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MPIDR WORKING PAPER WP 2010-022
FEBRUARY 2010

**A Secular Trend toward Earlier Male
Sexual Maturity:
Evidence from Shifting Ages of Male
Young Adult Mortality**

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**A Secular Trend toward Earlier Male Sexual Maturity:
Evidence from Shifting Ages of Male Young Adult Mortality**

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Abstract

This paper shows new evidence of a steady long-term decline in age of male sexual maturity since at least the mid-eighteenth century. A method for measuring the timing of male maturity is developed based on the age at which male young adult mortality accelerates. The method is applied to mortality data from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The secular trend toward earlier male sexual maturity parallels the trend toward earlier menarche for females, suggesting that common environmental cues influence the speed of both males' and females' sexual maturation.