

Press Release

Study links mother's age at childbirth to longer life

In what could be an important step towards delaying human aging and preventing age-related diseases, researchers have found a link between a person's longevity and the age at which their mothers gave birth

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Dr Leonid Gavrilov, co-author of the study and Principal Investigator of the NIH research project at NORC at the University of Chicago, said of the findings: "Our study found that persons born to young mothers (aged less than 25 years) had significantly higher chances of living to 100, compared to their siblings born to older mothers."

He went on to say that "even at age 75 years it still matters what was the mother's age when a person was born," as people born to mothers under the age of 25 have nearly an 80% higher likelihood to live to 100.

The study was conducted "using a within-family analysis," Dr Gavrilov explained, which means that "maternal age effect is real, and is not related to differences between families." As the study combed through thousands of family histories in order to get to "just a few hundred reliable records and some meaningful findings," Dr Gavrilov explained that the study, while significant in finding that the maternal age effect is real, is only the beginning. "We consider the results of this study as the beginning of a subsequent large-scale research effort with the promise of potentially breathtaking findings in the future."

Why study family medical histories, or try to find out what makes a person likely to live longer? The scientist explained: "People with exceptional longevity may represent particularly interesting outcomes of successful natural experiments on delaying human ageing and preventing age-related diseases. Therefore, studies on centenarians could become a goldmine for unravelling the secrets of human longevity."

In short, by studying the "unintended natural experiments" going on in the bodies of over-100s, the scientists could find out how to prevent diseases and extend the length of the healthy human life.

Even as scientists seek to extend our lifespans, life expectancy in the UK rising slowly and steadily due to everyday advancements. Meanwhile, the average worker is not putting enough money away to see themselves through a 'normal' retirement of 15 years, and has not considered the possibility of living 20, 25, or even 30 years after they stop working.

Arabela Velasco of [PensionCalculator.org](http://www.pensioncalculator.org) (<http://www.pensioncalculator.org>) said: "While we all want to live to be 100, for many people that would mean living 35 years in retirement. Is your pension fund equipped to last as long as you do? Seek advice about your pension investments, take advantage of employer contributions into your pension, and remember that saving early and often is the best way to build a nest egg that can see you through the whole of your life, no matter how long it may be."

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