

# Is aging a disease? Scientists call for new classification of aging

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The paper explores the evolution of disease classification practices and the progress made since William Cullen's seminal *Nosologiae Methodicae* synopsis published in 1769. It discusses some of the additions to the ICD-10 including some of the less obvious conditions like obesity that may set the precedent for classifying aging as a disease.

While there is clear disagreement among [demographers](#), gerontologists and biogerontologists on the subject, classification of aging as a disease is likely to unite both scientists and [medical practitioners](#) in the effort to prevent the pathological age-related processes and attract more resources to aging research.

In part, the report calls for creating a [task force](#) of scientists to more thoroughly evaluate whether to provide a more granular and actionable classification of aging as a disease in ICD-11.

"Aging is a complex multifactorial process leading to loss of function and a very [broad spectrum](#) of diseases. While the notion of whether aging itself is a disease is usually disputed, classifying it as such will help shift the focus of biomedicine from treatment to prevention. Classifying aging as a disease with multiple 'non-garbage' ICD codes may help create business cases for large pharmaceutical companies to focus more R&D resources on this important field. Considering the unprecedented increases in life expectancy and the heavy burden of medical costs in the developed countries, maintaining the human body in the disease-free youthful state for as long as possible is not just an altruistic cause, but a

pressing economic necessity", said Alex Zhavoronkov, PhD, CEO of Insilico Medicine, Inc.

**More information:** Alex Zhavoronkov et al. Classifying aging as a disease in the context of ICD-11, *Frontiers in Genetics* (2015). [DOI: 10.3389/fgene.2015.00326](https://doi.org/10.3389/fgene.2015.00326)

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