



Lose blood, live long life claim

Janelle Miles

AN American expert on centenarians believes menstruation may play a part in why women are almost six times as likely to live to 100 than men.

In a personal attempt to live longer, Thomas Perls, director of the New England Centenarian Study, donates more than half a litre of blood every two months to mimic menstruation and hopefully, slow the ageing process.

Dr Perls told the International Healthy Ageing and Longevity Conference in Brisbane yesterday more than 85 per cent of centenarians were women.

"Women are clearly the winners of the longevity marathon," he said.

While some scientists believe oestrogen plays a protective role in women, Dr Perls said another theory was that menstruation, causing iron deficiency over a large part of a woman's life, was a factor.

"Iron is a critical factor in our cells' ability to produce those nasty molecules called free radicals that play an important role in ageing," Dr Perls said outside the conference.

"It may be as simple as having less iron in your body makes you age more slowly and less susceptible to age-related diseases."