

## No single 'fountain of youth' yet identified in genome

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Nonie Hickle's hair is coal-dark. Her husband, Vincent, marvels at it. He points to it and says, "No gray!" Nonie's a little amazed too; she thinks it's kind of spooky. After all, she's 91 years old.

Statistically speaking, Hickle, who lives in San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood, should be sick. She ought to have cardiovascular disease, cancer, or heart failure. Yet she doesn't have any of those things. If you were to look at this 4'11" Korean-American nonagenarian, you wouldn't peg her at a day over 70.

Just what makes Hickle so healthy? The answer to that question remains elusive despite one of the largest genetic studies to date of exceptionally healthy old people, carried out by Eric Topol of San Diego's Scripps Translational Science Institute and reported today in the journal *Cell*.

Topol, a well-known cardiologist and digital-health proponent, launched the so-called "We'lllderly" project in 2008, after becoming convinced that healthy old age, not just longevity, was its own distinct, identifiable, trackable trait, just like having schizophrenia or being very tall.

After analyzing the genomes of 600 exceptionally healthy old people, Topol believes that people like Hickle may have a constellation of genes that create resistance to Alzheimer's and coronary artery disease. But so far there's no smoking gun. He and coauthors from Cypher Genomics, a bioinformatics company, called their findings "preliminary" and said they would make the genomes available to other scientists.

**Read full, original post:** [Is There a Fountain of Youth in Our DNA?](#)