

Highlighting the highlights



Research Highlights, News & Views and Research Briefings are three article formats used in this journal to highlight primary research. We explain the shared and unique features of these formats and describe how we are starting to use artificial intelligence to help produce one of them.

The Research Highlights, News & Views and Research Briefings published in *Nature Aging* act as a summary layer on top of some of the primary research that is published in the journal and elsewhere. Although these short articles all help to promote a particular research study and offer a means to rapidly consume recent findings, each of them also serves a slightly different purpose. As some of our readers may not yet be familiar with these formats, we discuss below their aims and what they can offer. We also describe how we have recently started to use artificial intelligence (AI) to support the creation of some Research Highlights and introduce the first examples of such articles in the journal.

News & Views are short commentaries that are written by field experts on a research article that has recently been published in the journal. The authors of this type of highlight often take part in the peer review of the research being discussed and not only provide a summary of the study but also a critique, all in a way that is accessible to a broad audience. News & Views thus allow both specialists and researchers working in other fields to be rapidly informed about some of the latest research published in the journal.

Research Briefings are written by the authors of a research study that is published in *Nature Aging*. Similar to News & Views, they provide a summary of the findings, but they also open a window on what happened ‘behind the paper’: for instance, during the initial conceptualization of the study, when and how collaborations were started, or how funding was secured – information that is usually not shared in a research paper. They also include both an expert opinion and an editorial note that briefly explain why the study was found to be of importance.

Research Highlights are produced by editors; they cover research that is published in other journals that the editorial team thinks will appeal to the broad community of researchers who are working on aging and age-related diseases. Perhaps most interestingly, they almost always feature quotes from authors of the original study, which reveal some of the context and motivations for the research and often offer a glimpse of what is to come next from this research team. Their topics are diverse, reflecting our broad scope, and usually align with the primary research that is most often handled by the editor at the journal who wrote the highlight. This can be a useful source of information for prospective authors to know who to engage with at the journal to discuss their research when at a conference, by email or with a video-conference call (see our [About the Editors page](#)). When submitting [pre-submission inquiries](#)¹ or manuscripts on a theme covered in a highlight, authors can also mention this in their cover letter and/or address their work to the editor who authored the highlight.

In the October 2023 issue of *Nature Aging*, you will find three Research Highlights on studies published by Springer Nature (publisher of *Nature Aging*) journals. The **first** one covers a report that describes how some of the unique aging and longevity traits of the naked mole-rat can be exported to mice by overexpressing a single gene from the long-lived species. The **second** one highlights a recent study on how various biological, lifestyle and social factors may influence healthy aging in Latin American populations. And the **third** one features an article that analyzes the evolution of racial and ethnic disparities in the burden of cardiovascular mortality linked to particulate air pollution in the USA.

Although these three recent examples of the format appear to be similar to all other Research Highlights previously published in the journal, this trio – unlike all of the others – was drafted with the help of AI. After carefully selecting the research articles to be highlighted, the editorial team used an internal Springer Nature AI tool based on a large language model (LLM) to help to produce a first draft of each summary. Each draft was then substantially revised by one of our editors for style and content, including the

selection and integration of quotes from the authors of the original study, and checked for accuracy. In alignment with our own recommendations to research authors², we disclose the assistance of AI at the end of these articles.

This is the first time that the journal has formally used such AI assistance in an editorial output. The motivation for this ongoing experiment is to explore how AI can potentially help our relatively small team of editors to better serve our community, by allowing us to highlight more research studies. Although an experiment, it is a well-controlled one, in which our editors continue to ensure the high quality of the content that our readers are used to. The format continues to offer unique contextual quotes obtained through interactions that sometimes initiate a broader conversation about the research between our editors and the authors of these studies. Using AI in some of our work is also an opportunity for us to learn how to use these new tools, and to develop an awareness and understanding of both their strengths and limitations. In the future, we anticipate that LLMs and similar tools will assist us in several other routine and complex editorial tasks, and therefore also see this first experiment as useful preparation for future use cases.

Many researchers are experimenting with generative AI tools – notably for the preparation of manuscripts, but also for assistance with coding and literature searches or even to explore new ideas³. In this context, it is important to note that LLMs do not currently satisfy authorship criteria and that their use must be reported somewhere in the manuscripts submitted to journals from the Nature Portfolio², as outlined on our [policy page](#).

We are interested to see how our experiment with AI in a small corner of the journal evolves and, more broadly, we are keen to follow how the further development of such tools will shape not only the dissemination of research but also the research itself.

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References

1. *Nat. Aging* **2**, 181 (2022).
2. *Nature* **613**, 612 (2023).
3. Owens, B. *Nature* **615**, 20 (2023).