

## Weight-Loss Surgery May Delay Aging

Nancy Walsh

Weight-loss surgery may help reverse the effects of aging -- as shown by increases in the length of chromosomal telomeres -- in certain subgroups of obese patients, a researcher said here.

Patients whose preoperative levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol were elevated had significant lengthening of the telomeres one year after surgery (+0.0227) compared with those whose LDL was low at the time of surgery (-0.0271,  $P=0.0387$ ), said [John M. Morton, MD](#) [1], of Stanford University Medical Center in Stanford, Calif.

In addition, patients who had elevated levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein (CRP) at baseline also showed telomere lengthening at postoperative year 1 (+0.04125) compared with patients with low CRP (-0.02294,  $P=0.005$ ), he reported in a session at [Obesity Week](#) [2].

"Telomeres are repeats at the end of each chromosome, which can fray over time from wear and tear. The general idea is that the shorter the telomere, the greater the increase in aging," he explained.

Successful aging implies avoiding disease and disability, maintaining function, and staying engaged with life, he observed.

"But we all know we're getting heavier, and if we continue in that direction as we get older, there are going to be physiologic changes including decreased glucose tolerance, CRP increases, blood pressure and cholesterol rise, and inflammation increases. One of the potential complications is an increased risk of dementia," he said at the meeting.

Aging in obese mice has been studied at the genetic level, and has shown that obesity increases the production of free radicals, which shortens telomeres and leads to cancer and other problems.

However, evidence has been less clear in humans, but [one recent longitudinal study](#) [3] found correlations between diet and telomere length.

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[2] <http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ObesityWeek/>

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