Study provides insights on chronic lung disease

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A new study shows that shorter telomeres—which are the protective caps at the end of a cell's chromosomes—are linked with worse survival in a progressive respiratory disease called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). In patients with IPF, excessive scar tissue forms in the lungs.

The average telomere length of IPF patients was significantly shorter than that of healthy individuals. Also, the telomere length of patients with IPF who died from their disease during the study was shorter than that of patients who survived.

The *Respirology* results support the theory that mutations in the enzyme that ensures the presence of full-length telomeres in each cell play an important role in IPF.

More information: Dai, J., Cai, H., Li, H., Zhuang, Y., Min, H., Wen, Y., Yang, J., Gao, Q., Shi, Y. and Yi, L. (2015), Association between telomere length and survival in patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. *Respirology*. DOI: 10.1111/resp.12566

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