

# **Is living in a high-rise building bad for your self-rated health?**

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# A Pattern Language

Towns · Buildings · Construction



**Christopher Alexander**

**Sara Ishikawa · Murray Silverstein**

WITH

**Max Jacobson · Ingrid Fiksdahl-King**

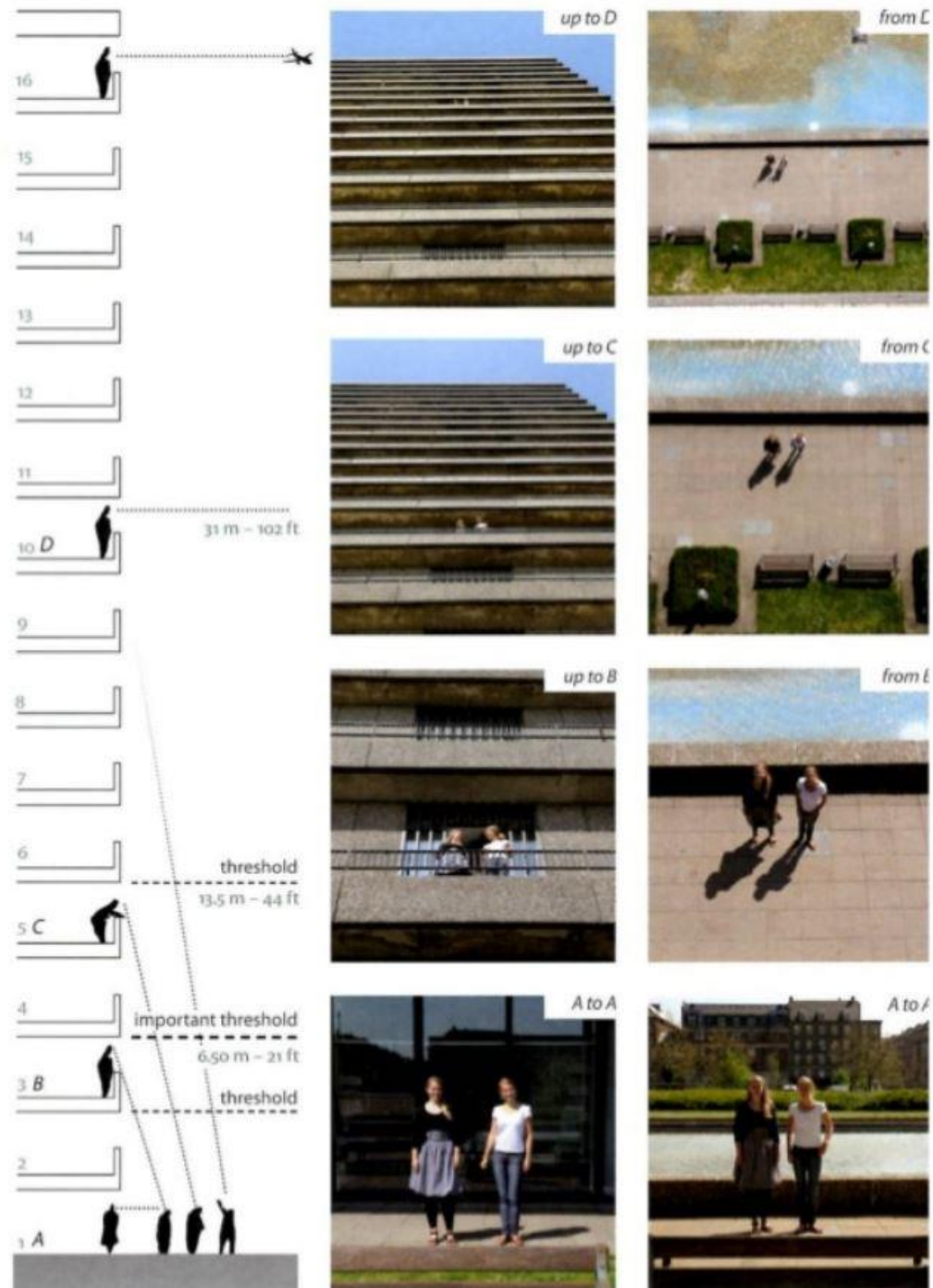
**Shlomo Angel**

## **The four-storey limit:**

“There is abundant evidence to show that high buildings make people crazy. Therefore, in any urban area, no matter how dense, keep the majority of buildings four stories high or less. It is possible that certain buildings should exceed this limit, but they should never be buildings for human habitation.”

