



ideal

Insight into the  
Determinants of  
Exceptional  
Aging and  
Longevity



The average age of our population is increasing at unprecedented rates. The current life expectancy for Americans is around 77.9 years. Improved medical care and prevention efforts mean that for the first time in history, older people have an opportunity to avoid major chronic diseases and remain healthy, active, and productive. But more research is needed to understand healthy aging.



- ❖ The IDEAL Study is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)



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## Purpose:

- ❖ Identify biological, physiological, and behavioral factors that distinguish “exceptional” agers from others their age.
- ❖ Understanding what differentiates “exceptional” agers from others their age may provide clues to how to preserve physical and cognitive function in late life and prevent disease and disability.



## Study population:

- ❖ People age 80 and older
- ❖ Living within 150 miles of Baltimore-Washington
- ❖ Meet the eligibility criteria



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## Eligibility criteria:

- ❖ Can perform normal activities of daily living without any help
- ❖ Can walk a quarter mile without pain or shortness of breath
- ❖ Have no severe memory or cognitive issues



## Eligibility criteria (con.)

Have no major medical conditions, including no history of:

- ❖ Cardiovascular disease
- ❖ Diabetes
- ❖ Active cancer
- ❖ Neurological or brain diseases



## **Eligibility criteria (con.)**

Have no major medical conditions, including no history of:

- ❖ Any medical condition that requires chronic drug treatment except drugs for hypertension
- ❖ Severe gastrointestinal or stomach diseases
- ❖ Significant vision and hearing problems





## Stage one of screening:

- ❖ 10 minute phone interview
- ❖ Questions to assess major diseases and disability status



## Stage two of screening

- ❖ 90 minute home visit
- ❖ Informed consent
- ❖ Confirm eligibility
- ❖ Assessment of physical and cognitive function
- ❖ Obtain a blood sample for eligibility criteria



## **Enrollment in BLSA**

- ❖ Baseline assessment
- ❖ Yearly follow-up visits



“Our aim is to learn the secrets of exceptionally healthy old age. What we find may one day help reduce the burden and suffering of others.”

Luigi Ferrucci, M.D., Ph.D, Senior Investigator,  
NIA, NIH