

‘Anti-aging’ protein might not be key to youthfulness after all

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Growth differentiation factor 11 (GDF11) has been hailed an anti-aging protein, capable of spinning back the clock on aged mouse heart and muscle. But a few studies have found evidence to the contrary. Most recently, researchers reported in [Aging Cell](#) on March 28 that GDF11 did not improve muscle function of older animals as had been observed by others.

“We have been unable to confirm the reported activity of GDF11,” the team from GlaxoSmithKline and Five Prime Therapeutics wrote in its report. In particular, the researchers were unable to replicate the results of a [2014 study](#) from Amy Wagers and Richard Lee of Harvard University and colleagues.

The GlaxoSmithKline group treated skeletal muscle satellite cells from older mice with GDF11, but did not see increased activity as Wagers and Lee had reported. Administering the protein to young mice resulted in a reduction of lean mass as well, the team noted.

These latest results fall more in line with a [2015 study](#) from the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research than with those reported by the Harvard team.

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