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## Vetek (Seniority): The Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life



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### Definition

Vetek (Seniority) – The Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life is an Israeli nonprofit association that sets as its central goals the protection of the rights of older persons and the extension of their healthy longevity and improvement of their quality of life. Recognizing the crucial role of medical scientific research for the achievement of those goals, the association’s objectives include the initiation and funding of scientific research for the extension of life expectancy of older persons and for the improvement of their quality of life.

### Overview

Due to the aging of the global population and the derivative increase in aging-related non-communicable diseases and their humanitarian and socioeconomic burden, there is an urgent need to promote biomedical research and

development on aging and aging-related diseases as a way to improve healthy and productive longevity for the elderly population. This task is urgent for every country. And indeed, the World Health Organization posited in its 13th Programme of Work that “Ensuring healthy ageing is an urgent challenge in all countries” (World Health Organization 2018).

Israel shares in the problem and seeks to contribute to solutions via diverse initiatives and organizations. In order to help address the aging-related health challenges, Vetek (Seniority) – the Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life – is uniquely poised to advance biomedical aging and longevity research in Israel. Advised by leading Israeli and international scientists in diverse fields of biomedical aging and longevity R&D, supported by noted public figures and advocates, strategically situated, and connected in the Israeli and international scientific and civic establishment – it advances the scientific research and development for the achievement of healthy longevity in Israel and internationally.

The association was founded in 2011 by Rafi Eitan (1926-2019), an Israeli politician and former intelligence officer, the founder of the Israeli pensioners party “Gil” and a former Minister of Pensioner Affairs. Among the various former functions in the Israeli intelligence community (including the famous leading of the capture of Adolf Eichmann), in the 1980s, Eitan served as the head of the Bureau of Scientific Relations.

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D. Gu, M. E. Dupre (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Aging*,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2\\_1016-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2_1016-1)

Rafi Eitan served as the chairman of the Vetek (Seniority) – the Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life. Dr. Ilia Stambler has served as the association’s chief science officer. Yoram Kleiner and Yossi Katz have served as the executive officers.

Initially, the association was mainly involved in the “care and safeguarding of the rights of senior citizens in the State of Israel, in all areas of life.” Yet, since 2016, recognizing that ill-health is arguably the most crucial concern of older persons, the association shifted its focus toward the promotion of healthy longevity, including advancement of scientific research and technological development and education toward that purpose.

The association’s main areas of interest include the following: *education and awareness*, raising public awareness about biomedical research and development dedicated to improve healthy longevity of the elderly population, improving the scientific, medical, social, and institutional perception of the field; *communication and support*, providing assistance in recruiting support for the most promising and effective diagnostic and therapeutic R&D approaches, from specific R&D projects to establishing R&D programs and centers of excellence, connecting researchers in the field of biomedical research of aging and adjacent areas and other stakeholders; and *analysis and data processing*, examining the entities active in the field in Israel and abroad, performing evaluation of R&D approaches to diagnosis and treatment, and providing recommendations regarding the most promising R&D directions, including data collection, curation, access, analysis, integration, and sharing in the field of aging and longevity research.

The association gathered a prominent advisory board comprising leading researchers of aging and longevity, from all the universities in Israel – Bar Ilan University, Weizmann Institute of Science, Haifa University, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Tel Aviv University, Hebrew

University of Jerusalem, as well as several luminary researchers from abroad, including Institute for Aging Research at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, Institute for Healthy Aging at the University of North Texas and others.

The Vetek (Seniority) – the Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life has been at the forefront of the longevity movement in Israel. The Vetek association strives to intensify longevity research activism in Israel and internationally. It is strategically allied with many organizations in Israel and worldwide with similar goals. Thus, in Israel, it has formed strategic partnerships with Israeli Longevity Alliance, and Disabled Not Half a Person association. And internationally, the organization is affiliated with the International Society on Aging and Disease (ISOAD), the International Longevity Alliance (ILA) and other longevity research and advocacy organizations.

The association and its members have been a leading force in the persistent advocacy efforts in Israel to emphasize the importance of enhancing biomedical research of aging to improve healthy longevity for the population. The “Law Proposal for the Establishment of the National Advisory Committee for the Promotion of Longevity and Quality of Life for the Elderly Population” has been advocated by the association’s members since July 2012. The association’s members were instrumental in organizing national conferences on longevity since 2013, such as “Pathways to Healthy Longevity,” as well as petitioned the authorities and organized smaller events and publications throughout the year.

With a strong contribution from such efforts, there have been issued governmental calls for research proposals specifically on research and development for the amelioration of aging-related ill-health and for the promotion of healthy longevity, such as the Israel Ministry of Science and Technology’s program to enhance the scientific and technological infrastructure for the elderly (since 2014), the Britain-Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership on Aging (BIRAX Aging) (2018), the Prime Minister’s

Innovation Prize with a focus on medical technologies for healthy aging (2018), and others. The Vetek association in cooperation with Disabled Not Half a Person initiated a special section on “Enhancing the research, development and education for the promotion of healthy longevity and prevention of aging-related diseases” as a part of the preparation of the National Masterplan on Aging within the Knesset Labor, Welfare and Health Committee, and organized discussions in Knesset on this subject (Vetek 2018).

The association strives to further intensify its research and advocacy activities for the promotion of healthy longevity in Israel and internationally.

## Cross-References

- ▶ [Longevity Activism](#)
- ▶ [Longevity Advocacy](#)

## References

- Vetek (Seniority) – The Movement for Longevity and Quality of Life (2018). <http://www.longevityisrael.org/>. Accessed 15 Feb 2019
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