

Department of Molecular Epidemiology Leiden

Scientific internship familial longevity. Geplaatst 1 november 2017.

Genealogical research has shown that human longevity clusters in families. Members of these longevous families live longer than comparable individuals from the same birth cohort and delay or even escape age related diseases. Insight into this familial component of longevity can provide important knowledge about the mechanisms that protect against age-related diseases and multi-morbidity. Genetic predisposition is an important determinant for longevity, and to accurately investigate this, we want to create two contrasting research groups. In other words, separate longevous families from normative families. The accompanying research question is: On which demographic and familial factors do longevous families differ from normative families.

Within the research project we use historical data, ranging from 1750 until 2017 (Historical Sample of the Netherlands). The data concern Dutch population registers and civil certificates, which are mainly death certificates. All data are verified and supplemented with the currently centralized municipal personal records database. This internship project can be started immediately with a complete data file of approximately 100.000 persons within 1326 five generational families.

You will create an algorithm to separate longevous from normative families under the supervision of a PhD student. The ultimate goal to which this internship contributes is to identify living descendants of longevous and normative families and subsequently contacting them for inclusion to a study into (genetic) factors contributing to longevity. You will work with complex datasets, providing you with the opportunity to improve your data-management and analysis skills. You can also work on learning or improving your R-skills because this is the program you will use for data management and analysis.

Molecular Epidemiology

Your internship will take place within the department of Molecular Epidemiology, which is led by prof. dr. Eline Slagboom. The department of Molecular Epidemiology focuses on the identification of factors and processes stimulating healthy aging. The department is investigating longevous families for more than 15 years in the Netherlands (Leiden Longevity study), frequently publishes on the topic and acquired an outstanding reputation, both nationally and internationally in the field of aging research. Besides that, the department provides an excellent atmosphere for the analysis of complex data because of the embedding within the department of Medical Statistics and Bio-informatics.

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