Cardiovascular diseases became the leading public health problem in the developed countries in the late 1940s. Finland has obtained questionable fame for having even the highest coronary heart disease mortality in the world. Previous studies have shown that there are clear regional differences in mortality due to cardiovascular diseases, especially eastern Finland has suffered from exceptionally high cardiovascular disease mortality.

Elevated blood pressure, high total cholesterol, obesity and smoking are suggested to be the main risk factors for the cardiovascular diseases. These factors could be easily affected by making changes in the way of life and dietary habits.

In this thesis, we studied two cohorts consisting men born between 1900-1919 from east and west Finland. Cohorts have been examined since year 1955. The aim was to clarify the differences in the mortality between the cohorts and in the risk factor levels by using competing risks. Data was analysed with Cox's proportional hazards model. During the follow-up study, differences between the cohorts in mortality due to cardiovascular diseases diminished. According to this study, the main risk factors for aging population are high total cholesterol and smoking.