questions were transformed linearly to a comparable 0-10 point scale.
 - Section 4/3 of the introductory text provides more detail about the classification of items and transformation of scores.
4. The regression-coefficient stands for the size of the angle of the linear regression line through the dots (averages) in the time charts. A positive coefficient denotes a rise in years lived happily and a negative coefficient a decline. A regression-coefficient of +.10 means a gain of one tens per year, so one full happy life-year every ten years.

Continuation of the trend in the US would imply that the number of happy life-years rises from 55 now to 63 in 2050.

Cite as:

Veenhoven, R., *How long and happy people live. Trend in nations 1946-2003*, World Database of Happiness, Trend Report 2004-2, Internet: www.eur.nl/fsw/research/happiness

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