

Chinese scientists identify genetic pathway in aging

Chinese scientists studying a worm have found the first genetic pathway underlying natural variation in aging, which could provide insights for the development of interventions to slow down the process in humans.

They found that the combination of a certain neuropeptide coding gene and its receptor gene controls the stress reaction of a “longevity gene”, which regulates the rate of aging.

The more active the coding gene and the stronger the receptor gene, the more rapid aging occurs, according to the team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Neuroscience.

An article about their study, which took more than five years, was published on Thursday in the journal Nature.

Uncovering the genetic secrets of the aging rate is significant, as the average age of the global population is rising fast. Aging is also a major risk factor for diseases, such as cancers and diabetes, the researchers said.

According to the United Nations, the number of people age 60 or older hit 1 billion worldwide this year and will rise to 3.1 billion by 2100.

“When people live longer, they begin to care more about healthy aging, which means keeping healthy and youthful and having a better quality of life in their twilight years, like some lucky ones do,” said Cai Shiqing, the team’s lead researcher.

One peer review of the article said the results will be of interest to the readers of Nature because of the general lack of information about how natural genetic variation regulates aging, and the role of neuromodulatory signaling in the process.

Lab experiments were conducted on *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a transparent worm about 1 millimeter in length that lives in temperate soil environments. It is the basis of the animal model widely used for age-related research because of its clear genetic profile and short life span – an average of three weeks.

The tiny free-living worms from different parts of the world show varied rates of decline in virility, eating and locomotion during aging.

Researchers said they have not yet found the worms’ neuropeptide in the human body.

“But we know that animal evolution is conservative, and if we carry on with further studies we’re confident that we will probably find that the mechanism underlying the aging rate of mammals is the same as for the worms,” said Mu-Ming Poo, director of the institute and an academician of the science

academy.

“Healthy human life can be extended if there is a way to target these genes in the future,” he said.

[Social networking app joins battle against smoking in Beijing](#)

An increasing number of reports related to smoking in indoor public places have been made on China’s popular social networking app WeChat.

Beijing Tobacco Control Association said its official account on WeChat, “Smoke-Free Beijing” received 2,717 reports from August to October.

It said an average of 900 reports have been received every month, with an increase of 50 percent compared with that of the second quarter of the year. The complaints were mainly concerning restaurants, office buildings and Internet cafes.

Smoking controls have made some progress in the city, said the association, adding that medical institutions, schools and hotels have seen greater improvement among other indoor public places.

By following the official account, people can instantly report and upload photos related to any smoking violation in indoor public areas.

Names and locations of involved companies or organizations will be exposed on eBeijing, an official website authorized by the Beijing Municipal Government, and the website of Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning.

Volunteers will then be sent to these places to investigate and deal with violators. Those who have been reported more than five times will be punished by smoking control departments.

Beijing, home to more than four million adult smokers, rolled out the “strictest smoking ban in history” on June 1, 2015, prohibiting smoking in indoor public places, workplaces and public transportation.

A total of 1,245 workplaces and 5,243 individuals have been punished for violating the ban over the past 29 months.

Xi's book on governance published in Lao language

The Lao language version of Chinese President Xi Jinping's book on governance has been officially launched Thursday in Lao capital Vientiane.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Guo Weimin, deputy director of the State Council Information Office of China, said the publication of the book's Lao version is of great significance on the occasion of the successful conclusion of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the upcoming visit by General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese President Xi Jinping to Laos.



Copies of "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" [China Plus file photo]

The Lao version of the book "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" will help Lao people learn more about Chinese development concept, development path as well as domestic and foreign policies, he said, adding that this also helps promote the exchange of experiences in governance between the two parties and two countries.

According to Guo, the book, together with its newly published second volume, features the rich contents of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and offers an important window for the international community to fully, objectively and rationally understand contemporary China.

At the ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to Laos Wang Wentian said the publication

of Lao language version of the book will strengthen mutual trust and respect between the two parties and the two countries, enhance understanding of Lao people about China, promote people-to-people connectivity, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, constantly consolidate the traditional friendship, and further build a solid foundation for the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between China and Laos.

