

# New blood test shows how long you will live

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(Medical Xpress) -- A controversial test capable of revealing just how long you have to live is set to hit the market in Britain within the year. The test measures a person's telomeres which are the structures found on the tips of chromosomes and researchers believe that these telomeres are crucial indicators of the speed in which a body is ageing.

The test was developed by Maria Blasco from the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre. Blasco's company, [Life Length](#), is in negotiations with medical diagnostic businesses throughout Europe in order to collect blood samples and market the tests.

The test works by measuring the length of the [telomeres](#) and is able to then determine the biological age of a person. Research shows that individuals with shorter than normal telomeres have a shorter [life](#) span than those individuals with longer telomeres. The test, however, is not capable of giving an exact length of life in terms of months or years.

Many critics of the new test are referring to it as opening Pandora's Box. While the personal interest an individual may have in seeing just how long they have left to live, insurance companies may be just as interested in this information. Life-insurance companies may look to require testing on individuals, and those unfortunate enough to have smaller telomeres may find it difficult to get insurance. Others are concerned this may open a new door to scams and 'miracle cures' being offered to 'extend' life expectancy and take advantage of those with shorter telomeres.

Researchers are hoping that the testing of telomeres could provide vital information on premature deaths due to many conditions ranging from Alzheimer's, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. They believe that within the next five to 10 years, telomere testing will become very widespread. The current cost for this [test](#) is around \$700, though Blasco hopes to be able to bring down the prices as public demand increases.

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