# Sense and Scale

Up to the fifth floor, we can recognise people at ground level and talk to them, further up it gets more and more difficult and there is no more personal interaction between the people in the building and the ground level.



Jan Gehl (2010). "Cities for people"



Joachim



**1. Is living in a high-rise building bad for your health?**

**2. What is the best floor level to live on in terms of your health?**

# Belgian Census Data of 2001

**Adult population:** 6,102,820

## **Dependent: self-rated health**

- Very poor, poor or fair: 26%
- Good or very good: 74%

## **Building type**

- Low-rise: 93%
- High-rise: 7%

**Floor level:** -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, ... 15+

**19,011 neighborhoods**

## **Individual control variables**

- Sex
- Age
- Marital status
- Ethnicity
- Educational level
- Professional status
- Tenure track
- Household size
- Crowding

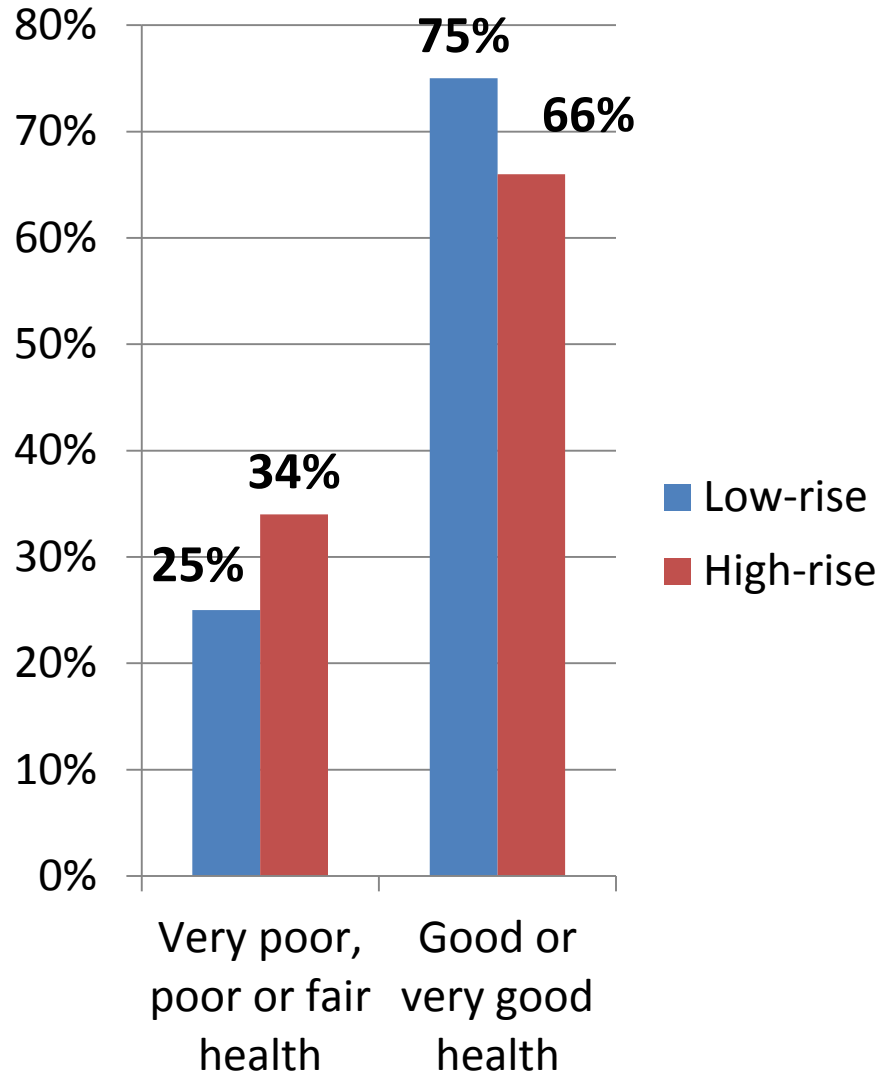
## **Neighborhood control variable**

- Median income

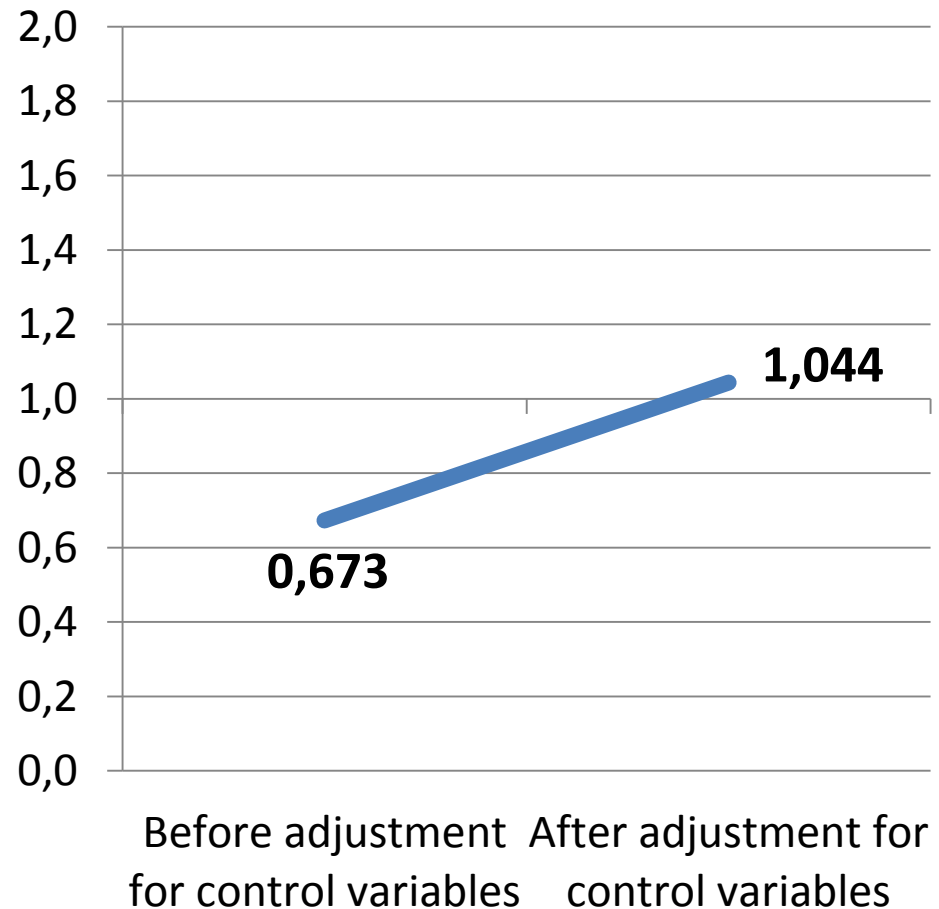
**→ Multilevel, binary logistical regression analyses**

