

New tool lets users find out how fast their bodies are ageing

It is the first built on Asian cohort data, and offers a way to better manage health

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Current smokers have a biological age 3.6 years older than non-smokers, while individuals who are obese can have one that is 4.2 years older than those with a normal body mass index.

Unlike chronological age, which is how long we have been alive, biological age shows how well our bodies are functioning.

Meanwhile, Singapore participants who exercised frequently had a biological age about 1.25 years younger than those who never exercised or exercised less than once a month, while plant food intake was associated with a biological age about one year younger than those who reported no plant food intake.

These findings, from the decade-long Singapore Longitudinal Ageing Studies (SLAS) by the National University of Singapore (NUS), in-

form a biological age test that was introduced to the market about six weeks ago.

Precision health company Lucence Group's chief executive officer Tan Min-Han said it worked with local researchers to develop the test – the first built on an Asian cohort – that tells users how fast their bodies are ageing, offering individuals another tool to better manage their health.

As Lucence – founded in 2016 as a spin-off from A*Star – continues to gather user data, the test results will become increasingly precise over time as its model is refined, he said.

The AgeQ test, which provides a snapshot of blood biomarkers associated with healthy ageing, is being offered by several private healthcare players here, including IHH Healthcare.

Speaking at an Aug 11 event where the test was introduced, Minister for Trade and Industry (Energy and Industry) Tan See



Minister for Trade and Industry (Energy and Industry) Tan See Leng (second from right) with Lucence chief executive officer Tan Min-Han (right) at The Science of Healthy Longevity event on Aug 11. Lucence worked with local researchers to develop the AgeQ test, which provides a snapshot of blood biomarkers associated with healthy ageing. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

Leng said the data-backed health assessment tool is an encouraging example of how public-private collaboration can bridge the gap between research and practical applications that contribute to healthier

ageing.

"Life is not about how many breaths you take... It's about maximising the moments that take your breath away," he said, adding that new innovations and preventive

health efforts may help people like him and his peers to one day live well to 125 years old.

This innovation comes at a time when Singapore is grappling with a super-ageing population.

To address this national challenge, it recently committed \$350 million to a Grand Challenge on Maximising Healthy and Successful Longevity under the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2030 plan, which aims to develop solutions to key ageing challenges.

The AgeQ biological age test was built upon data from an Asian cohort and subsequently validated using data from over 300,000 people across the US and the UK.

NUS researchers followed more than 5,400 Singaporeans for over a decade to understand how physiological changes relate to long-term health, showing how lifestyle choices like smoking and diet can impact one's biological age.

In an Aug 11 press release, Lucence said the translation of these findings into practical applications reflects the strength of Singapore's research and innovation ecosystem, bringing together three partners – NUS, A*Star and Lucence.

Lucence's Tan said the work brings ageing research closer to achieving preventive health outcomes at the population level, and economically, it creates a pathway for Singapore-developed intellectual property to be validated, commercialised and potentially adopted in international markets.

Building on the SLAS findings, Lucence intends to explore additional biomarkers that could help identify cardiovascular disease and cancer risks that may emerge as individuals age.

AgeQ is already available in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

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