

# **Healthy ageing and longer healthspan through hormesis**

**Suresh Rattan, PhD, DSc**

Laboratory of Cellular Ageing, Department of Molecular Biology, Aarhus University, Denmark

Mild stress can be good for you – sounds paradoxical, but it is a scientifically tested and proven fact.

Modern ageing research has shown that there is no gene or an enemy in our cells, which determines how shall we become old and when shall we die. Genes determine our ability to live and maintain health for about forty years – a period known as the essential lifespan (ELS) required by nature for the continuation of the species. We are surely able to live much longer than our species' ELS, but our natural survival abilities then need a helping hand for living longer, for maintaining health and for protecting ourselves from diseases in old age. Latest scientific research shows that “stress of choice”, for example exercise, has numerous benefits for the body and the mind, due to its ability to stimulate body's own defence and maintenance systems. This phenomenon of mild stress-induced health and longevity benefits is known as “hormesis”, and the conditions which cause hormesis are called “hormetins”. This lecture will give an overview of the present state of knowledge in the field of ageing and provide practical suggestions as to how to strengthen body's own survival and health mechanisms by using physical, nutritional and mental hormetins, including sauna, spices and mental activities such as meditation.