

LENGTH OF LIFE AFTER MENOPAUSE

Homo sapiens is the only primate where females have a much longer life span after menopause; this can even exceed the length of the fertile period. The most convincing explanation is that grandmothers help their grandchildren survive. The phenomenon was thought to be the consequence of an effective selective pressure. A similar situation exists in female killer whales, who have the longest life after the last calving. Now, we have experimental evidence of this selection, reported in a paper which appeared in [PNAS](#) and deserved a comment in [Science](#).