# Study reveals secrets behind Maria Branyas Morera's remarkable longevity



Scientists have recently published a study that aims to unlock the secrets behind the extraordinary longevity of Maria Branyas Morera, who lived to be 117 years old before her passing in August 2024. Recognised as the world’s oldest living person prior to her death, Branyas, an American-Catalan woman born in March 1907 in San Francisco, attributed her remarkable lifespan to a combination of “luck and good genetics” as well as her choice to “avoid toxic people.”

The comprehensive analysis conducted by researchers examined Branyas Morera’s genes, microbiome, and lifestyle choices, revealing that her cells functioned as if they were 17 years younger than her actual age. This study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, sheds light on the factors that contributed to her supercentenarian status, a demographic that remains exceptionally rare despite the increasing population of centenarians due to advancements in healthcare.

Researchers identified that Branyas Morera had an extraordinarily healthy gut microbiome, described as “anti-inflammatory,” and rich in beneficial bacteria such as Bifidobacterium, known for its health-promoting properties. Over the years, Branyas maintained a Mediterranean-style diet, consuming an abundance of fruits and vegetables and notably eating three yoghurts daily. These yoghurts, which are known to contain probiotics, may have significantly contributed to maintaining a healthy gut and thereby influenced her extended lifespan. The researchers noted, “This could be an example of a dietary intervention that, acting in the gut microbiota, is associated with healthy aging and long lifespan.”

Furthermore, the study revealed that Branyas Morera exhibited unique genetic variations not previously observed in European populations, which may have played a role in her exceptional longevity. The analysis included a comparison with 75 other women from the 1000 Genomes Project, aiming to understand the genetic underpinnings of ageing. The variants identified in Branyas’ genome have been linked to improved immune health, cognitive function, and enhanced protection against various diseases such as cancers and heart issues.

Moreover, scientists highlighted the importance of DNA methylation—a biological process that affects gene expression—where Branyas was identified as an outlier demonstrating a significantly younger biological age. The study indicates that her cells behaved similarly to those of younger individuals, suggesting a potential connection between her lifestyle and dietary choices and her biological health.

Cohorts of researchers hope that the findings from Branyas Morera’s case can guide advancements in anti-ageing therapies and increase understanding of the dietary factors contributing to longevity. The emerging picture illustrates that extreme ages like hers do not necessarily correlate with poor health, emphasising the need for further investigations into the links between diet, gut health, and longevity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.livescience.com/health/ageing/biological-secrets-of-worlds-oldest-woman-maria-branyas-morera-revealed-after-death> - This article corroborates Maria Branyas Morera's exceptional longevity and the study of her biological factors, including her genes and gut microbiome, which contributed to her health and longevity.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/health/how-to-live-longer-centenarian-daily-snack> - This piece supports the claim that Branyas Morera maintained a healthy lifestyle, including a Mediterranean diet and regular consumption of yoghurt, which may have contributed to her longevity.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original context for the article about Maria Branyas Morera's longevity and the scientific study conducted on her.
* <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/early/2024/02/25/2024.02.25.533111> - This preprint server hosts the study on Maria Branyas Morera, detailing her genetic and microbiome analysis, though it is not yet peer-reviewed.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/GetRef.cgi?study_id=phs000424.v8.p2> - This link relates to the 1000 Genomes Project, which was used as a reference for comparing Branyas Morera's genetic variations.
* <https://www.josepcarreras.org/en/institute> - This is the website of the Josep Carreras Institute, where Manel Esteller, a key researcher in the study on Branyas Morera, is based.