For his part, Kikeo Khaikhamphithoune, member of Secretariat of the Central Committee of Lao People's Revolutionary Party and Head of the Party's Commission for Propaganda and Training, said the publication of the book is a valuable gift for the Lao party and people on the occasion of the upcoming visit of Xi Jinping to Laos.

The Lao language versions of Xi Jinping's report at the 19th CPC National Congress and his book on governance are of practical significance for the Lao side to study and learn from China's theory and experience, said Kikeo.

The book "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" collects 79 speeches, talks, interviews, notes and letters of the Chinese leader between November 2012 and June 2014. Since its first launch in September 2014, the book has been translated into 24 languages, 27 versions and over 6.6 million books have been published worldwide.

[Xi's remarks inspire Chinese journalist association](#)

Journalists from across China have said they were inspired by Chinese President Xi Jinping's remarks on journalism and would endeavor to spread China's voice.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, called on journalists to "strengthen their confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics."

He made the statement in a congratulatory letter to the All-China Journalists Association (ACJA) on its 80th anniversary Wednesday.

"We are lucky to work as journalists in the new era and we will strive to present new aspects in our work," said Zhang Tie, deputy director of the commentary department of the People's Daily, the flagship newspaper of the CPC.

In the letter, Xi said he expected journalists to "maintain a close connection with the people, record the events of the great times, tell

China's stories well, spread China's voice, herald the message of victory and raise national morale, for the realization of the Two Centenary Goals and national rejuvenation."

"Xi has repeatedly emphasized that journalists should care for the people," said Hou Kaidi from China Central Television. "We need to focus on the stories of the ordinary people."

"In order to tell stories of the Chinese people, journalists from Chongqing Daily have spent three years reporting on more than 500 people, recording their love for the country and home as well as their endeavor to make a better life," said Jiang Chunyong, deputy editor in chief of the newspaper.

"We will continue to improve media convergence and reach Internet audience and young people through integrated media products," said Qian Tong, executive deputy director of Xinhua All-Media Service.

[60-year-old protects Great Wall, pens essays](#)

Sixty-year-old Gao Zhengqing has been patrolling a 30-kilometer section of the Great Wall for three years and has written 50,000 words, with a monthly salary of 300 yuan (\$45).

Gao lives in Xujiawan village, Pianguan county, North China's Shanxi province. Less than one kilometer away from the Ming Great Wall, the mountain-surrounded village is now home to less than 20 people, with many young people having left to work in cities.

Pianguan county is known as the "museum of the Great Wall". Along the over-fifty-kilometer-long wall, there are more than 300 beacon towers. One of the beacons called Jiuyaoshidong was the most functional military fortress along the historic site during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1911).

The once well-conserved wall was his only "playmate" when Gao was a kid, but it has been severely damaged due to both natural and human factors over the past 50 years. The loss of his childhood companion made Gao realize the necessity of protecting the Great Wall.

Gao became a Great Wall protector in September 2014, becoming one of the six in the county. Riding his motorbike, Gao patrols from Mendaogou, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, to Baiyangling, North China's Shanxi province, every day from 8:00 am to midnight.

Besides, Gao also uses his pen to safeguard the Great Wall. Gao started to read about the wall in 1983. So far, he has finished around 50,000 words, and

some of his essays have been published in magazines including China Great Wall Museum.

“I don’t protect the Great Wall for money. I do it because I really love it,” said Gao, who earns a monthly salary of 300 yuan (\$45). “The Great Wall is a rare treasure for the Chinese nation. It is also the soul of our nation. To protect it is to protect the history of our nation.”

Gao’s action is the epitome of the official protection. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage and Shanxi provincial government have invested over 74 million yuan in conservation planning, putting up protective signs, and repairing critical sections. In total, 127 full-time protectors are employed, and 94 sections are designated as conservation areas by the provincial government.