

CEO who took gene therapy designed to treat aging reveals promising early results

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In 2015, Elizabeth Parrish, the CEO of Seattle-based biotech firm BioViva, hopped a plane to Colombia, where she received multiple injections of two experimental gene therapies her company had developed. One is intended to lengthen the caps of her chromosomes (called telomeres) while the other aims to increase muscle mass. The idea is that together these treatments would “compress mortality,” Parrish told *The Scientist*, by staving off the diseases of aging—enabling people to live healthier, longer.

On its website, BioViva reported the first results of Parrish’s treatment: the telomeres of her leukocytes grew longer, from 6.71 kb in September 2015 to 7.33 kb in March 2016. The question now is: What does that mean?

Over the phone, Parrish was measured in discussing the implications of the finding, which has not yet undergone peer review. “The best-case scenario would be that we added 20 years of health onto the leukocytes, and the immune system might be more productive and catch more of the bad guys,” she said. “But we have to wait and find out. The proof will be in the data.”

Much more data are needed before claiming success against aging, said Dana Gleit, a senior research investigator at Georgetown University. “We haven’t established a causal link between telomere length and health,” she told *The Scientist*. “If it’s like gray hair, dying your hair won’t make you live longer.”

Read full, original post: [First Data from Anti-Aging Gene Therapy](#)