

Telomere hype: How to debunk claims about telomeres and aging

A skeptic needs to do considerable homework in order to muster the evidence needed to counter the latest exaggerated, premature, and outright pseudoscientific claims about telomere length being a measure of “cellular aging” and therefore how long we’re going to live.

Talk of telomeres isn’t just being used to sell dubious diagnostic tests and dietary supplements. There is a strong push to make telomere length the currency of how we think, measure, and do science about our health and well-being, and how we target our health interventions.

In order to evaluate all this, we cannot rely on the usually dependable “[sourcing heuristic](#)”. A lot of hyped and nonsense claims in other areas of science and medicine can readily be dismissed by looking at who is represented as the authority and where their evidence comes from.

But what if the person making a claim about telomeres is a Nobel Prize winner or an author on a paper that contributed to someone else winning a Nobel Prize? Or a blogging Director of an NIH institute? And what if the claim cites an article in a prestigious, peer-reviewed, high-impact journal?

There is a lot of money in play. Patents and products tied to telomeres have obvious commercial potential, but there is also another temptation in that making wild claims could send wannabe bench-to-boardroom researchers flying business class to give five-figure/hour talks to corporations.

Read full, original article: [Skeptic’s Guide to Debunking Claims about Telomeres in the Scientific and Pseudoscientific Literature](#)