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# Biological age is increased by stress and restored upon recovery

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## Highlights

- Biological age undergoes rapid fluctuations in mice and humans
- Severe stress induces increases in biological age that are reversed upon recovery
- Parabiosis, surgery, pregnancy, and COVID-19 transiently elevate biological age
- Biological age recovery rate may predict gerotherapeutics

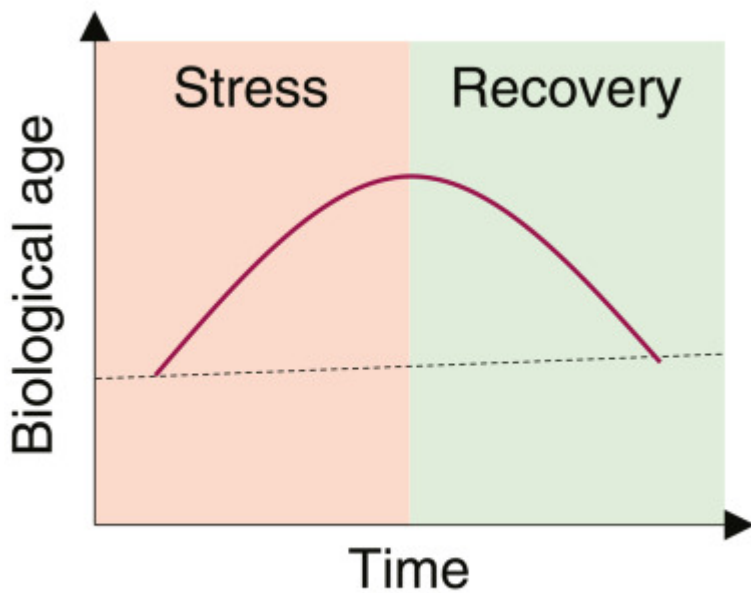
## Summary

Aging is classically conceptualized as an ever-increasing trajectory of damage accumulation and loss of function, leading to increases in morbidity and mortality. However, recent *in vitro* studies have raised the possibility of age reversal. Here, we report that biological age is fluid and exhibits rapid changes in both directions. At epigenetic, transcriptomic, and metabolomic levels, we find that the biological age of young mice is increased by heterochronic parabiosis and

and following surgical detachment. We also identify transient changes in biolog ge

during major surgery, pregnancy, and severe COVID-19 in humans and/or mice. Together, these data show that biological age undergoes a rapid increase in response to diverse forms of stress, which is reversed following recovery from stress. Our study uncovers a new layer of aging dynamics that should be considered in future studies. The elevation of biological age by stress may be a quantifiable and actionable target for future interventions.

## Graphical abstract



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## Keywords

[aging](#) • [biological age](#) • [stress](#) • [recovery](#) • [dynamics](#) • [epigenetic aging clocks](#)

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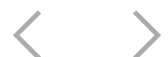
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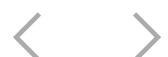
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