

Manuscript Title

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Abstract

At a recent symposium on the biology of aging, a debate was held as to whether or not we know what aging is. Many/most of the participants were struck not only by the lack of consensus on this core question, but also on many basic tenets of the field, and on how to ask the key questions. Together, we felt it was important to write up a summary of these cordial but important disagreements to demonstrate the work the field has before it in order to generate a clear paradigm. Accordingly, we undertook a systematic survey of participants on a number of points that were raised during the debate and symposium, and here present a summary of the conclusions. We use this to identify major directions, empirical or philosophical, that might help move the field toward a consensus paradigm. [1-2 more sentences to be added after we see survey results].

Introduction

The authors were all participants at the *Biology of Aging Symposium: Understanding Aging to Better Intervene*, held November 9-11, 2019 in Montreal, Quebec. The symposium featured 44 speakers with a diversity of expertise related to aging, including basic aging biology, translational geroscience, geriatric medicine, nutrition, immunosenescence, ecology/evolution, demography, statistics, systems biology, aging epidemiology, and complex systems theory. During the course of the symposium, a debate was held on the question, "Do we know what aging is?" with BHK ostensibly arguing the "pro" side and AAC ostensibly arguing the "con" side. There was extensive audience participation. Most participants agreed that the debate was striking in how it highlighted the lack of a clear consensus paradigm in the field, and collectively we agreed it would be important to describe this for our colleagues.

Accordingly, we designed a survey that we sent to participants of the symposium, both invited speakers and students/other participants. The survey was meant to capture the opinions on the key points of disagreement during the debate and the meeting more generally. All participants who responded to the survey are co-authors.

References
