

Genetics play strong role in determining age of menopause and overall longevity

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If you're wondering why you entered menopause earlier or later than other women, blame your mother. That's because numerous studies have confirmed the role of genetics in determining a woman's age at

menopause. A new study not only reconfirms this association but additionally suggests a link to familial longevity. Results are published online today in *Menopause, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS)*.

The age of menopause is clinically defined as one year after the final menstrual period and is, on average, about 52 years. However, every year thousands of [women](#) outperform this statistic by entering menopause later in [life](#), whereas many others naturally enter menopause much earlier in life.

Although menopause can occur earlier as the result of various conditions such as smoking, chemotherapy, and an elevated body mass index, the age of menopause is generally accepted to be most influenced by [family history](#). So, if your mother experienced her menopause early, chances are you will also begin the transition earlier in life.

The goal of this latest study focused on reproductive life was to identify genetic variants associated with the delayed age of menopause based on familial longevity. Results were based on a meta-analysis of several larger studies, including the Long Life Family Study, the Health and Retirement Study, and the Framingham Heart Study. These studies found that women who were able to have children beyond the age of 40 years were four times more likely than average women of living to 100 years or older and that women who had children at age 35 years or older were 1.5 times more likely to live past 100 years.

In this study, researchers performed a [meta-analysis](#) for genetic variants associated with age of menopause in women who ultimately lived to a very old age. The findings provided further evidence for genetic basis of age of menopause. In addition, the discovery of new variants suggests that there may be genetic mechanisms of age of menopause that are linked to human longevity.

Findings were published in the article "Genetic associations with age of menopause in familial longevity."

"Genetic variants associated with later menopause have been found to be associated with longer life. Although early menarche and total number of reproductive years have not been associated with slower aging, later menopause (longer reproductive potential) appears to be associated with slower aging." says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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