# Healthy Lifestyle Can Offset Genetic Risk of Shorter Lifespan, Study Finds



A newly published study in "BMJ Evidence Based Medicine" from researchers at Zhejiang University School of Medicine in China suggests that maintaining a healthy lifestyle can significantly offset the genetic risk of a shorter lifespan. The research, led by Dr. Xifeng Wu, involved data from over 350,000 individuals of European ancestry, analyzing their genetic dispositions and lifestyle choices over an average period of 13 years.

Participants were scored on their genetic risk for a shorter life using a polygenetic risk score and on their adherence to a healthy lifestyle. Findings indicate that those with high genetic risk but who also maintained a healthy lifestyle could extend their lives by up to 5.5 years, compared to those with both a high genetic risk and an unhealthy lifestyle. Four key lifestyle factors identified were non-smoking, regular physical activity, adequate sleep (defined as 7-8 hours per night), and a healthy diet.

While the study was observational and couldn't conclusively determine causation, the correlation between these healthful behaviors and increased lifespan was strong. Dr. Wu emphasized that a combination of these factors could substantially mitigate the life-shortening effects of genetic risk.