

Study reveals people's thoughts on living longer

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(PhysOrg.com) -- If people were given a pill to make them live longer what would they do with that extra time? According to a new study by University of Queensland researchers, they would spend it with their family.

Co-authored by the UQ School of Population [Health](#) researchers Associate Professor Jayne Lucke and Professor Wayne Hall, the study interviewed 605 Australians aged 18 to 96 and identified their ethical, social and personal beliefs towards pharmaceutical life extension.

The lead author Dr Brad Partridge, now at the Mayo Clinic in the US, conducted the interviews as part of his PhD.

Dr Lucke said the research, published in the journal *Rejuvenation Research* recently, was inspired by studies showing the lifespan of animals can be greatly increased in the laboratory.

“The participants were given a scenario to consider, which involved taking an anti-ageing pill that increased the maximum human lifespan,” Dr Lucke said.

“The pill would not be used to cure diseases, but to delay the onset of related health problems which led to an earlier death.”

She said 63 percent of participants said there would be personal benefits to life extension including spending more time with family (36 percent);

having more time in life to achieve ambitions (31 percent); and better health and quality of life (21 percent).

“Eighty percent also envisioned at least one downside,” she said.

“These included prolonging a state of poor health (34 percent); financial cost of living longer (16 percent); and outliving family and friends (12 percent).”

She said some of the other results were half of the participants believed the benefits to society would include increased collective knowledge (26 percent); extended lifespan of ‘important’ people (15 percent); and more time to contribute (12 percent).

“More than half (52 percent) of participants thought that life extension would not be beneficial to society though, with seven percent of these participants identifying overpopulation (40 percent) and an increased burden on healthcare and welfare (23 percent) as problems,” she said.

Dr Lucke said understanding public attitudes towards prolonging the human lifespan was important to consider.

“It is a known fact that public attitudes toward new technologies, especially one such as the possibly of increasing the [lifespan](#), may foster or impede research progress,” she said.

“The study should encourage researchers, bioethicists and policy makers to engage with members of the public about the goals of research surrounding life extension, the expected outcomes of such research and the likely implications for individuals and society.”

Provided by University of Queensland ([news](#) : [web](#))

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