

SCIENCE

Living in stressful areas 'can make you age faster'

By Shan Ross

Residing in a stressful neighbourhood is related to ageing faster, particularly in women, research suggests.

Scientists used telomeres, part of a person's DNA which get shorter over time, as a measure of biological ageing.

The study found people reporting problems such as burglaries, litter and vandalism had shorter telomeres, and that

this was more marked in women. This shorter length existed even after factors such as age, sex, social class, smoking, diet, weight, depression and fitness were taken into account.

The reported problems in people's environment also included muggings, fumes and disturbances by youngsters.

The study was a collaboration between Professor Anne Ellaway, from the University of Glasgow, and Professor Paul Shiels, at the Institute of Cancer Sciences.

Professor Ellaway said: "Improving rundown areas may combat this acceleration in ageing."

