

You are only as old as you feel

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As we grow older, the experience of aging is often increasingly subjective. Assessing self-rated health (SRH) and subjective age provides intuitive, albeit enigmatic, input regarding how an individual is feeling about their overall health and aging. Longitudinal studies suggest that both measures predict mortality in older adults. To what extent are SRH and subjective age tapping into the same underlying mechanisms? We evaluated biometric twin models to determine the degree to which SRH and subjective age may have common genetic and environmental sources of covariation. Analyses are based on 1400 twin pairs from the Project Talent Twin and Sibling (PTTS) Study, including 649 pairs with complete data for the full bivariate model. Participants were, on average, 70 years old when interviewed in 2014. Individuals reporting their SRH as 'good' or 'very good' also tended to endorse feeling younger than their age ($r=.52$). Univariate twin modeling indicated almost half of the variance in SRH was attributed to additive (A) genetic influences, with little familial (C) environmental influences, and remaining variance attributed to individual (E) environmental influences. Similar ACE results were found for the univariate twin model for subjective age. The bivariate twin model attributed covariation between SRH and subjective age to the genetic (A) component, with much of the remaining residual variance in subjective age due to (E) environment. Current results suggest (1) common genes may be responsible for associations between SRH and subjective age and (2) each measure retained unique variation largely due to individual-specific environmental influences.