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## Anti-cancer gene may be a fountain of youth

ONE of the genes that protects people from cancer may also help delay ageing, according to a study published yesterday.

The findings could lead to new drugs that prevent or fight cancer while extending healthy youth and lifespan, said Manuel Serrano, a researcher at the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre, who worked on the study.

Dr Serrano said researchers genetically changed mice to have an extra copy of a key cancer-fighting gene called p53 and found it also played an important role in delaying ageing.

“Everyone agrees that the ageing is produced by the accu-

mulation of faulty cells,” Dr Serrano said. “In other words, p53 delays ageing for exactly the same reason that it prevents cancer.”

The study was published in the journal *Nature*.

The role of p53 in cancer has been known for many years. Dr Serrano said he and his team applied this knowledge to ageing.

Dr Serrano said other research had shown that mice and worms that ate less had slower metabolisms and lived longer. His study offers evidence that the mice can benefit from the extra copy of the genes without being starved.

Reuters