Is aging a ‘treatable disease’? Harvard geneticist faces accusations of ‘snake oil salesman’ as expert scientists refute claims

Harvard geneticist David Sinclair, who has said his “biological age” is roughly a decade younger than his actual one, has put forward his largely unlined face as a spokesman for the longevity movement.

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His social-media accounts are a platform for assertions that his work is pushing nearer to a fountain of youth. He claimed last year that a gene therapy invented in his Harvard lab and being developed by a company he co-founded, Life Biosciences, had reversed aging and restored vision in monkeys. “Next up: age reversal in humans,” he wrote on X and Instagram.

On Feb. 29, in the eyes of many other scientists working to unlock the mysteries of aging, he went too far.

Another company he co-founded, Animal Biosciences, quoted him in a press release saying that a supplement it had developed had reversed aging in dogs. Scientists who study aging can’t even agree on what it means to “reverse” aging, much less how to measure it.

The response was swift and harsh. The Academy for Health and Lifespan Research, a group of about 60 scientists that Sinclair co-founded and led, was hit with a cascade of resignations by members outraged by his claims. One scientist who quit referred to Sinclair on X as a “snake oil salesman.”

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