

Different genes may be responsible for longevity, healthy life

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They've made it far in life, 80 years and counting. Yet they're conspicuously free of the afflictions that often crop up in old age: diabetes, heart disease, cancer, dementia. They are a rare breed, the "Wellderly."

That's the name researchers have given a group of older adults who could unlock the genetic secrets not just to a long life, but a healthy one.

"Longevity is somewhat man-made because you can now do so much for a person — you can put them on life support and live forever," Eric Topol, who oversees the Wellderly study as director of the Scripps Translational Science Institute in La Jolla, California, told BuzzFeed News. "Short of that, you can certainly treat cancers and heart disease and neurodegenerative diseases, and keep people alive but not healthy."

What his team wants to understand is why some elderly people have managed to avoid developing any chronic conditions. "For all these years of genomics, we've been focusing on diseases," Topol said. "There just hasn't been enough work on the health span" — that is, the number of years a person maintains good health.

The first study out of the Wellderly project, published in the journal [\*Cell\*](#), suggests that healthy aging and longevity, while related, also have distinct genetic differences.

**Read full, original post:** [A Long Life Is Genetically Different From A Healthy One](#)