Here are genetic reasons why some people age more quickly than others

Why do some people age more quickly than others? Why is it that one person develops heart disease and another, of the same age, doesn’t? Although aging is a complex process, with hundreds of different variables, one thing is becoming increasingly clear: the sum of your genetic information —known as the genome— matters. In the largest genetic study of aging to date, researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have uncovered multiple new genetic “regions” that influence lifespan and healthy aging.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

SIGN UP

Traditional genome-wide association studies focus on one single genetic variant. Although effective, this may also be limiting. Healthy aging, for example, is made up of multiple factors: “healthspan” (the portion of one’s life spent in good health), parental lifespan, extreme longevity, epigenetic aging, and frailty. Focusing on any one of these may offer insight into the aging process, but why not focus on all at once to get a better picture of the underlying genetic architecture of aging?

This is exactly what the researchers of the latest study did. Rather than focusing exclusively on one variable, they performed a “multivariate” genome-wide association study.

…

The analysis yielded 52 genetic variants associated with healthy aging, twenty of which had not previously been linked to aging.

This is an excerpt. Read the full article here