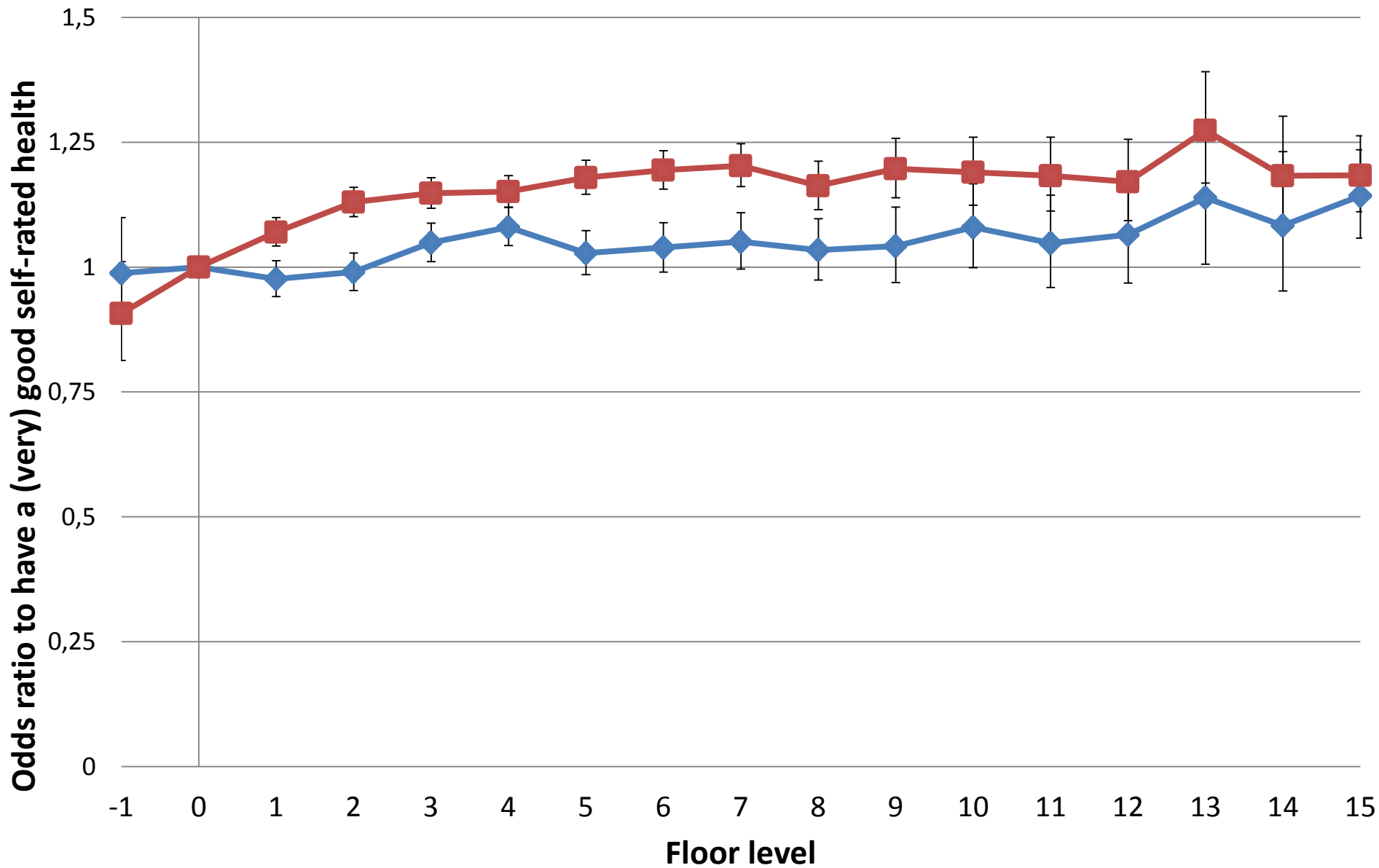


## Bivariate statistics



## Multilevel, binary analyses: odds ratio to have a (very) good self-rated health





◆ Before adjustment for control variables    ■ After adjustment for control variables

# Limitations

- Cross-sectional design
- Explanations not explicitly examined
- Building characteristics?
- Immediate environment?

# Take home messages

- It's about the strong demographic and economic segregation
- A weak, curvilinear positive effect of floor level
- Architects are wrong

