Biological tipping point: At a certain point in life, environmental factors and age are more important to disease risk than DNA

In 1952, Nobel-prize winner Dr. Peter Medawar put forward the hypothesis that aging processes may be a result of evolution's natural selection not having that much to say about people past their child-bearing years.

A new study finds fresh support for Medawar's hypothesis in an analysis of how roughly 20,000 human genes are expressedTrusted Source as we age.

The study suggests that our genes are less of an influence as we get older.

Study senior author Dr. Peter Sudmant, assistant professor in integrative biology at the University of California Berkeley tells *Berkeley News*, "Almost all human common diseases are diseases of aging: Alzheimer's, cancers, heart disease, diabetes."

"Massive amounts of public resources have gone into identifying genetic variants that predispose you to these diseases. What our study is showing is that, well, actually, as you get older, genes kind of matter less for your gene expression," says Sudmant.

"Genes that are turned on when we are young are more constrained by evolution because they are critical to making sure we survive to reproduce, while genes expressed after we reach reproductive age are under less evolutionary pressure."

This is an excerpt. Read the full article here