

A ripe old age

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Good living, a happy outlook and avoiding obesity are more important than genes in prolonging life, according to the first study of Australian centenarians compiled by UNSW researchers.

Reaching 100 years is a feat achieved by a growing number of Australians, the Australian Centenarian Study's Professor Robyn Richmond said.

"In 1900 there were only 50 people who were recorded as reaching 100, but now there are more than 3,000 people who are 100 years or more," said Professor Richmond, who's based in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

The study shows that lifestyle plays a bigger role than genetics in determining long life.

Professor Richmond and her team studied 188 Australians who had made it to 100, and found that maintaining social networks, keeping physically and mentally active, and being open to change were common traits.

“About 20 to 30 per cent of the likelihood of living to 100 is because of your genes. But that leaves 70 to 80 per cent up to [environmental factors](#),” Professor Richmond said.

“The major finding of this study is the impact of [personality](#).”

The findings were presented this week at the International Federation on Ageing Conference in Melbourne.

Provided by University of New South Wales

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