

Is living forever in the future?

July 6 2011, by Deborah Braconnier

(Medical Xpress) -- Is it possible that your child could live to see 150 years of age? What about your grandchild living to see their 1000th birthday? According to a British biomedical gerontologist and chief scientist of the Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence (SENS) Foundation Aubrey De Grey, that is a definite possibility.

De Grey believes that we are within 25 years of finding the medical technology to essentially bring a 'cure' to aging. He says the first person to live to see 150 is already alive and that the individual who will first live to see 1,000 years could be born within the next two decades.

He believes that with the advancement of medical treatments in areas such as gene therapy, [stem cells](#), therapy, immune stimulation and a variety of other medical techniques, people will soon be able to just visit their physician for regular maintenance checkups and cures for diseases that are a part of aging will no longer be an issue.

While De Grey's predictions may seem a bit extreme, life expectancy is growing by three months every year and many experts are predicting over a million centenarians by 2030. In 2010, Japan alone had over 44,000 residents who had passed the 100 year mark.

In 2005 a group of scientists dismissed his work as 'pseudo-science' and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Technology Review journal offered \$20,000 to any molecular biologist who was able to show that De Grey's theory was wrong. This reward has yet to be claimed.

Heart disease is caused by what De Grey refers to as “molecular garbage” that accumulates when the body ages and can no longer ‘take out the trash.’ De Grey is currently looking at identifying particular enzymes that can break down this garbage with the idea of being able to develop a type of genetic therapy to increase longevity.

De Grey defines aging as a lifelong accumulation of cellular and molecular damage and believes that with medical technology, the practice of preventative geriatrics will enable physicians to repair this damage before it becomes a problem and extend the healthy [age](#) and life of individuals.

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