

## Life Expectancy in Down Syndrome

Life expectancy among patients with Down syndrome may be much higher than suspected, based on data from 1,341 Down syndrome patients in the British Columbia Health Surveillance Registry from 1952 to 1981. The important factor seems to be the presence or absence of congenital heart disease.

Among Down syndrome patients *with* congenital heart disease, 23% died during the first year of life and only 53% survived to age 20. In contrast, 90% of Down syndrome patients *without* congenital heart disease survived

to age 1 year and almost 80% survived to age 30. Clearly, patients with Down syndrome and congenital heart disease have a disproportionately higher mortality than those without congenital heart disease, particularly during the first year of life.

Baird PA, Sadovnick AD. *J Pediatr* 1988;110:849.

**Editor's comment**—*These data are very important for pediatricians caring for children with Down syndrome, since families need assistance in planning appropriately for the child's lifetime and life expectancy.*

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